



EARTHE

Activity 2

Digital toolkit for innovative curriculum and methodological development

Module – Problem solving

Method – Case studies

Case study

Module 4 – Problem Solving

Case study 1. - Analysing to Act

Related Method - Case Studies

Context and Background

A non-profit organisation in Ireland runs community-based adult education programmes for early school leavers. Attendance dropped sharply after introducing a new blended learning format.

Problem / Challenge Presented

Staff need to understand the reasons behind learners' disengagement and develop interventions to address and reverse it.

Actions Taken / Method Applied

The programme coordinator led a Case Study workshop using a real-life example. Data for the session included attendance records, learner interviews, and tutor feedback. Participants worked in groups to identify key issues, analyse underlying causes, and suggest potential actions, using tools such as SWOT analysis and stakeholder mapping. Each group then shared its findings and proposed solutions with the wider group.

Outcomes and Results

The analysis highlighted several underlying causes of the challenges learners faced. These included insufficient technical support during online sessions, a perception that some online modules were not directly relevant to their career aspirations, and a lack of structured opportunities for social interaction.

Activities taken:

To address emerging challenges, several measures were introduced. A weekly online 'support hour' was set up to provide technical assistance, while course content was refined to better reflect local employment needs. In addition, a peer group project was incorporated to encourage collaboration and practical application of skills. As a result, attendance significantly improved, rebounding to 55% within a single term.



Lessons Learned

The workshop highlighted that engaging participants in a shared process of analysis fosters a sense of ownership over the solutions developed. It also showed that working with real programme data makes the exercise more relevant and meaningful, while creating a stronger sense of urgency to act.

Key Success Factors

Several factors contributed to the success of the workshop. Honest sharing of data, even when it highlighted challenges, created a foundation of trust and openness. The diversity of participants — bringing together tutors, administrative staff, and learners—ensured a wide range of perspectives and insights. Finally, a clear structure for analysis provided focus and direction, helping the group move from discussion to actionable solutions.

Challenges Encountered and How They Were Addressed

Several challenges emerged during the workshop. Some staff initially reacted defensively, which was addressed by framing the session as a collective effort to improve practices rather than assign blame. Time constraints also limited the opportunity to explore every possible cause in depth, so the discussion was guided toward identifying and prioritising the ‘biggest win’ actions that could deliver the most immediate impact.

Applicability / Recommendations for Educators

When working with real cases, educators are encouraged to bring in different data sources to give students a fuller picture. A structured analysis framework can help keep discussions focused and make complex issues easier to tackle step by step. Just as important is nurturing a safe, supportive atmosphere where participants feel comfortable exploring sensitive topics openly and respectfully.