



EARTHE

Activity 2

Digital toolkit for innovative curriculum and methodological development

Module – Problem solving

Method – Case studies

Class activities



Module 4 – Problem Solving

Class activity 1. - Structured Case Analysis (SWOT + Fishbone)

Related method: Case Studies

Target group

Age: Adults (25+)

Gender: All genders

Level of studies: From VET to postgraduate

Status: Employed / unemployed / in transition

Fewer opportunities: May include participants with limited formal study experience or limited digital access. The activity may be useful for adult educators (trainers, facilitators) who need to use case-based approaches to help learners analyse real problems and propose practical solutions. It is well suited to mixed-experience groups.

Learning outcomes

After finalising this activity, learners will be able to:

- Identify core problems and underlying causes using a Fishbone (Ishikawa) analysis.
- Analyse strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) to generate context-aware solutions.
- Produce a short evidence-based action recommendation.

Duration

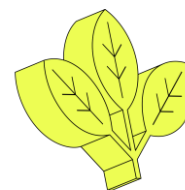
90 minutes

Materials and resources



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Printed case text (1–2 pages) per group, Fishbone diagram templates (printed or on flipchart), SWOT template sheet, Flip charts, markers, sticky notes, Timer, Room with space for group work

Activity description

Participants work in small groups to deconstruct a real-world case using Fishbone to surface root causes, then complete a SWOT to frame solutions and produce a short action recommendation. This strengthens analytical thinking and links theory to practice.

Detailed Implementation Steps

Introduction

The facilitator begins by presenting the learning goals and sharing the case study (for example, low attendance in a blended adult education class). Next, the facilitator demonstrates the Fishbone method by drawing a simple diagram on the board and working through a short example out loud. While doing so, they explain how different categories of causes—such as People, Process, Resources, and Environment—help guide the analysis.

Main activity

Participants read the case and note observed problems and facts. Facilitator instructs them to mark data vs. assumption.

In groups, students create a Fishbone diagram by choosing 3 to 5 main categories of causes and then listing specific causes under each one. The facilitator moves around the room, asking guiding questions such as, ‘What evidence supports this cause?’ to deepen the discussion.

If the group gets stuck, try prompting them with questions like: ‘Whose perspective might be missing?’ or ‘Which step in the process could go wrong?’”

Based on Fishbone, groups complete the SWOT for possible interventions—matching strengths to opportunities, and planning how to mitigate threats and weaknesses.

Groups produce a 3-point action plan (what, who, timeline) and assign one person to present.



Conclusion and reflection

Each group (2–3 min each) presents their top 3 recommendations.

Facilitator leads reflective questions: *Which root cause is the highest priority? Which recommendation is the fastest to implement? Which requires policy change?*

Link back to the learning outcomes: ask participants to cite the diagram or SWOT element that led to their recommendation.

Assessment / Evaluation Method

Observation checklist (facilitator): evidence of root-cause thinking (Fishbone completeness), quality of SWOT (realistic items), clarity of action plan (specific, measurable).

Peer feedback: Each presenting group receives 2 written comments: one strength, one question.

Quick quiz (self or group): (can be written or oral)

Which cause in your Fishbone had the strongest evidence? Why? (open answer)

Name one Strength and one Threat from your SWOT. (short answer)

Which recommendation is first-step actionable within 2 weeks? (single-line answer)

Adaptation Tips

Short time / smaller group: Use a single combined Fishbone + SWOT flipchart and do whole-class analysis.

Online: Use Miro/Mural with Fishbone and SWOT frames; breakout rooms for group work.

Low literacy / language diversity: Use visual prompts and allow oral responses; facilitator transcribes for the group.

Module 4 – Problem Solving

Class activity 2. - Role-play Case Reconstruction

Related method: Case Studies

Target group

Age: Adults (25+)

Gender: All genders

Level of studies: All levels of study are eligible

Status: Employed / unemployed / in transition

Fewer opportunities: The activity can include participants with limited public-speaking experience. Likewise, it can be useful for adult educators who aim to practice stakeholder analysis and empathy by re-creating events described in a case study and exploring alternative courses of action.

Learning outcomes

After finalising this activity, learners will be able to:

- Reconstruct stakeholder perspectives and motivations through role-play.
- Test alternative interventions and observe likely stakeholder reactions.
- Reflect on communication and negotiation tactics for complex situations

Duration

75-90 minutes

Materials and resources

Case vignette (short—1 page) with named stakeholders, Role cards (brief character descriptions), Props (optional) and a simple rubric for observation, Video recorder (optional) or smartphone for reflection, Room with space for role-play

Activity description



Groups enact the case scenario, then replay it with alternative interventions. This activity aims at strengthening empathy, communication, and applying problem-solving.

Detailed Implementation Steps

Introduction

Present the case (e.g., community partner resists new adult-learning schedule) and learning objectives.

Explain role-play rules: 1) stay in role during the scene; 2) show, not tell, and 3) after the initial enactment participants will explore alternative responses.

Main activity

Form groups of 4 to 6 and assign role cards. Roles include protagonist, opponent, mediator, observer(s). Observers have a checklist: tone, negotiation tactics, evidence use. Perform the case as written. Facilitator signals end.

Observers report on which communication moves escalated or de-escalated the conflict. Actors remain in role and respond to quick questions.

Groups agree on one alternative strategy (e.g., different opening question, data-centred approach), rehearse and perform. Observers compare outcomes.

If video is used, play excerpt for micro-feedback.

Conclusion and reflection

Whole-class discussion: *Which strategies changed the outcome and why? Which stakeholder concerns were not addressed?*

Ask participants to write one transferable tactic they will use in their training (e.g., “Start with shared facts, then elicit concerns”).

Assessment / Evaluation Method

Observer rubric: Communication clarity, evidence use, listening behaviour, conflict resolution techniques (rated 1–4).

Self-evaluation prompt: *What did you do differently in the second enactment? Did it improve the outcome?* (short paragraph)

Facilitator questions for quick check:

What was the turning point in the improved enactment?



Which stakeholder interest remained unaddressed?

Adaptation Tips

Allow role preparation time and offer “coach” observers who suggest lines.

Run multiple parallel role-plays and rotate observers.

Use breakout rooms; observers take notes in a shared doc; optionally record scenes.



Module 4 – Problem Solving

Class activity 3. - Case Clinic & Action Plan (Peer Review)

Related method: Case Studies

Target group

Age: Adults (25+)

Gender: All genders

Level of studies: All levels of study are eligible

Status: Employed / unemployed / in transition

Fewer opportunities: This activity works well for groups with varied experience levels, as participants can learn from each other. Practitioners can bring a real or hypothetical case from their work to a session, where peers help analyse it and collaboratively develop a practical, step-by-step action plan.

Learning outcomes

After finalising this activity, learners will be able to:

- Apply structured peer feedback to refine problem analysis.
- Develop a prioritised, resource-aware action plan.
- Demonstrate ability to solicit and integrate peer insights

Duration

90–120 minutes (can be expanded to a half-day)

Materials and resources

Participant-submitted case summaries (1 page), Problem statement, evidence, stakeholders, proposed interventions, constraints, Feedback forms for peers (structured)
Flip charts, markers



Activity description

The activity involves a “clinic” where one group’s case is presented and peers provide structured feedback using templates. The presenting group revises their action plan on the spot. This models collaborative problem-solving support.

Detailed Implementation Steps

Introduction

Explain the clinic rules: the presenter briefly explains the problem, peers give focused, constructive feedback, and the presenter then revises their work. Stress the importance of feedback being helpful and actionable.

Main activity

Presenter reads the one-page case and states the decision needed.

During this stage, peers focus on asking factual clarification questions, and the presenter responds with concise, to-the-point answers.

Each peer uses the feedback form with three sections: Strengths/Evidence, Gaps/Questions, Suggested Actions (short bullet points). The facilitator manages the time for each activity, making sure discussions and tasks stay within the planned limits.

Presenter identifies 2–3 promising ideas from feedback and explains why.

Presenter drafts a prioritised action plan (3 steps with leads and timelines) and posts it for group review.

Peers evaluate feasibility and give rapid suggestions.

Conclusion and reflection

Presenter shares final action plan and reflects on lessons learned.

Class discusses how peer input changed the plan and what evidence is still needed.

Assessment / Evaluation Method

Rate feedback usefulness (1–5) and note one concrete improvement.

What two changes were most valuable and why?

Does the action plan include: responsible person, timeline, success criteria? (Yes/No checklist)



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Adaptation Tips

Run “light clinics” with thirty-minute cycles: 5 minutes presentation, 10 minutes feedback, 10 minutes rework, 5 minutes present.

Use shared documents and breakout rooms for each clinic; peers fill digital feedback forms.

Make it possible to hide or remove any sensitive information.