

CASE Argument Mapping

Workshop Outline

The Hunt Laboratory for Intelligence Research
University of Melbourne

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Learn the CASE approach to developing well-reasoned arguments and presenting them clearly and persuasively.

OVERVIEW

Rationale

Professional life often requires presenting written arguments to others, whether in a risk assessment, legal opinion, policy proposal, scientific paper, incident report, or in many other forms. However, we often find it difficult to clearly convey the steps in our reasoning. Our readers then have to work hard to understand our thinking. This can be time-consuming, frustrating and error prone.

Fortunately, CASE Argument Mapping can help. Using simple yet powerful logical principles, we can create diagrams or maps of our reasoning. Using these maps as the basis for written arguments increases clarity and makes the task of understanding easier for our readers. It also helps strengthen our arguments by exposing missing steps, weak logic, and hidden assumptions.

THE WORKSHOP

Intended participants

The workshop is designed for anyone needing to write clearly and persuasively for readers such as managers, decision makers, or stakeholders. If your organisation produces reports, briefs, memos etc., this workshop is for you.

Objectives

Objectives for the workshop are:

- Develop the ability to produce written work with a clear and compelling logical structure.
- Build the understanding of fundamental principles of reasoning and how to apply them in a range of professional contexts.
- Provide teams with a common language to discuss and critique reasoning.

Approach

The workshop has both theoretical and practical components. Learners are guided through the theory behind CASE argument mapping, and complete exercises that help bed down skills. We employ different exercise types, ranging from simple polls to in-depth mapping of complex arguments.

Each workshop is developed for your organisation's professional context, with exercises tailored to match the type of work your organisation produces. As an example, we'll ask in advance for examples of the kinds of written work produced in your organisation, which we will then transform using CASE, illustrating how using the technique can improve clarity, rigour and persuasiveness.

Participants are provided with two printed workbooks. The first is used in the workshop itself, while the second contains additional theory should participants wish to reinforce their understanding.

CONTENT

The workshop has five content units:

Rationale for CASE

This unit explains the nature and benefits of CASE mapping. Topics include:

- The common problem – documents whose reasoning is poorly articulated and hard to follow
- Examples of well-drafted reasoning using CASE structure
- The distinctive benefits of CASE structuring.

CASE basics

Here we cover the fundamentals of CASE argument mapping, including:

- Recognising and identifying the CASE elements (Contention, Argument, Evidence, Source)
- Practice developing your own CASE-structured reasoning.

Abstraction

This unit covers the principles that help us connect the evidence to the contention (i.e., main point being established) as well as mistakes to avoid when making that connection. Topics include:

- How increasingly abstract claims form a 'ladder of inference' connecting the evidence to the contention.
- Adding layers to an argument so readers can more easily see how the connection.

Bridging claims

All reasoning involves what we call bridging claims, though these are often not explicitly stated (i.e. are hidden assumptions). Here we cover the logical structure of reasoning units and the role of bridging claims. We'll also cover a simple but powerful technique for exposing hidden assumptions.

- Understanding what bridging claims are and how they function in arguments.
- Recognising bridging claims in arguments.
- Practice identifying hidden bridging claims.
- Learn the 'Rabbit Rule' and apply it to examples.

Presenting Reasoning

The final unit looks at the different ways you can use CASE to present your reasoning in written work.

- Converting argument maps into CASE based prose.
- Complexities that arise when converting argument maps to prose.

"The course teaches the basics of deconstructing formalised arguments and information and reorganising it in a method that is far more digestible for reading."

"I found the examples and exercises that were directly related to our job and industry to be excellent. This allowed me to not just visualise how to apply this in my profession, but it gave me an opportunity to exercise it while receiving advice and feedback with the experts."

DELIVERY OPTIONS

Numbers

Smaller cohort sizes allows for direct interaction with the instructor, including feedback on exercises, which helps participants acquire the skills covered in the workshop. We thus recommend up to 12 participants per cohort. However, larger groups can be accommodated in single workshops, or we can run multiple workshops.

Timing – Two half days recommended

Due to the intensive intellectual effort required in the workshop, we recommend it be delivered in two half-day sessions (4 hours per session, including a break). Session start times, and spacing between sessions, are flexible.

If the two half-day option doesn't suit for any reason, we can also deliver the course in a standard one-day workshop, with morning, lunch and afternoon breaks.

Location

Workshops can be run at the University of Melbourne. This location has excellent training facilities and catering which provides a focus for cohorts away from work distractions.

Alternatively, we can provide training on or near organisational premises. For this option, organisations would be responsible for venue and catering.

PRICING

First cohort \$19,470 ex GST for up to 12 participants. \$1645 per additional participant. Includes catering and materials.

Repeats: \$14,940 ex GST for up to 12 participants. \$1245 per additional participant.

GST is applicable and allowance for travel costs outside of Melbourne CBD may be added to the total fee.

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► For more about the Hunt Lab and its training program, visit <https://huntlab.science.unimelb.edu.au>