A Deeper Dive

Crafting Compelling Case Studies for Evaluation

Begins at 1 p.m. Eastern

EvaluATE

1

EvaluATE
evalu-ate.org

2

3

Materials

Slides

Recording

4

Introductions
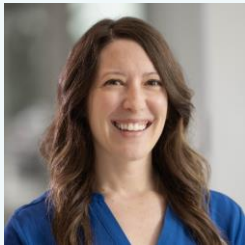
Samantha

Hooker

Brianna

Hooks Singletary

Oluchi

Anyaibe

Val

Marshall

5

Behind the Scenes

Maureen Green
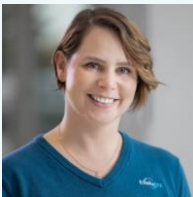
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Megan Lopez

Cori Hyde

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6

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7

Brianna

Val

Oluchi

8

What are Case Studies?
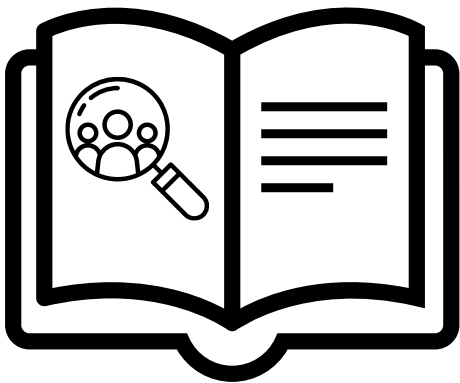
Focus on people, groups, or programs within a clear boundary.

Offer rich descriptions that provide real-world insights.

9

Interviews

Surveys

Rich Description of Context

Observations

Focus Groups

Document Review

10

- Understanding human impact

- Supports sensemaking

11

Why Use Case Studies for Evaluation?

To Make Sense of Complex Situations

To See How Context Matters

To Understand Impact

To Share Real-Life Lessons

To Follow Long-Term Effects

12

Case Studies for Evaluation

CHAT QUESTION

Have you ever used case studies in your evaluation work?

What benefits have you noticed from using case studies in your evaluations?

Answer
in chat box

13

Agenda

- Strategic selection of cases that align with your evaluation goals

- Well-defined case study evaluation questions

- Diverse data collection methods that capture multiple perspectives

- Careful consideration of ethical standards

- Compelling reporting that balances narrative with clear evidence

14

TechSkills Advanced Manufacturing Initiative

- NSF ATE-funded project based at Summit Valley Community College
- Aims to enhance technician training in industrial automation
- Serves a mix of traditional students, adult learners, and veterans
- Emphasizes industry-aligned curriculum, hands-on labs, and work-based learning opportunities

15

TechSkills Advanced Manufacturing Initiative

Understand how the TechSkills Advanced Manufacturing Initiative components are working, who they serve best, and where there's room for improvement.

- Surveys and performance data show strong outcomes overall—but some student groups are experiencing especially high retention and job placement rates.
- Interviews suggest these strong outcomes may be linked to specific local employer partnerships and targeted support strategies built into the program.

This raises key questions:

- What aspects of the program's implementation are driving these strong results?
- Which practices are most effective, and for whom?
- What lessons can inform future program development or scaling?

16
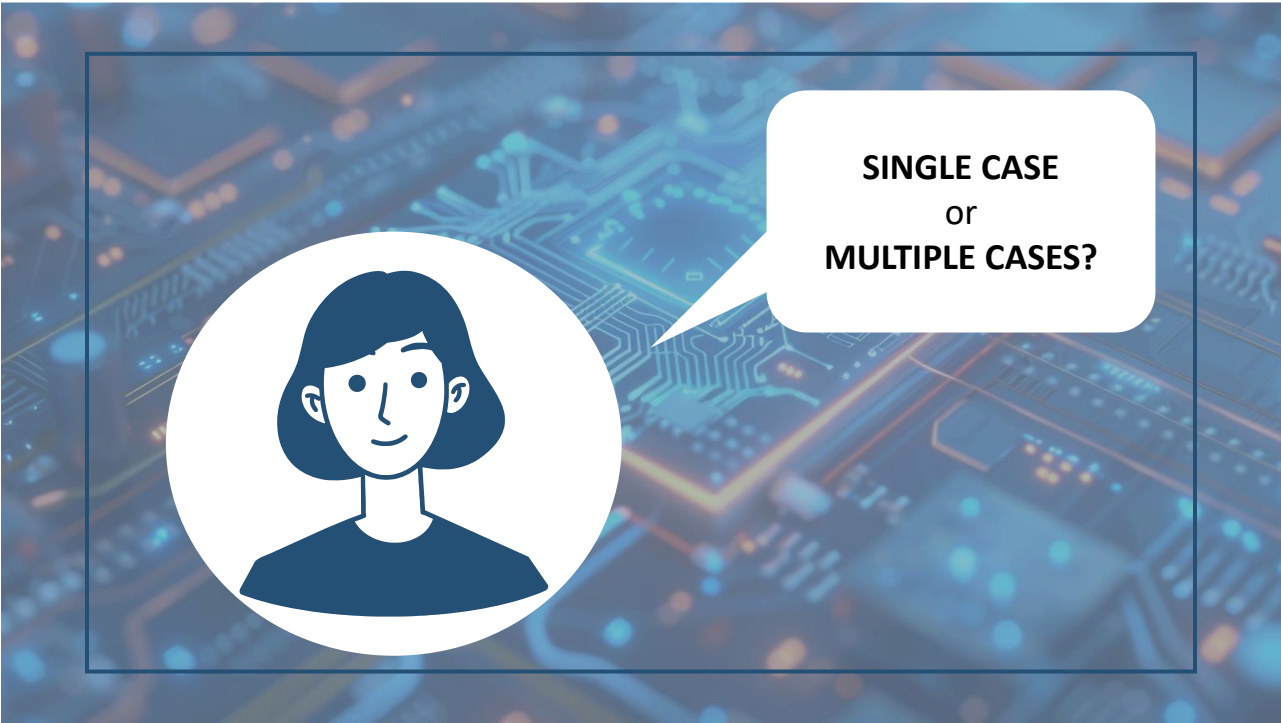
17

Selecting a Case

Single or Multiple Case Study Design

Single Case Study

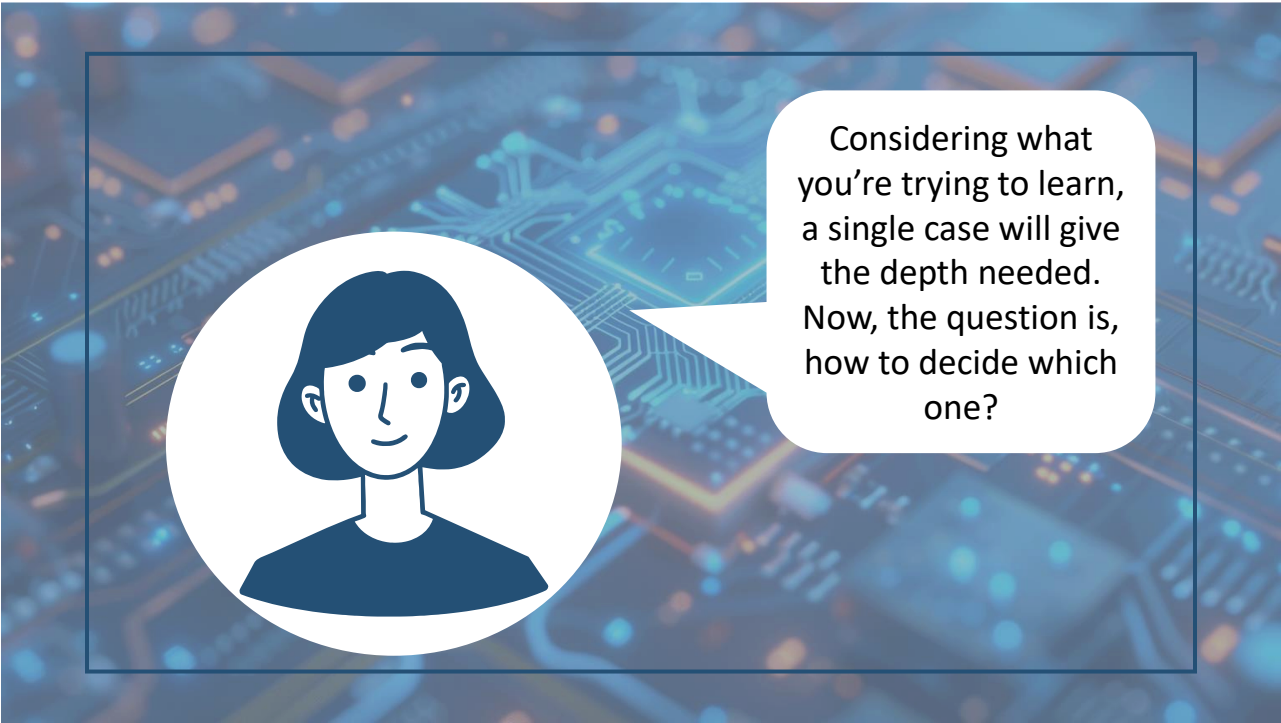Focuses in-depth on one specific project or situation to explore unique details or complex dynamics.

Multiple Case Study

Looks at several cases to compare experiences, find patterns, and draw broader insights across settings.

18

19

Selecting a Case

Considerations

- Alignment with Your Focus •———————

Evaluation Focus:
Understand how the TechSkills Advanced Manufacturing Initiative components are working, who they serve best, and where there's room for improvement.

❌ A case that focuses on students in the Introduction to Advanced Manufacturing Course held on Tuesdays.

✔ A case that follows a cohort of students placed in a specific internship site at local manufacturing companies.

20

Selecting a Case

Considerations

- Alignment with Your Focus

- Potential for Insight
  - Unique
  - Typical

21

Selecting a Case

Considerations

- Alignment with Your Focus

- Potential for Insight

- Access and Feasibility
  - Time
  - Access to data and people
  - Logistics

22

23

Selecting a Case

TechSkills Advanced Manufacturing Initiative

Evaluation Goal: Understand how the TechSkills Advanced Manufacturing Initiative components are working, who they serve best, and where there's room for improvement.

Case Study Type: In-depth single case study

People Involved: Students, faculty, project staff, and industry partners

24

Which of the following would be the most appropriate case to study?

POLL QUESTION

Case A

All SVCC faculty who are responsible for the development of the TechSkills curriculum and its implementation in classrooms

Case B

One cohort of students who are taking courses in the Advanced Manufacturing program and engaging in TechSkills internships

Case C

All students who have participated in the TechSkills program over the past five years

Answer in poll box

25

Which of the following would be the most appropriate case to study?

POLL QUESTION

Case A

All SVCC faculty who are responsible for the development of the TechSkills curriculum and its implementation in classrooms

Case B

One cohort of students who are taking courses in the Advanced Manufacturing program and engaging in TechSkills internships
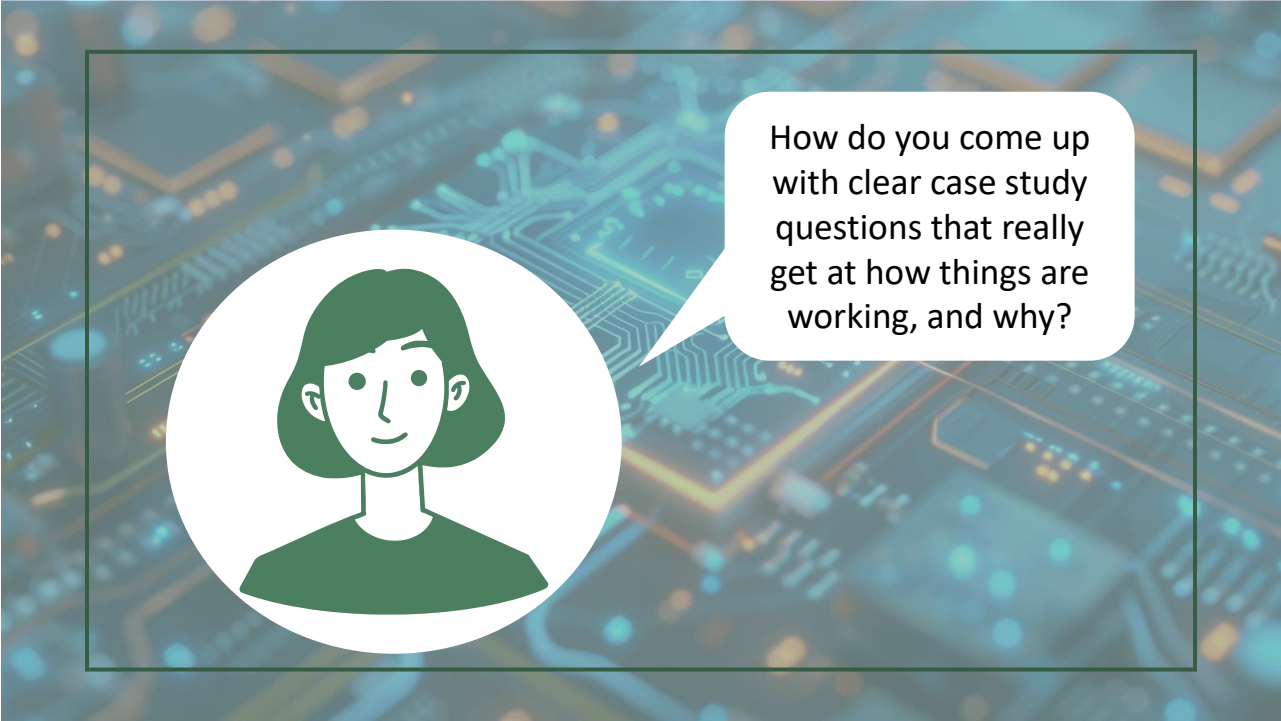
Case C

All students who have participated in the TechSkills program over the past five years

Answer in poll box

26

27

Well defined evaluation case study questions

28

Well defined evaluation case study questions

⚙⚙ Align with goals

29

Well defined evaluation case study questions

⚙⚙ Align with goals

❌ How does faculty collaboration across departments influence curriculum design in SVCC's general education courses?

✓ **How do students in the Spring 2025 TechSkills cohort at SVCC engage with hands-on lab activities, and in what ways do these experiences contribute to their development of industry-relevant technical skills and perceptions of career readiness?**
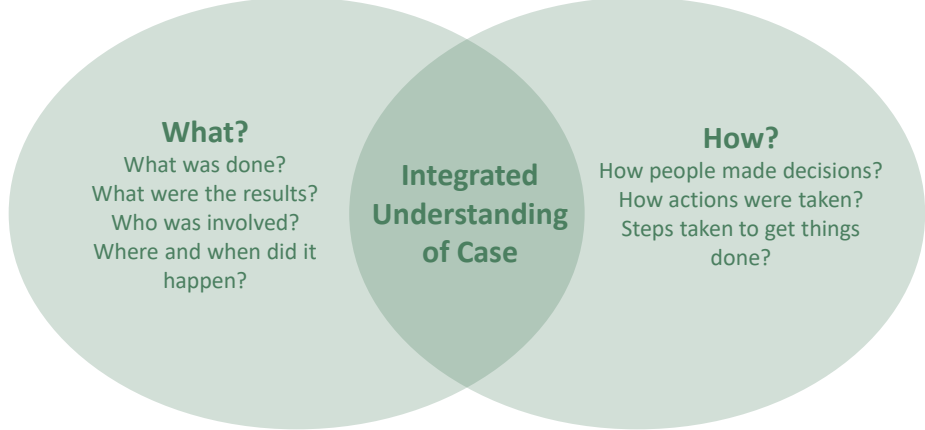
Purpose of Evaluation
How effective is the TechSkills Advanced Manufacturing Initiative at Summit Valley Community College in preparing students for careers in advanced manufacturing through hands-on learning experiences?

30

Well defined evaluation case study questions

Explore influencing factors

What?
What was done?
What were the results?
Who was involved?
Where and when did it happen?

Integrated Understanding of Case

How?
How people made decisions?
How actions were taken?
Steps taken to get things done?

31

Well defined evaluation case study questions

Are flexible

- Be ready to adjust your questions

- Be open to changing your methods

- Plan for possible timeline changes

- Let the most important findings lead

32

33

34

Diverse Data Collection Methods

Data Collection

Case studies use multiple methods to get a full picture of what's happening.
They often use **qualitative** methods, but quantitative data can also help.

Interviews

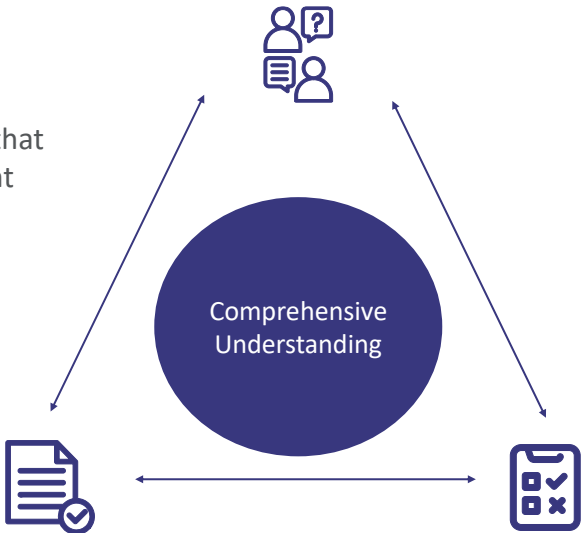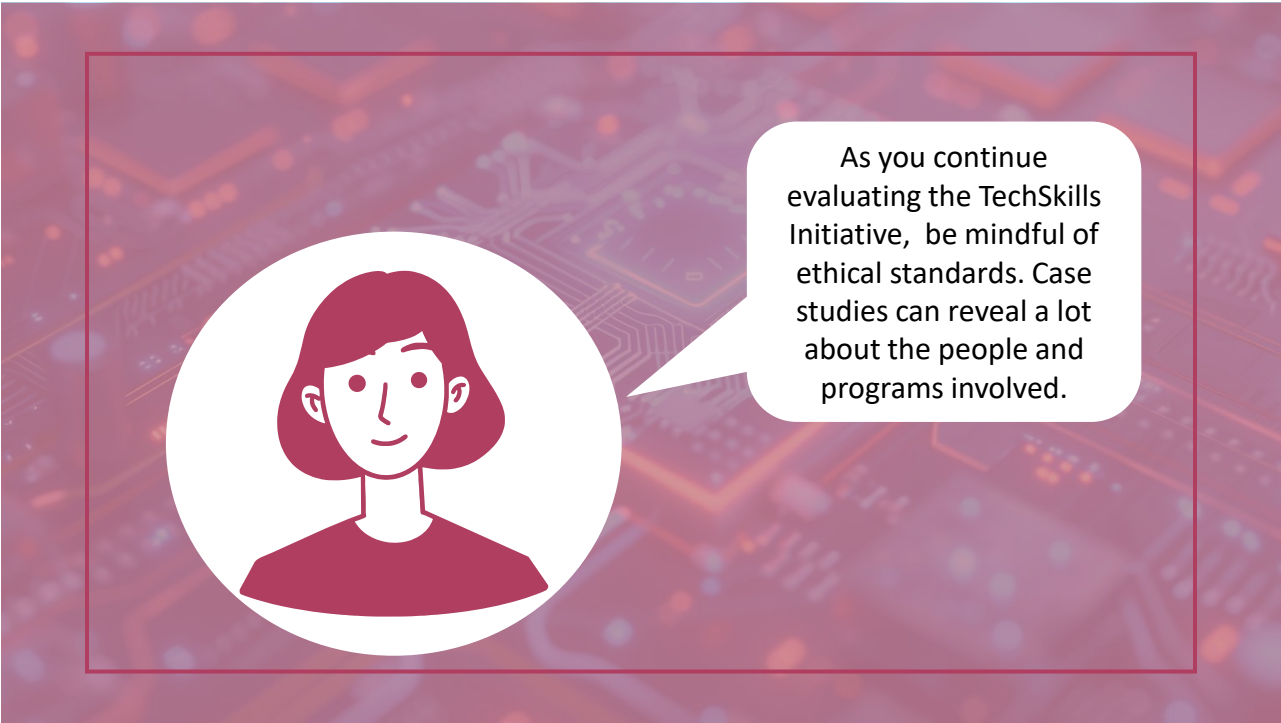Focus Groups

Surveys

Document Review

Observations

35

Diverse Data Collection Methods

Data Analysis - Triangulation

Triangulation is an analysis method that involves collecting data from different sources such as **interviews**, **observations**, and **documents**.

Comprehensive Understanding

36

37

Ethical Standards

Why Ethics Matter in Case Study Evaluations

Case studies provide deep insights—but also require greater ethical responsibility. Evaluators must approach them with ethical care to protect participants and ensure meaningful, trustworthy findings.

- Case studies involve personal, in-depth insights that may **reveal sensitive information**
- Participants may be **easily identifiable**
- **Findings are shaped by evaluator interpretation**—reflexivity is key

38

Ethical Standards

Key Ethical Practices

Informed Consent

Confidentiality & Anonymity

Cultural Sensitivity

Reflexivity

39

We've learned so much! Now it's time to share what we found with the people involved. Case studies help us tell real stories, so it's important to check in with others to make sure our findings feel true before we report them more widely.

40

Case Validation

Purpose of Case Validation

Validation means sharing your findings with participants to get their feedback.

Validation builds **credibility** and strengthens **trust**, critical for impactful case studies.

Accuracy

Representation

Meaningfulness

41

Case Validation

Include the Right Voices in Validation

Focus on those **most affected** and **best positioned to confirm** the findings are accurate and meaningful.

Primary Participants
Project Interestholders
Evaluation Team

42

Case Validation

Next Steps

Steps to Finalize the Validation Process

- Make revisions as needed.

- Document decisions.

- Acknowledge the validation process in the case study report.
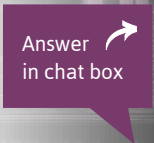
43

Case Studies for Evaluation

CHAT QUESTION

What would be some effective strategies to communicate evaluation findings from the TechSkills case study to students, faculty, industry partners, and funders?

Answer in chat box

44

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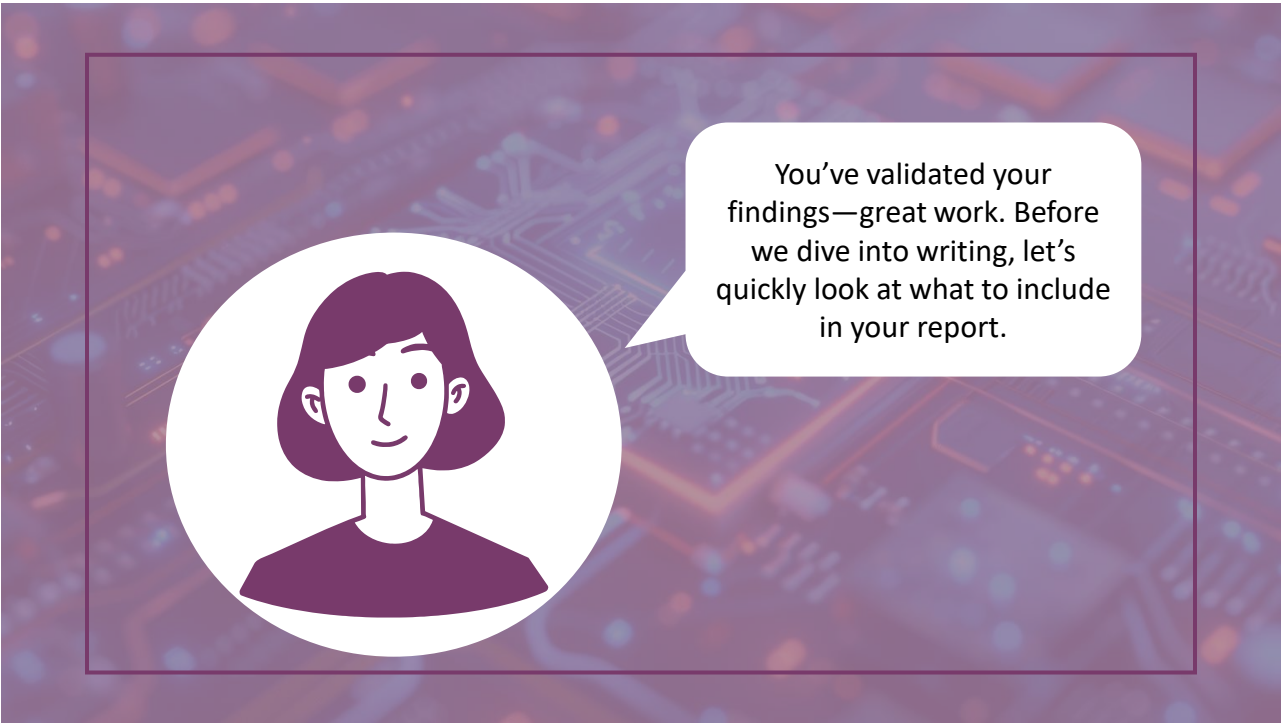
46

Case Study Reporting

Traditional Evaluation Report Structure

Introduction

Methodology

Findings

Conclusion

47

Case Study Reporting

Case Study Report Structure

Introduction

Introduction to the Case

Methodology

Findings

Conclusion

48

Case Study Reporting

Introduction to the Case Report Section

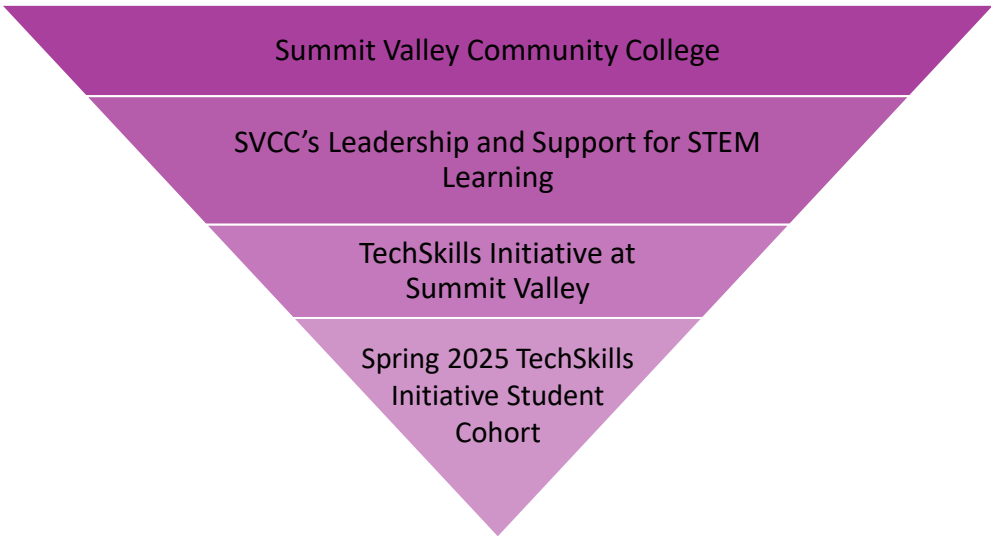- Briefly describe the specific case being studied.

    - Give some background about the field or topic the case is part of.

    - Start broad, then zoom in

49

Case Study Reporting

Introduction to the Case Report Section

Summit Valley Community College

SVCC's Leadership and Support for STEM Learning

TechSkills Initiative at Summit Valley

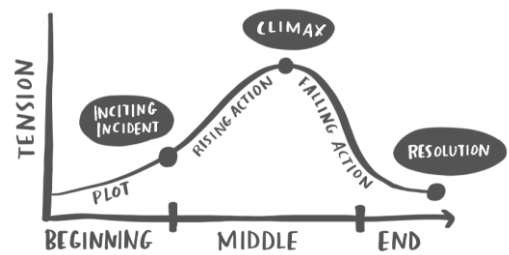Spring 2025 TechSkills Initiative Student Cohort

50

Writing Considerations

Structure with a narrative arc

- Use a clear narrative arc
  - Challenge
  - Action
  - Resolution

51

Writing Considerations

Narrative Point of View

==In our evaluation== of the TechSkills Advanced Manufacturing Initiative, ==we prioritized== a reflective, equity-centered approach. ==We worked closely with== Summit Valley Community College and its industry partners to understand not just whether the program was effective, but why it was working—or not working—for different groups of students. ==Our goal was== to provide insights that could inform real-time decision-making and foster long-term impact.

52

Writing Considerations

Show, Don't Just Tell

Clear visuals help people understand your findings quickly.

Charts, tables, and graphs make key data easy to see.

Powerful quotes can bring findings to life and highlight what matters most.

53

Writing Considerations

Show, Don't Just Tell

As part of the TechSkills initiative, Dr. Winston drew from his own introductory classes to recruit students, prioritizing those who showed strong interest and potential. His approach emphasized hands-on research opportunities and flexible work hours, making it easier for students to participate alongside their academic responsibilities. While this strategy proved effective in identifying capable students, Dr. Winston noted ongoing efforts to increase diversity and shared persistent challenges in attracting students from underrepresented groups.

Reflecting on his recruitment strategy, Dr. Winston said:

> *I teach juniors, and I can grab the best students, and many times it is completely independent of their ethnicity or their [being] female or male. You know, I hire the best students and that doesn't matter. I mean, I can just talk to them, and they are engaged, but I can find them right there. And I start them their junior year.*

54
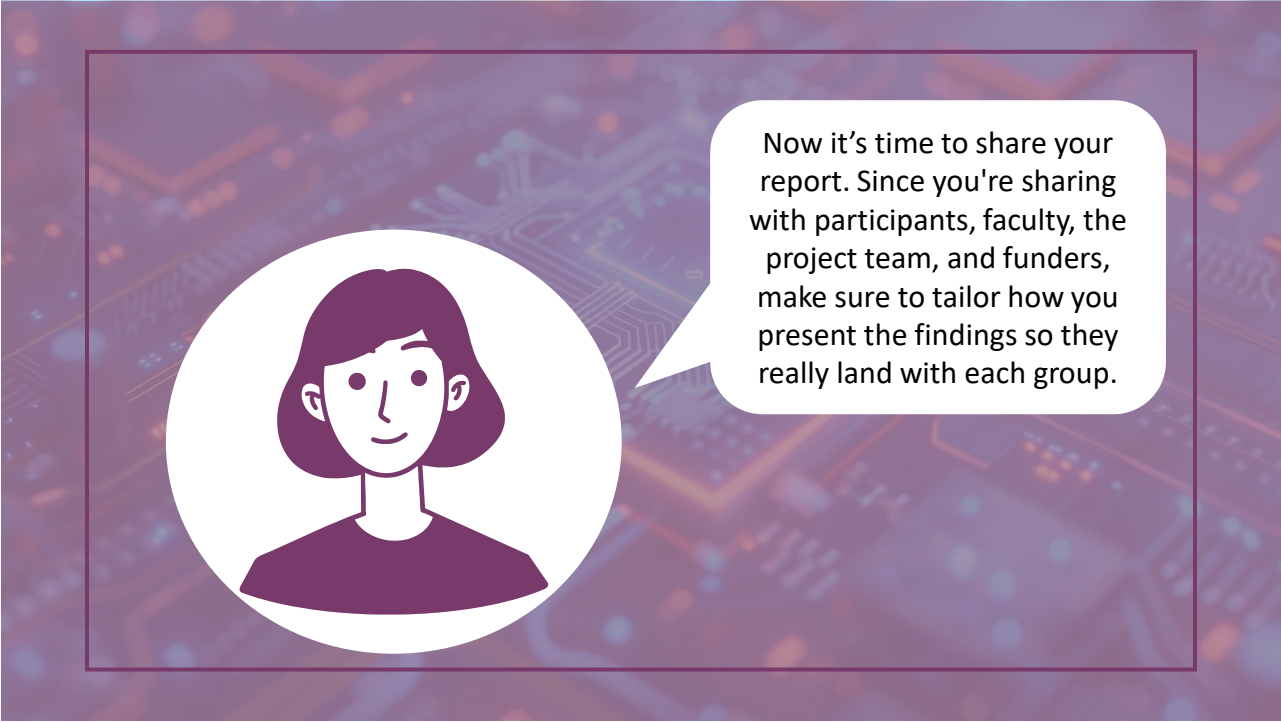
55

Presenting Your Case Study

Key Questions for Presenting Your Case Effectively

When preparing to present your case, it's important to tailor your message to the **needs and perspectives** of your audience.

What are their top priorities or concerns?

What information would be most relevant or beneficial for them to understand?

How are they likely to use this information when making decisions?

56

Presenting Your Case Study

Key Questions for Presenting Your Case Effectively

| Key Questions	Student- Focused Response
What are their top priorities or concerns?	• **Gaining practical, job-ready skills** • **Completing the program on time** • **Balancing school, work, and family commitments** • Keeping costs (tuition, tools, travel) manageable • Finding stable, good-paying employment
What information would be most relevant or beneficial for them to understand?	• **How hands-on training connects to real-world jobs** • **Support services available to help them succeed** • Which skills employers in the region are looking for • Career pathways and certifications tied to the program
How are they likely to use this information when making decisions?	• **To decide whether to stay in or complete the program** • **To choose a career path or specialization** • **To access tutoring, advising, or other supports** • To seek out internships or job opportunities • To build confidence in their ability to succeed post-graduation

57

Presenting Your Case

Presentation Methods

58

Presenting Your Case
Presentation Methods
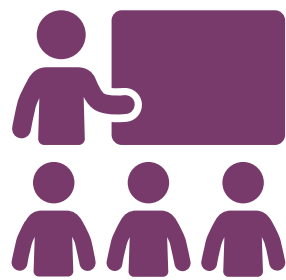
Presentation parties are informal events where you bring participants together to connect while sharing key findings from the case study.

They provide space for **conversations about the results** without requiring everyone to read the full report in advance.

This format works especially well for participants, like students, who may:
- Prefer interactive and social ways to learn
- Feel more comfortable asking questions or sharing feedback in a **casual setting**
- Be short on time or **less likely to read** a written report

59

Presenting Your Case
Presentation Methods

Project events or summits bring together key interest holders—such as participants, leaders, faculty, and funders—to share updates and insights.

These are typically **formal or semi-formal** gatherings with presentations, panels, or group discussions.

They're ideal for sharing findings with **those not directly involved in the case study**, such as funders and senior leaders, because:
- Offer a high-level view of project progress and impact
- Support strategic discussion and planning
- Fit within existing events for convenient participation
- Report available as a reference, but not required reading

60

Presenting Your Case

Presentation Methods

Case study debriefs are small, invite-only gatherings designed for deeper discussion and reflection on case study findings.

These sessions typically include 4–8 participants, such as faculty, program staff, or institutional leaders involved in the case.

- Discussion-based, not presentation-focused; participants are expected to read the case study in advance
- Designed for informed dialogue on key findings, implications, and next steps
- Best suited for those closely involved in the case study, such as faculty and project staff
- Multiple sessions may be held, often organized by theme to focus the conversation

61

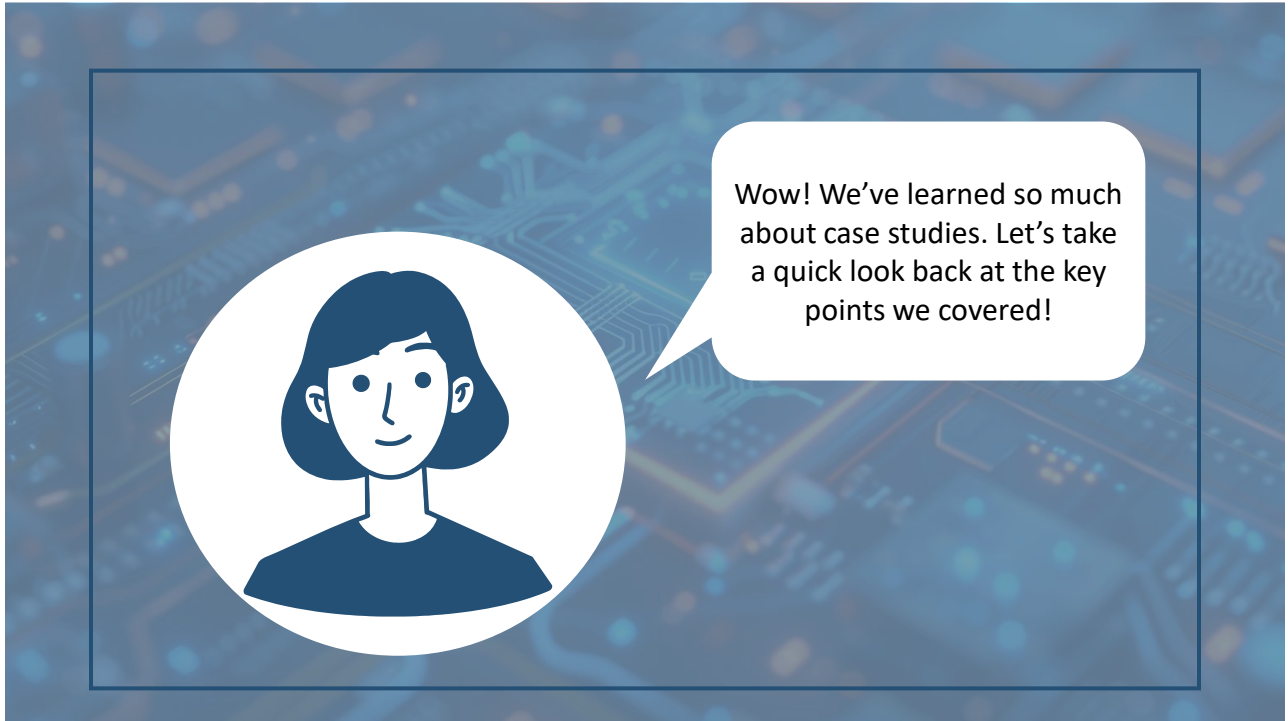# Presenting Your Case

Presentation Methods

Email is a simple, direct way to share key findings with a broad audience.

Ideal for **anyone involved in the project**, especially those you **don't need direct feedback from**

Works well for **summary-level updates** with a link to the full report

Allows recipients to **engage on their own time**

62

63

What Makes a Case Study Effective?

- Strategic selection of cases that align with your evaluation goals

- Well-defined case study evaluation questions

- Diverse data collection methods that capture multiple perspectives

- Careful consideration to ethical standards

- Compelling reporting that balances narrative with clear evidence

64

Ideas to Enhance Your Evaluation Practice

Consider where case studies might illuminate complex challenges in your current evaluation work

Look for opportunities to amplify participant voices through storytelling

Use easy-to-understand visuals to help explain your main points clearly.

Build time for reflection and discussion when sharing case study results

65

Questions?
Ask in the chat box

EvaluATE

66

FEEDBACK SURVEY

HOW DID WE DO?

67