An education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don't.

Anatole France

THE NATURE OF CASE STUDY RESEARCH

PUB 3115

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YOUR PRESENTATION

FOUR THINGS TO NOTE

- **Policy vs. Administration**
- **Focus on a i) program, ii) program/policy area, or iii) pattern**
- **Policy instrument to be analyzed**
- **Stage in the policy process to be analyzed**

Difference between public policy and public administration

Public policy: evaluate a problem, analyze and interpret data, proposal actions and get approval from politicians

Public administration is the implementation of government policy

Public administration: manage people, projects and money

Three ways to study policy:

1) **Programs** (such as public health care) – assumes that the researcher accepts the categories/definitions of policy makers
2) **Particular areas** – environmental, cultural, transportation, trade, labour market, etc.
3) **Patterns** – broad developments (such as privatization), more abstract

Policy Instruments

1. Symbolic Response – "Yes, people should save!"
2. Exhortation/Education – persuasion, etc.
3. Tax Expenditures – use of tax credits, etc.
4. Public Expenditures – creating programs
5. Regulation – passing laws or rules

Policy Instruments

5. Public Expenditures – creating programs such as Old Age Retirement Pension (use money collected from taxes and redistribute)
6. Regulation – passing laws that require (force) people to save (National Pension Scheme)

Policy-Making Process

1) Initiation – there's a problem…
2) Priority-Setting – what are the options?
3) Policy Formulation – designing the solution
4) Legitimation – formal approval by politicians
5) Implementation – putting into place
6) Interpretation – court cases and rulings
7) Evaluation – is the problem better? Is the policy effective?

Common Grammatical Errors

1. "**It** was good last night" - Avoid vague pronoun references!

2. **it's** = it is; it has (It's a hot day)
   its = the possessive form (The cat caught its tail)

3. **compliment** = to say something nice (He paid me a compliment)
   complement = to fit together (Her work complements my work)

4. **principle** (noun) = a rule (A principle of the legal system is that ...)
principal (adj.) = most important (The principal character in the play is the mother)
principal (noun) = a person in a position of leadership (The principal is the head of the school)

5. **effect** and **affect**

6. At least two sentences are needed for a paragraph. You cannot have one sentence alone.

7. Avoid spellign errors.

Writing and grammar problems

1. Passive and vague – “It was been written by some…”

2. Unclear – “There are a few problems…”

3. Use of the possessive form– My brother’s sister’s children’s toys. Yikes! Always re-write. Never use apostrophes in your writing for the possessive.

Everything you write from now on (for the rest of you life) has to have:

1. Introduction
2. Outline of how the document will proceed
3. Conclusion

You can determine whether your writing flows by asking the following questions:

- Can I move backwards and forwards logically from any point of view, or from any part of the paper?

- Can I diagram my essay quickly on a blackboard or a piece of paper?

- Can I add greater subtlety or complexity without detracting from the logical flow?

Poor conclusions

• stopping without concluding (“thank god it’s over!”);

• introducing some new idea that hasn't been developed in the main body of the essay (“Oh, by the way…”); or

• being ambivalent or wishy-washy (“I’m confused”).

The 7 interview – and statement of interest – questions. Answer these and you are set!!

1) ***Tell us about yourself?***

***translation*: Here's some rope. Want to hang yourself?**

2) ***Why did you apply?***

***translation*: Show us how you fit with our organization or program.**

3) ***What experience do you have?***

***translation*: You probably can't do it. You don't have the exact qualifications needed.**

4) ***Provide an example of a difficult situation that you were in with people in the past and how you handled it?***

***translation*: Prove that you are not difficult to get along with.**

5) ***Can you explain the gap in your work-school history?***

variations: Why did you take a year out between high school and university? Why did it take you five years to complete a four-year program?

***translation*: Are you a quitter, a failure or a slacker?**

6) ***Tell us about a problem that you solved in life, school or work?***

variation: Have you ever experienced a serious problem in your life? How did you solve it?

***translation*: Prove that you are a problem solver, and explain how you go about solving problems.**

7) ***What is your greatest weakness?***

variation: What personal qualities do you feel you need to work on to be a better person?

***translation*: Tell us what's wrong with you so that we can reject you immediately.**

Case Study Research

- *The essence of a case study… is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result.*

Yin, Robert (1994) *"Ch 1: Designing Case Studies,"* **Case Study Research: Design & Methods**, 2nd edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Case Study: Definitions

- Case study is “the study of the particularity and **complexity** of a **single case**, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (Stake, 1995, p. xi).

- Case study research is the **in-depth** study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the **perspective of the participants** involved in the phenomenon (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005).

- Case study is “a setting or group that the analyst treats as an **integrated social unit** that must be studied **holistically** and in its particularity” (Schutt, 2006, p. 293).

Case Studies Design

- Good case study design is vital
- Robert K. Yin suggests five components of good case study design:
  1. The research question
  2. The assumptions
  3. The unit(s) of analysis
  4. The logic linking the data
  5. The criteria for interpreting the findings

What makes a strong case study?

- The case study must be ‘interesting’
- The case study must display sufficient evidence
- The case study must be ‘complete’
- The case study must consider alternative perspectives
- The case study should be written in an engaging manner
- The case study should contribute to knowledge

Sources of data and principles to collect data

- Six sources of evidence
  - Data collection methods

- Three principles for collecting data

Collecting data

- Six primary sources of evidence:
  - Documents
  - Archival records
  - Interviews
  - Direct observations
  - Participant-observation
  - Physical artifacts
- Additional sources exists

Collecting data from documents

- What to think of
  - Plan the collection of data from documents
    - Different types include letters, memos, email, blogs, videos, academic books and journals
    - Agendas, minutes of meetings
    - Reports, evaluations or studies
  - Make sure you have access to documents
  - Finding documents and investigation takes time
- Why use documents
  - Correctness, corroborate, inference, build on others

Collecting data from archives

- What to think of
  - Plan the collection of data from archival records
    - Personal records
    - Service records, customer complaint database
    - Survey data
  - Make sure you have access to databases etc.
  - Retrieval and investigation takes time
- Why use archival records
  - Can contain quantitative data for the case

Case studies

- Definition
  - A comprehensive, in-depth investigation of a situation, a sequence of activities, or a procedure within its natural setting
- Purpose
  - To understand a situation, a sequence of activities, or a procedure to learn what happened, how it happened, and why it happened

Research Approaches and Field Work Methods

- **What makes an exemplary case study?**
  - Significance of the case study
    - A single case can have significance
  - "Completeness"
    - Well defined boundaries of the case
    - Critical evidence has been given "complete" attention
  - Consideration of alternative perspectives
    - Perspectives of all major actors
  - Sufficient evidence presented in case study analysis
    - Reader can reach an independent judgment of its merits
  - Engaging write-up
    - Enthusiasm for meaning of findings & results

Different research purposes

1. To test theory: To explain the causality between different observations or the reasons behind a certain situation concerning the phenomenon
2. To generate theory: To explore a vague problem or a new area of research
3. To provide description: To describe, i.e., observe and visualize the situation of certain phenomena

What is the unit of analysis?

- Research *object* – or *unit* in the real world context that you will observe
  - An individual
  - A role
  - A group
  - A process
  - An organizational entity, eg subsidiary, virtual team
  - An organization
  - A geographic region
  - Or any other definable and observable unit

Collecting data

- Six primary sources of evidence:
  - Documents
  - Archival records
  - **Interviews**
  - Direct observations
  - Participant-observation
  - Physical artifacts
- Additional sources exists

Collecting data through interviews

- What to think of
  - Maintain a friendly and non-threatening climate
    - Ask “how” questions rather than “why”
  - Different types of interviews
    - Open-ended
    - Focused interview
    - Structured questions (compare with surveys)
- Why use interviews
  - Captures data not recorded on paper and otherwise

Collecting data through direct observations

- What to observe
  - Meetings, Factory work, Classrooms, Conditions of buildings, Work space, How people dress, etc.
- What to think of
  - Decide on level of formality
    - Observational protocols
    - Direct observations taking notes
    - Less formal observations
- Why use direct observations
  - Useful in providing additional information and understanding of the case

Collecting data through direct observations

- Beware of
  - Capturing events with cameras etc may require written permission
  - Single observers may miss important events

Collecting data through participant-observations

- What to think of
  - Decide on what roles to assume (special mode of direct observations)
- Why use participant-observation
  - Gives access to events and data otherwise inaccessible
  - Reality is perceived from within
  - Gives the observer ability to manipulate minor events

Collecting data from physical artifacts

- Examples
  - Technological devices, Tools or instruments, Works of art
- What to think of
  - Collected or observed as part of an (direct/participant/historical) observation
  - Plan the collection of data from physical artifacts
    - What is really usefull?
- Why use physical artifacts
  - May include data not found in other ways

Conducting Case Studies: Collecting the evidence

Three Principles of Data Collection

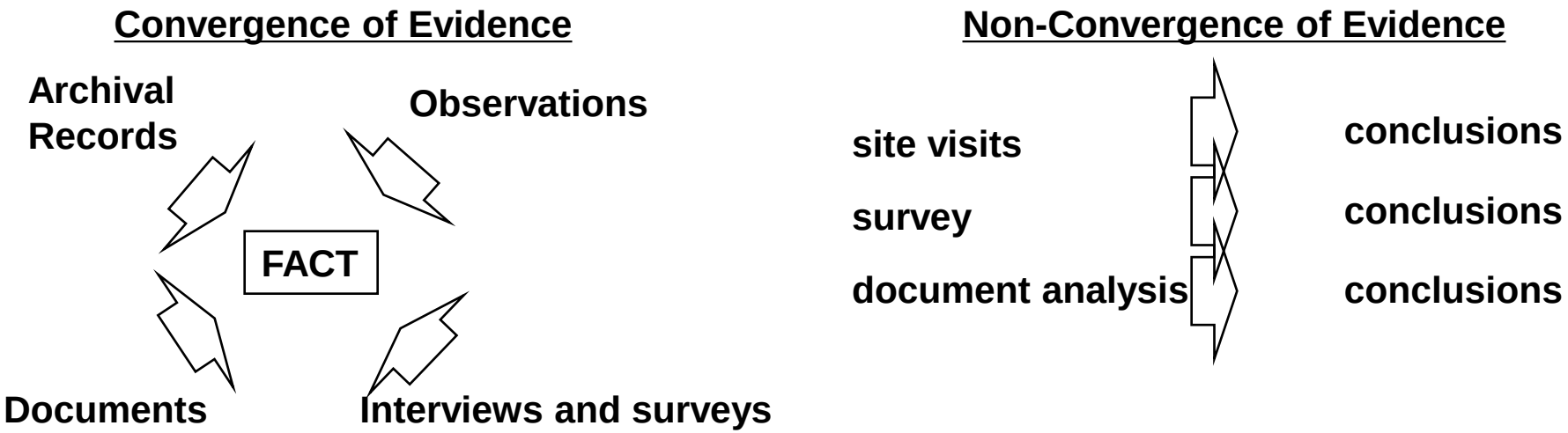
Principle 1: Use Multiple Sources of Evidence

- Single source only provides data on ***one*** specific source
  - Generally applicable results are hard to derive
  - Trustworthiness
  - Accuracy
  - ***NOT*** recommended for case studies
- Weaknesses of data sources in case studies
  - Bias
  - Correctness

Principle 1: Use Multiple Sources of Evidence cont'd

- Triangulation: Rationale for using multiple sources of evidence
  - Triangulate data from multiple sources
  - Develop *converging lines of inquiry*
  - Findings/conclusions are likely to be more *convincing* and *accurate*
  - Possible to address broader array of issues
  - Case studies using multiple sources often are considered to have higher overall quality

Principle 1: Use Multiple Sources of Evidence cont'd 2



- Prerequisities for using multiple sources
  - More time-consuming

Principle 2: Create a Case Study Database

Why create case study database?

- Weakness in many case studies:
  - No separation between *collected evidence* and *final report*
  - Readers of the report have no way of finding out basis for conclusions
  - Not using a database is a major drawback...

- Using a database
  - Increases *reliability* of the entire case study

Principle 2: Create a Case Study Database cont'd

- Contents of database
  - Case study notes
    - Notes from e.g. interviews, observations, document analysis
    - Handwritten, typed, computer files, audiotapes Case study documents
    - Can require large physical space (for printed material)
    - Beneficial to have an annotated bibliography
  - Tabular materials
    - Surveys and other quantative data
  - Narratives
    - E.g. open-ended answers to questions in the case study protocol

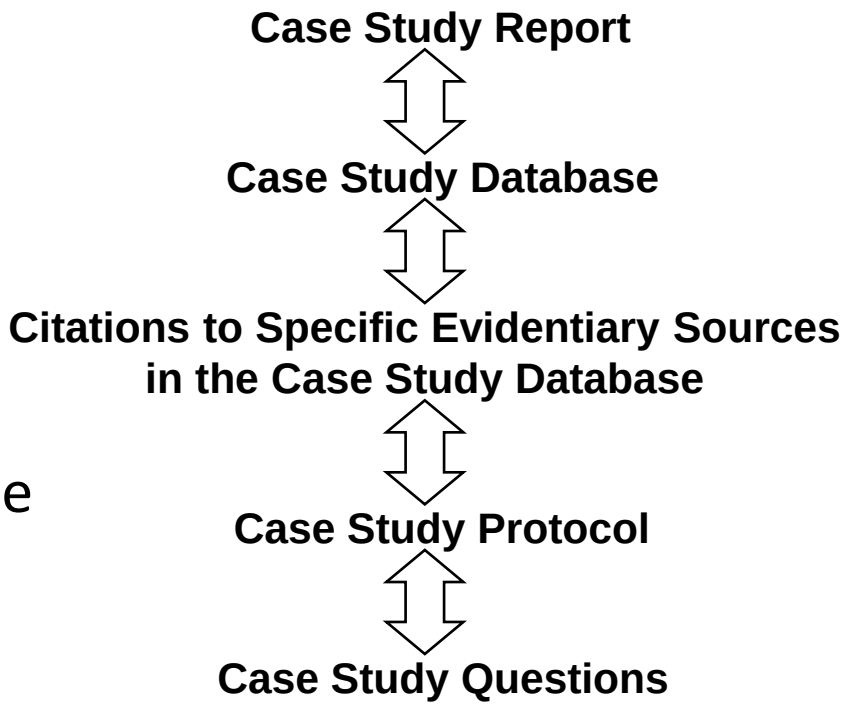
Principle 3: Maintain a Chain of Evidence

Why maintain chain of evidence?

- To increase *reliability* of the information in the case study
- To allow an *external observer* to follow the *derivation* of any evidence
- To trace the steps in either direction
- Prove that
  - Case study report contains the same evidence as was collected
  - No evidence have been lost via bias

- Case study report should hold in ”court”!!

Principle 3: Maintain a Chain of Evidence cont'd



- Case study report should cite case study database
- Database should reveal how and when evidence was collected and surrounding circumstances
- Case study protocol should be linked to initial case study questions

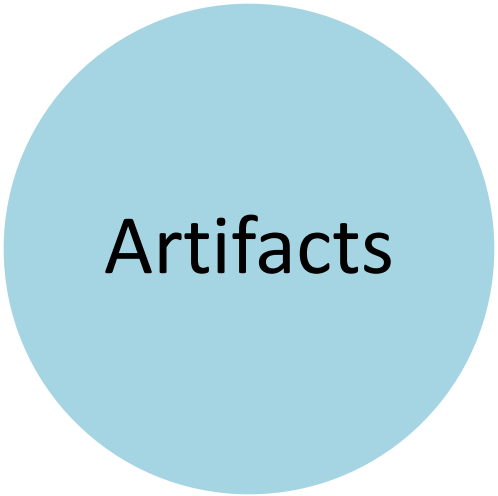
EXAMPLE

CASE STUDY OF A UNIVERSITY COURSE

Student Ratings

COURSE EVALUATION
INTERVIEWS FO STUDENTS

CASE STUDY OF A UNIVERSITY COURSE

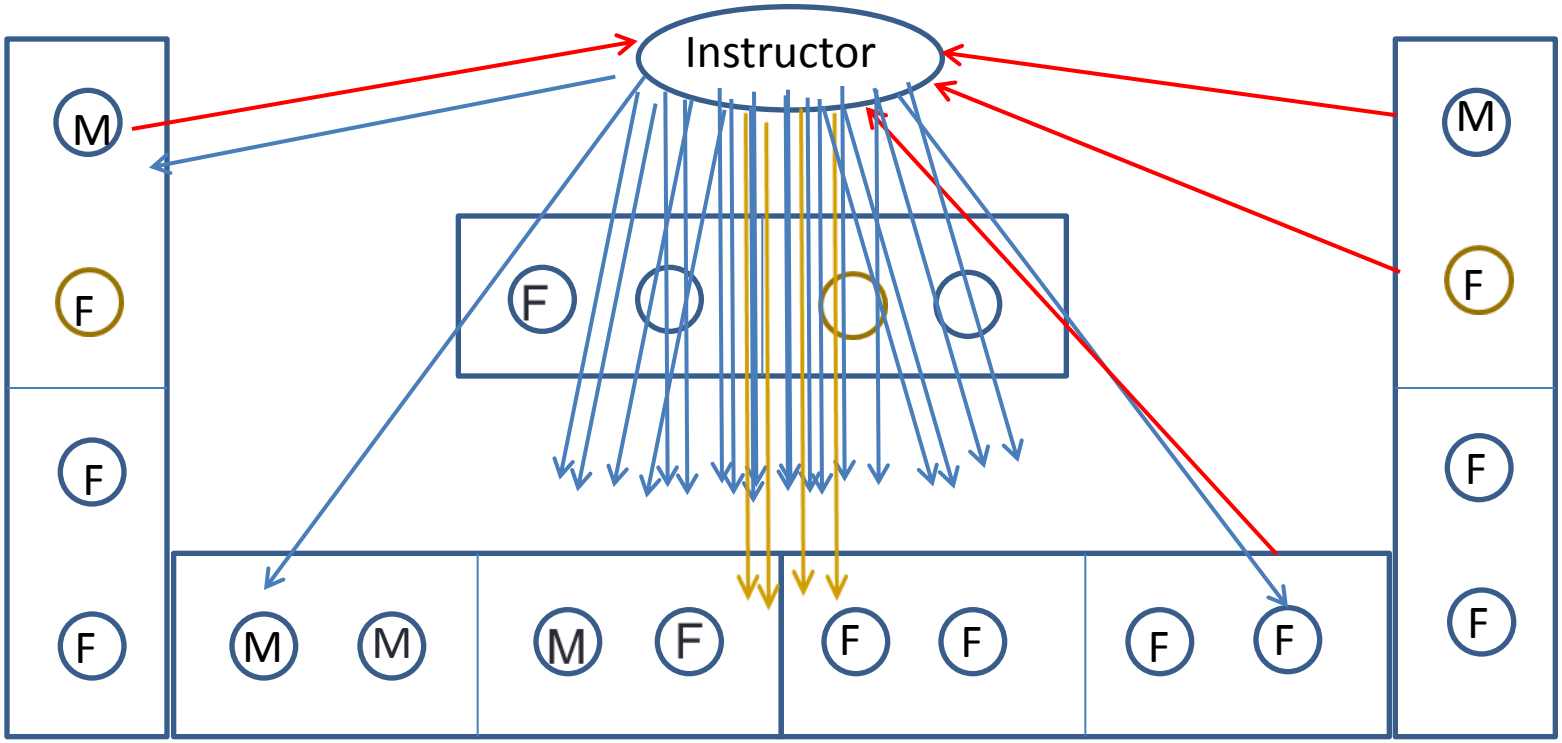


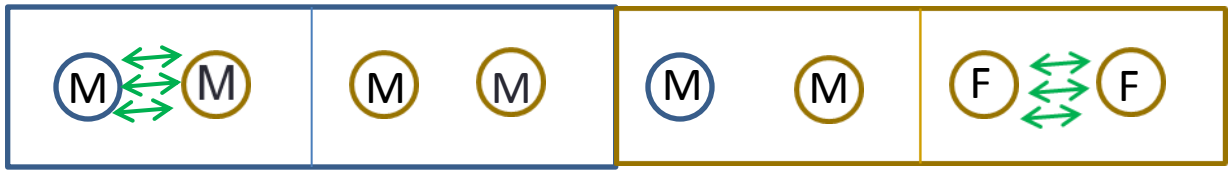
- Syllabi
- Assignments and project descriptions
- Samples of student work
- Assignment and test results

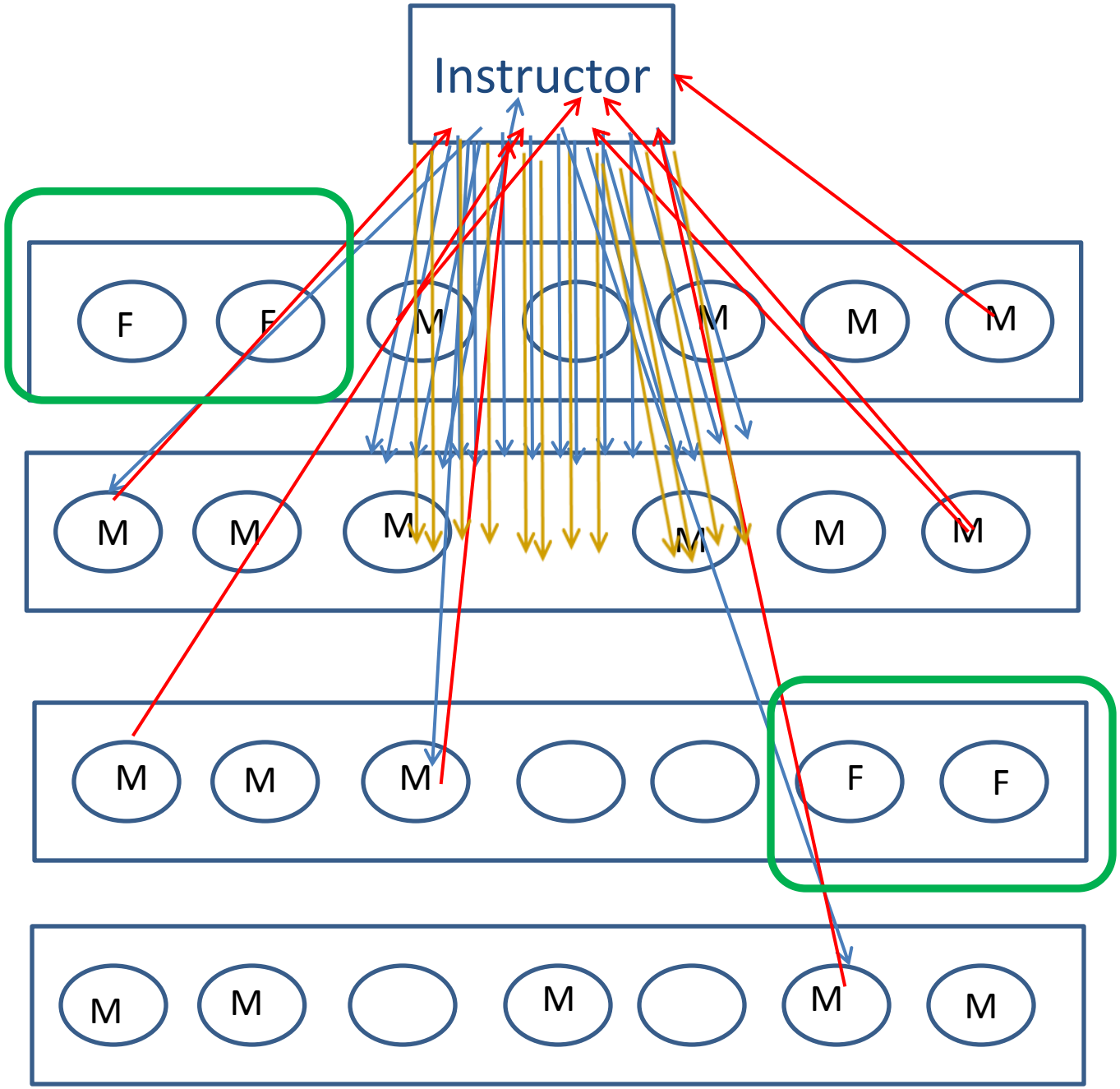
CASE STUDY OF A UNIVERSITY COURSE

- Alumni Surveys
- Classroom Observation
- RatemyProfessor.com

Flow of Communication Map



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FACTORS FOR JUDGING A GOOD CASE RESEARCH

- What is new?
- So what?
- Why so?
- Done well?
- Why now?
- Who cares?

Roadmap for Case Research

- Question
- Case selection
- Literature review
- Research question
- Data collection
- Data organization
- Data analysis
- Conclusion