

## **CASE STUDY METHOD IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

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Many students learn better from examples than from logical development starting with basic principles. The use of case studies can therefore be a very effective classroom technique. The case study method is an active learning method, which requires participation and involvement from students in the classroom. The method of case-study provides students with an excellent opportunity to apply creatively the language material on the basis of their professional knowledge and allow them to adapt themselves to the real-life situations.

The case method combines two elements: the case itself and the discussion of that case. Cases provide a rich contextual way to introduce new material and create opportunities for students to apply the material they have just learned. Effective cases are usually based on real events, but can be drawn from both the present and the past. A decision-maker faced with the situation described in a case can choose between several alternative courses of his action, and each of these alternatives may be supported by a logical argument. During the classroom discussion students carry out analytical work of explaining the relationships among events in the case, identify options, evaluate choices and predict the effects of actions.

Cases could be different in volume and content. It depends on the aims of teaching foreign languages, the level of students, as well the type of required help in the process of making the decision. Therefore, cases relatively can be divided into following types:

1. Scientific research, which is oriented at accomplishing research activity;
2. Practical, which reflects real life situations;
3. Educational, the task of which is organizing educational process.

Scientific research case study acts as a model for getting advanced knowledge of a situation and action in it. Its educational function comes down to scientific research teaching skills by the help of modeling approach. Practical case study sets up a problem of a detail life situation reflection. Therefore this case creates a practical case model. Educational task of practical case comes down to a training of vocabulary and grammar learned before, practicing and decision making in a particular language situation. Educational case reflects typical language situations, which are appearing in a real life more frequently. Students are more possible to come across with such situations in their professional life. Furthermore, training and educational tasks are placed on the first place.

There are numerous advantages to use cases while teaching foreign languages. Study cases help to develop and raise critical thinking and reflective learning of the learner; develop problem solving skills; improve the student's organizational skills; enhance communication skills; train managerial communication skills; encourage collaborative learning and team-working skills; connect theory and practice; get students to be active, not passive.

The case study method usually involves three stages: individual preparation; small group discussion; large group or class discussion.

Case studies are usually discussed in class, in a large group. However, sometimes, teachers may require individuals or groups of students to provide a written analysis of a case study, or make an oral presentation on the case study in the classroom.

It is extremely important that the case studies are well prepared in advance so that each student knows what his role is. There are many ways of introducing the case study to your students. Here is a list of steps that should be completed during the case study introduction class:

- 1) Read the case study thoroughly with your students. Here you can deal with any lexical or grammatical issues. You may also like to ask your students to represent the background information in a visual form.
- 2) Provide the students with some input on how they should analyze the case study.
- 3) Pre-teach the language required to discuss the case study. There are many publications for teaching meeting skills, presentation skills or negotiation skills. It is important to select the skill you would like to focus

on and teach the specific language.

A classroom case discussion is usually guided by the supervisor. Students are expected to participate in the discussion and present their views. The interaction among students, and between the students and the teacher, must take place in a constructive and positive manner. Such interactions help to improve the analytical, communication, and interpersonal skills of the students.

To sum up the above information we can state that the power of the case method lies in the active participation of the students. In case learning, students encounter the problem before they create the structure to solve it. The method is basically inductive and experiential.

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