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The use of the case-study method as a pedagogical  
Technology in the formation of professional  
competencies of students

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**Abstract.** The article examines the educational potential of the case study technology, which consists in strengthening the practical orientation of students' professional competence, as well as in significantly increasing the productivity of the pedagogical process, which is due to the essential features of cases and their capabilities in the development of professional and universal competencies.

**Key words:** case- study, method, competence, technology, lesson.

As practice shows, the highest quality training of specialists is possible with the integration of theory and practice in the educational process. One of the most effective ways to implement this direction is the use of case-study methods. Given the specifics of the preparation of future graduates, it should be noted that case-study in this case is an important auxiliary element. Nowadays priorities are focused on the practical, applied orientation of education in universities. The purpose of higher professional education is to train specialists who have mastered a set of necessary competencies that are formed throughout the training. Thus, the case study method is being actively introduced into the higher education system. This happens for the following reasons:

- first of all, this is due to the general orientation of the further development of education, now it is more focused on the development of professional competence, the development of personal abilities of the individual, the acquisition of thinking development skills;
- secondly, this is due to the development of new requirements for the characteristics that a modern specialist should possess - professional behavior in all

kinds of life situations, stress resistance, skills in crisis conditions. The case-study method or the method of specific situations is a method of analysis by using problem-situational means, which is based on learning by solving certain tasks-cases [1, p. 14]. The case study method is specific learning situations developed on the basis of factual materials for their subsequent discussion in the classroom. In the process of such discussions, the participants of the process analyze, make decisions as managers and learn to work in a team.

It is possible to highlight the features of the case method:

1. This method is used to solve such problems, the answer to which is diverse; there is no single correct solution.
2. It is the process of finding a solution itself that is put at the head of the table, for cooperation and joint work of the teacher and students, that is, the process of developing a solution is important, not the result.
3. An important result is the acquired professional skills.
4. How the case-study process takes place: the development of a model of a specific life situation that reflects the package of skills, abilities and knowledge that students should master. The teacher is assigned the role of a moderator who generates questions and records answers, as well as supports the discussion.
5. This method is extremely emotional and lively. This is not a dry theory, where the role of students is expressed only in listening, where they do not take an active part and are only passive participants in the process. Case-study is practically a theatrical performance in which everyone participates, and everyone has a role to play. This is a technique closely related to the manifestation of emotions, struggle and creativity. Thus, we see that the case-study methodology is extremely useful in modern education, because it develops such important qualities as independent thinking, the ability to express one's point of view, reasonableness and deliberation of one's speech, the ability to listen to others. This is not a bare theory, but a practical application of theoretical knowledge to solve a problem. Signs of the case-study method: collective principle of work; pluralism of decisions; at the same time, the goal remains the same; group evaluation of activities; there should be emotional tension among the participants of the discussion, regulated by the teacher as necessary. There are many reasons why cases can be divided into groups. For example, in terms of complexity, cases can be [2, p. 20]:

- illustrated learning situations. The purpose of this kind of case studies is to teach case participants algorithms for making a decision in a specific life situation;
- training situations with the designation of a specific problem, where it is

described in detail. The purpose of this case is to develop the skill to independently diagnose the situation and make a decision regarding this problem;

- training situations without the designation of a specific problem and the situation described here is more complicated than in the previous case. There is no clearly formulated problem here, there is only a set of statistical data, it is possible to review the opinions of various groups of the population. The goal here is to teach students to identify the problem independently by analyzing the data provided; Special attention should be paid to another classification, the authors of which are N. Fedyanin and V. Davidenko, based on foreign experience. Their classification is as follows [3, p.46]:

- a highly structured case is a case with a minimum amount of additional information, the student here must use a certain model or formula. Such problems have the most optimal solution;

- “short vignettes” are cases consisting of 1-10 pages of text, a couple of pages of applications that contain only reference materials for the task, but the student must rely on his own knowledge when searching for a solution;

- long unstructured cases, the volume of which can reach up to 50 pages - this type of case is considered the most difficult, because a huge array of information is provided, among which the student must weed out the husk and select only the necessary data, which may not be present in such texts at all. The form of presentation of cases can be absolutely any: starting from simple paper texts, ending with cases on electronic media. Additional visual sets should be included, such as: diagrams, diagrams and tables. It will be more visual and will arouse increased interest from students. There are certain requirements for the format and structure of the case:

a) it is necessary to describe a situation that should be plausible;

b) if any company is present in the situation, then the name of the company represented, the name of the product, the description of the product is necessary;

c) it is necessary to examine the company from the inside and outside, its strengths and weaknesses, find out who are the partners and dealers, what is the development strategy, who are the management structures, what is the financial situation of the company, evaluate the company's team, its interaction;

d) the names and positions of the main characters should appear.

During the case study, many tasks are solved:

1) problematic structuring;

- 2) identification of the characteristic features of the structure of this situation, its main and secondary functions, consideration of the issue of its contact with the surrounding reality;
- 3) the cause-and-effect relationship during which this situation arose, and what it can lead to;
- 4) analysis of the content element in the activity, building a model and proposing an optimization method; development of an assessment plan for the current situation and all its components;
- 5) forecasting the future;
- 6) development of recommended behavior of all actors;
- 7) a developed program for activities in a specific situation.

The most common areas of application of this method of teaching are economic sciences and various business sciences abroad. For the first time, the solution of cases was designated precisely as a method of teaching at the law school at Harvard University in 1870; and at the Harvard Business School, this method began to be introduced in 1920. The publication of the first case lists was carried out in 1925 in the Harvard University Business Review [4].

At the moment, two classical schools of case study are recognized - the Harvard School (American) and the Manchester School (European). According to the first school, there is only one single correct solution, and according to the assumptions of the second, the emphasis is on the presence of several solutions to the problem. The volume of American cases is 20-25 pages of text, plus 8-10 pages are highlighted in the illustration, and the volume of European cases is 1.5–2 times shorter [5]. The teacher summarizes the discussion process and the work of all the teams, announces the true development of events, sums up the results. In the classroom, presentation is used as a great springboard for the formation and improvement of important professional qualities of a modern specialist, such as: stress tolerance, the ability to present oneself, public speaking skills, the ability to defend one's point of view, purposefulness, the ability to work in a team. Of course, an important aspect is the assessment formed by the teacher. As in other cases, the most important and necessary requirements for evaluation should be such as objectivity, reasonableness of assessments, consistency, optimality. The teacher is also recommended to take a direct part in the discussion and presentation. In the pedagogical sense, the methodology of case-study is a more extensive, more creative, and more professional methodology in comparison with traditional methods of teaching. The necessary emotionality is required from the teacher during the learning process. Given the presence of discussions, possible disputes and confrontations, the teacher should first of all be a good psychologist,

so that the listed phenomena do not develop into a domestic scene, but are a means of revealing the truth and training positive personality traits. The teacher needs to create an environment that ensures the observance of the personal rights of students, and mutual cooperation.

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