EFFECTIVENESS OF CASE STUDY IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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Abstract: The use of case study in teaching foreign languages is one of the most effective ways to develop students' speaking skills. Case study involves the development of students' logical thinking as well as language skills. At the same time, it boosts students' data analyzing skills and stimulates critical thinking.

Keywords: case study, speaking skills, foreign language teaching, methods, students' communication skills, critical thinking

The use of case study in teaching foreign languages is one of the most effective ways to develop students' speaking skills. Case study involves the development of students' logical thinking as well as language skills. Students automatically begin to improve their language skills while solving a problem in a case study. They update their vocabularies in order to express their ideas and try to form sentences correctly.

Michelle Schwarz stresses that the method refines students' communication and critical skills in the process of applying theoretical knowledge and searching for solutions, fostering students' information literacy and increasing their collaboration and team work [1]. Information literacy is one of most current issues in education of XXI century. Therefore, teachers with the help of this method can develop not only students' language skills, but also their communication skills, team-working skills and critical thinking.

Teaching students how to apply theory in practice has always been the most difficult pedagogical process and it is that teachers face challenges a lot in the process of resolving this problem. Maryann Piotrowski considers that, due to their decisional rather than expository nature, cases combine theory and practice and are effective in sharpening the students' "ability to differentiate facts from opinions, relevant data from irrelevant, and trivial information from that which is vital to decision making"[2]. At the same time, it boosts students' data analyzing skills and stimulates critical thinking. For instance, if the students are given a problem for the case study, at first, they exchange the ideas with each other, secondly, they collect the data which are related to the topic and next they analyze the data by dividing them into relevant and irrelevant.

Uber Grosse points out that the case study has a number of advantages, such as creating opportunities for students to read, speak, listen and write. In addition, increased learner participation, which is specific to the case method, has been found to have positive effects on learners' motivation and attitudes toward language study[3]. For example, if the teacher choose the topic due to the interest of the audience and encourages students on the topic, students' motivation will enhance for the lesson dramatically. Children love interactive games and they show their energy and social skills in creative games and activities. Thus, if the teacher is able to organize the lesson properly and focus the individual interests and abilities of pupils on the unique goal, they may achieve great successes in the teaching process.[4]

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