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The role of case study in teaching english to journalists

The case study method has been widely used in education a learning vehicle with specific educational objectives in mind. It has been highly popular in many disciplines such as journalism, economics, law cases, psychiatry and engineering, where the skills of unstructured and complex problem solving are involved. Case studies provide students with the opportunity of reading, understanding and discussing a specific problem area. Students are expected to propose logical solutions to the problem presented. Each case is written to leave the student at a decision point with the manager in the case confronted. It will usually describe how the current position developed and what problems key personalities in the case are currently facing. Tables of data, diagrams and photographs may be added to help provide a more complete picture.

Key words: case study, decision, choice, solving, situation, effective.

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Журналистерді ағылшын тілінде оқытудағы case study тәсілінің рөлі

Мақалада заманауи әдістердің бірі кейс әдісі, яғни белгілі бір мәселені оңтайлы шешу мәселелері сөз болады. Кейс – әдісі арқылы журналист мамандығын таңдаған студенттерді білім алуға, оқуға қызықтыра отырып болашақ маман ретінде тұлғаның дамуын қалыптастыруға болады. Кейс әдісі – нарықтық экономикада және әлеуметтік жағдайларды суреттеу арқылы, оқу барысында қолданылатын оқыту техникасы. Жағдай (кейс) деп – ұжымдағы, қоғамдағы қандай да бір нақты шынайы жағдайдың жазбаша берілуін айтамыз. Мысалы, ағылшын тілінде сұхбат беру, кәсіпорынның құрылуы, оның дамуы, бизнестегі табыстары мен қиыншылықтары, т.б. Білім алушылар ұсынылған жағдайды талдап, мәселенің маңызын түсіндіріп, шешу жолдарын көрсетуді және олардың ішінен ең тиімдісін таңдап алулары тиіс.

Түйін сөздер: кейс әдісі, шешім, таңдау, шешу, жағдай, нәтижелер.

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Роль «case study» в обучении журналистов английскому языку

В статье рассматривается применение кейс-метода, который направлен на расширение познавательных и творческих способностей студентов, а также дает возможность развивать командный дух, навыки командной работы, что является в современном мире одним из важнейших требований к достижению успеха. Обучение с помощью кейсов помогает студентам, будущим журналистам приобрести широкий набор разнообразных навыков. Задачи имеют одно решение и один путь, приводящий к этому решению. Кейсы имеют много решений и множество альтернативных путей, приводящих к ним.

Ключевые слова: кейс-метод, решение, ситуация, эффективный.

THE ROLE OF CASE STUDY IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO JOURNALISTS

What is a Case Study? It is now documented that students can learn more effectively when actively involved in the learning process. The case study approach is one way in which such active learning strategies can be implemented in our institutions. Case studies are defined as student centered activities based on topics that demonstrate theoretical concepts in an applied setting. This definition of a case study covers the variety of different teaching structures we use, ranging from short individual case studies to longer group based activities.

Cobuild [1] defines «Case study» which is spelled with or without a hyphen, as an account that gives detailed information about a person, group or thing and their development over a period of time.

What do teachers do if they have advanced language learners, who may have certain grammatical, lexical or pronunciation problems but for the most part are at ease in their L2. This is a problem we face constantly in our language classroom and we found that case studies provide the answer to the above dilemma. The case study method has been used in many fields in third level education and also lends itself nicely to language learning [2]. The next question may be where to find suitable case studies which are not too content-led and do not presuppose an in-depth knowledge of a specific subject matter. As the main aim of the language teacher is not to teach content but rather improve the student's communicative competence and oral proficiency in the L2, case studies written by language teachers and adapted to the language classroom are more appropriate than case studies written by business lecturers. There are various publications on the market which respond to the language teachers' needs. While some books offer simulations with prescribed roles, others integrate mini-cases at the end of each chapter dealing with a specific topic such as international marketing or finance. As far as interactive case studies go, two distinct types of case study can be identified: those that provide the learner with targeted content input to practice a specific skill such as negotiating, interviewing, problem-solving or decision-making and those which are more free to interpretation and call on the teacher to choose the preferred methodology and classroom strategy[3].

Developing a case study based on the research interests of staff. For example, the research area of one of our lecturers is polymeric

foams, he is now responsible for a sports and materials science case study analyzing running shoe performance including the behavior of the polymeric foams in the soles.

Case studies provide students with the opportunity of reading, understanding and discussing a specific problem area. Students are expected to propose logical solutions to the problem presented. Each case is written to leave the student at a decision point with the manager in the case confronted. It will usually describe how the current position developed and what problems key personalities in the case are currently facing. Tables of data, diagrams and photographs may be added to help provide a more complete picture. Appendices are normally used to include large amounts of data that would otherwise clutter the text. Film, video, audiotapes and slide sequences have all been used as vehicles for case descriptions. Students cannot remain passive observers, but are trained to be action-oriented and decisive. The case method has been found as an extremely effective method of accelerating management development [4].

Case studies can focus on an issue with a specific student or an entire classroom. These studies can:

- Help you prepare for and consider issues you have yet to come across in your own teaching.
- Help you see beyond the surface of an issue and consider all sides to the problem.
- Develop your analysis skills and improve your ability to deal with problems as they occur in the classroom.
- Be an ideal complement to textbook instruction.

If your professor isn't already supplementing the theoretical discussions in your readings with practical applications, take some time to seek them out and broaden your understanding. Cases don't necessarily have to include ESL students or classrooms to be of use. A student facing reading difficulties will still bring these issues to an ESL class. What skills are developed through case studies?

Learning to listen to each other, respecting others' views on the same subject, as learning when and how to react and to handle information are some of the basic skills which are developed through case studies. As a result, students develop their analytical skills. They also practice applying concepts, techniques and principles in analysis. They learn how to judge which techniques are appropriate and applicable, to plan communication and to analyze values. In addition, students learn to use creativity in generating alternative solutions to the problems.

The case method cannot be considered as either tutorial or lecture based. Therefore, many students find the method difficult to adapt to. Critical

thinking, creativity, communication skills, as well as attitude, self-analysis, social skills and decision-making skills are all involved.

Easton [5] proposes the following several steps for case analysis:

- Understanding the situation
- Diagnosing problem areas
- Generating alternative solutions
- Predicting outcomes
- Evaluating alternatives
- Rounding out the analysis
- Communicating the results

Students are highly recommended to follow the above steps to be able to cope well with a case study. However, they usually complain about the shortage of time and lack of information, which also applies to a real-life situation and they cannot tolerate ambiguity.

However, the advantages of case studies are numerous. Some of them are set out below:

1. to develop critical thinking and reflective learning in the learner.
2. to improve the student's organisational skills – as case studies are sometimes very dense in information, the key is to condense this information into logical sections and organise them so that a clear picture of the problem/issue can be understood
3. to enhance communication skills – case studies can be used to improve the student's written and oral communication. Non-verbal communication skills are also practised by using case studies
4. to train managerial communication skills such as holding a meeting, negotiating a contract, giving a presentation etc. Case studies force students into real-life situations to require them to get involved in managerial communication.
5. to encourage collaborative learning and team-working skills in the language learner.

Much patience and tolerance is expected from the instructor to manage a case study successfully. However, it is worth every minute of it. Materials selection also plays an important role in achieving this. Tailor-made department-related case study materials design is one of the effective strategies which is used in ELSU. For example, Tourism and Hotel Management students study tourism and hotel management related cases, and Computer Technology and Programming Department students concentrate on cases which concern computer programmers. Students enjoy reading, understanding the issues and offering solutions to the problems discussed as long as these concern their future career. Although it may take a couple of weeks' patience for the instructor, seeing a group of students discussing cases at the desired level

is worth the effort and the time which is put in to achieve the end result.

Case studies from textbooks may be adapted so that the problems mentioned above can be eliminated. Alternatively, teachers may design their own cases. In fact, it soon became clear in our situation that it was simpler to develop our own cases, catering to our own students' particular needs and interests. The difficulty of case studies may also be graded so that cases introduced at the beginning of courses concentrate on developing students' speaking skills. As students become familiar with case studies, more emphasis can be placed on designing materials which concentrate on developing students' critical and analytical thinking skills.

The following steps were drawn up to help teachers design case studies. Below is an example of designing a case for first-year tourism students.

Case study: tourism

1. Find or think of a problem that your students can relate to. Problem: Imagine you are the manager of a ski resort. Today is Wednesday and the snow in your resort is melting. The snow conditions are getting worse by the hour. Your guests are beginning to complain. On Saturday you are expecting a planeload of new guests. What will you do?

2. Mind-map solutions to the problem.

3. What is the optimum solution? Is there an optimum solution?

4. Are there any distracters or limitations to make the case more difficult to solve?

5. What exhibits are required to provide the information needed to solve the case?

6. What information is required in each exhibit?

7. Which concepts and language need to be introduced or discussed before the case analysis begin?

The general topic of skiing could be a class discussion prior to introducing the case. Vocabulary to be revised: resort

After the material has been designed, the following checklist can be applied so as to ensure that the material will be suitable for your students.

Checklist

- Does the problem emulate a real-life situation?
- Is the problem something that students will be able to grasp?
- Are there at least three exhibits?
- Are the exhibits evident or do they need explaining?
- Are the exhibits real?
- Are the exhibits too explicit?
- Will the case provoke enough discussion?
- Are there a number of possible solutions?
- Is the case challenging?

Case study has a great deal of potential in the fields of second language acquisition theory and pedagogy. It allows us to go beyond the isolated and decontextualized issue of what is taught and learned, to questions of how and why languages are taught and learned differently in different interactional contexts and settings. This study was the first to use multiple data sources to investigate the day to day lived experience of primary language teachers in Queensland. Its flexible design over one school semester involved productive refocusing and evolved to include analysis of lesson transcripts and teacher diaries. Cases may raise more questions than they answer sometimes, but this also is a valuable function of research, which should allow for problem setting, as well as problem solving. Larsen-Freeman and Long remind us that the goal of classroom-centred research 'is to describe classroom processes, not to prescribe instructional techniques'. Cases are an ideal medium for doing just that.

Our case studies encourage learning of both course content and key skills, and careful consideration needs to be made as to how to assess different aspects.

As you know we are always on the look out for original materials for use in my classes. We find that my students appreciate real world experiences in the classroom and case studies provide them with real life situations for discussion and evaluation. They are particularly useful for business English classes.

Әдебиеттер

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