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PEDAGOGICAL CASES AS A MEANS OF FORMING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES OF FUTURE TEACHERS

Abstract

Scientists and educators are constantly looking for effective technologies that develop personal and professional competences. One of the popular methods in the world teaching practice is the case study method, aimed at practice-oriented training of specialists and formation of professional competences.

This article examines the effectiveness of the case study method in the formation of professional competences of future teachers. The authors provide information on approaches to the use of case study, the advantages and disadvantages of this method. A research work was organized at the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, which consists of conducting lessons using the case study method for the second year students of the specialty “Foreign language: two foreign languages” in the discipline “Pedagogical psychology”. The lessons received good feedback from the students. With the help of empirical methods, it was revealed that the case study method is effective in training future teachers, by increasing the activity of students in the educational process. As a result of the research work, the authors tested the designed cases, established the interest of students in using the case study method in the classroom, revealed the productivity of this method, as well as the level of formation of professional competences.

Keywords: higher education, future teachers, professional competences, modern teaching technologies, interactive technology, case study.

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ПЕДАГОГИКАЛЫҚ КЕЙСТЕР БОЛАШАҚ МҰҒАЛІМДЕРДЕ КӘСІБИ ҚҰЗЫРЕТТІЛІКТІ ҚАЛЫПТАСТЫРУ ҚҰРАЛЫ РЕТІНДЕ

Аңдатпа

Ғалымдар мен педагогтар үнемі жеке және кәсіби құзыреттілікті дамытатын тиімді оқыту технологияларын іздейді. Шетелдік педагогикалық тәжірибеде кең тараған әдістердің бірі-мамандарды тәжірибеге бағытталған даярлауға және кәсіби құзыреттілікті қалыптастыруға бағытталған кейс-стади әдісі.

Бұл мақалада болашақ мұғалімдердің кәсіби құзыреттілігін қалыптастырудағы кейс-стади әдісінің тиімділігі қарастырылған. Авторлар негізгі кезенді қолдану тәсілдері, бұл әдістің артықшылықтары мен кемшіліктері туралы ақпарат береді. Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университетінде зерттеу жұмысын ұйымдастырды. «Педагогикалық психология» пәні бойынша «Шет тілі: екі шет тілі» мамандығының 2 курс студенттеріне кейс-стади әдісін қолдану арқылы сабақтарды өткізуден тұрады. Сабақтар студенттерден жақсы пікір алды. Эмпирикалық әдістердің көмегімен кейс-стади әдісі болашақ мұғалімдерді дайындауда, оқушылардың оқу үдерісіндегі белсенділігін арттыру арқылы тиімді екендігі анықталды. Зерттеу жұмысының нәтижесінде авторлар әзірленген жағдайларды тексерді, студенттердің кейс-стадиді сабақта қолдануға қызығушылығын анықтады, бұл әдістің өнімділігін, сонымен қатар кәсіби құзыреттіліктердің қалыптасу деңгейін ашты.

Түйін сөздер: жоғары білім, болашақ мұғалімдер, кәсіби құзыреттіліктер, оқытудың заманауи технологиялары, интерактивті технология, кейс-стади.

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ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКИЕ КЕЙСЫ КАК СРЕДСТВО ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНЫХ КОМПЕТЕНЦИЙ БУДУЩИХ ПЕДАГОГОВ

Аннотация

Ученые и работники в сфере образования находятся в постоянном поиске эффективных технологий обучения, развивающих личностные и профессиональные компетенции. Одним из популярных методов в зарубежной педагогической практике является метод кейс-стади, направленный на практико-ориентированную подготовку специалистов и на формирование профессиональных компетенций.

Данная статья рассматривает эффективность применения метода кейс-стади при формировании профессиональных компетенций будущих педагогов. Авторами представлена информация о подходах к применению кейс-стади, преимуществах и недостатках данного метода. В Евразийском национальном университете им. Л.Н. Гумилева была организована исследовательская работа, заключающаяся в проведении занятий с применением метода кейс-стади у студентов 2-го курса специальности «Иностранный язык: два иностранных языка» по дисциплине «Педагогическая психология». Занятия получили хороший отзыв со стороны студентов. С помощью эмпирических методов было выявлено, что метод кейс-стади эффективен при подготовке будущих педагогов, за счет повышения активности студентов в образовательном процессе. В результате проведенной исследовательской работы авторы апробировали разработанные кейсы, установили заинтересованность студентов в применении кейс-стади на занятиях, выявили продуктивность данного метода, а также уровень сформированности профессиональных компетенций.

Ключевые слова: высшее образование, будущие педагоги, профессиональные компетенции, интерактивная технология, кейс-стади.

Introduction. The modern labor market requires the training of specialists with professional competences who are capable of applying theoretical knowledge in practice. In this regard, universities have to implement active practice-oriented teaching methods. At the moment there are a significant number of methods that actively involve students in the educational process by means of problem-based learning and one of them is case study method. It is widely used in foreign practice in economics and management and is considered as the most effective technology for mastering problem-solving skills. However, in Kazakhstan practice it is not used in all disciplines, as the material preparation requires a lot of time.

In this article, we will try to identify the effectiveness of the case study method in the formation of professional competences of future teachers of the educational program “Foreign Language: two foreign languages”, and also test cases we have developed.

First, let's figure out what competences are and what professional competences future English teachers need.

Competences are a dynamic combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities. The formation and development of competences is the goal of the educational program. They are formed in various sections of the course and assessed at its various stages. Competences can be subdivided into competences related to the subject of study (professional) and general competences (independent from the content of the training program) [1].

Professional competences relate to professional activities and are determined in accordance with the requirements of the educational program. It should be noted that there is no single agreed list of competences that a future teacher should have, the set of competences depends on the order of society.

Let's consider some professional competences that a future English teacher should have on the example of the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, specialty “6B01719- Foreign language: two foreign languages” [2].

Universal competences: the ability to use modern communication tools and technologies; the ability to evaluate various situations on the basis of a holistic systemic scientific worldview.

General professional competences: the ability to carry out all types of professional activities in the field of education: to use foreign and domestic methods and concepts of teaching foreign languages; own the psychological and pedagogical foundations of behavior and personality development; solve the problems of a specific training course in the conditions of teaching foreign languages; use modern active and interactive teaching methods; to be guided in psychological mechanisms and pedagogical conditions of successful training and education.

Professional competences include: implementation of all types of speech activity in two foreign languages; own a system of concepts and categories that reflect the theoretical platform of the English language.

So how to form these competences using the case study method. First, we need to figure out which approach is suitable for studying the discipline, taking into account the type of lesson, the duration of the lesson, and the timing.

In foreign practice, there are three approaches to the use of case study: Harvard, European and Chicago.

The founder of the Harvard Method was Christopher Columbus Langdell, the dean of Harvard Law School. The original Harvard case study is a classroom activity in which students take on a role of a specific decision maker, usually a senior manager. They discuss specific management situations and try to offer solutions or recommendations on the issues under consideration. Harvard Business School devotes about 90% of class time to case solving. The volume of cases is 20-25 pages of text, and 8-10 pages of illustrations. The method is used to teach disciplines, when there is no unambiguously correct solution, but several answers, comparable in degree of truth [3].

In the European approach, the best known is the Manchester Business School, where Max Glackmann is the pioneer of the method. The solution of these cases is implemented on the basis of discussions and the volume of cases is 1.5-2 times shorter compared to the Harvard School.

The Chicago School is associated with the names Ernst Watson Burgess, N. Andersen, R. McKenzie, E. Hughes, W. Thomas, F. Znanetsky and others. They viewed case study as non-quantitative research that emphasized the history and context of events, avoided generalizations and focused on understanding social life through the representations of the actors. The key methodological moment of the case study was the reliance on qualitative methods for collecting and analyzing empirical material. Ernst Watson Burgess ranked the case method as one of the main strategies for empirical research [4].

Methods and materials. The case study method is gaining popularity in the world practice. It should be mentioned that any artificially created case is based on a real situation. It is created from factual material that is adapted for discussion in the learning group. A well-designed case allows to modernize the educational process purposefully, create an extensive field for students' creativity. In the process of working with case teachers have to define goals clearly in order to help students understand and synthesize theoretical material. It is assumed that if learners can solve a problem in the classroom, then they can apply the same principles to solve any problem in their professional life [5]. The case can include methods of description, analysis, modeling, games, etc.

The following positive aspects of this method are distinguished:

- focus on discussion, interaction of participants in solving problems;
- analysis of real-life situations;
- better understanding of educational material;
- development of students' analytical, creative and communication skills;
- the ability to formulate, express and argue position clearly;
- evidence is provided from many sources that makes generalization easier;
- monitoring of students' learning outcomes;
- increase of motivation to learn;
- formation of practical skills;
- formation of a moral values scale [6];
- focus on the future profession.

However, this method has disadvantages:

- inability to fully replace traditional methods;
- a high probability of the formation of a biased approach to solving such situations;
- difficulties in ensuring discipline in the classroom;
- the need for a great deal of time (for both sides: the teacher develops cases; students solve them).

Formally, the following stages of solving cases are distinguished:

1. familiarizing students with the information of the case;
2. analysis of the situation;
3. case discussion and presentation of solution;
4. assessment of the participants and summarizing [7].

With the help of empirical research methods: questionnaires, observations and conversations, the level of formation of professional competences was determined, as well as the level of student satisfaction by the case study method in the implementation of the educational process. As part of our research work, we have designed and tested pedagogical cases on the second year students (20 students) of the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian national university majoring in “Foreign language: two foreign languages”. Classes were held in the course “Pedagogical psychology” with the use of case study method. The research was conducted during one semester, 2020-2021 academic year. In accordance with the curriculum, we conducted 15 lessons using the case study method. Examples of the studied cases are given below.

Case title: Young teacher

A young teacher after graduation starts working in a private school where wealthy parents’ children study. The children are spoiled, deprived of parental attention due to employment. Therefore, children require it to themselves at school.

The bell rings and the teacher begins a lesson in the 6th grade with the introduction of herself but the boys of the class do not want to listen to the teacher because they believe that a young teacher is kind and they can do whatever they want. Such behavior embarrassed the young specialist and she immediately remembered the words of the headmaster, “These children differ from the children in public schools, you cannot shout at them, raise your voice, argue with them, otherwise dissatisfied parents will come. You should be kind and gentle with them.”

Questions and tasks:

1. What should the young teacher do in this situation to continue the lesson?
2. How to gain authority from the class?
3. Have you ever faced such situation?
4. How should the school authorities help the young specialist to integrate into the professional environment?

Comments: this case study tests students’ readiness for quick decision making and stress resistance.

Students also receive information about the school, school policy, a link to the professional standard “Teacher”.

The students were interested in this case as they undergo teaching practice in schools and sometimes face discipline problems themselves. The role of the school authorities and experienced teachers in assistance of a young teacher has generated a big discussion among the students. Students consider that it is natural to experience such difficulties on the first working day, especially if you are a young teacher. In the process of finding a solution, the students came to the conclusion that the teacher had to apply interactive teaching methods in order to interest the students. They also recommended to obtain information about the class from the previous teacher in advance.

Case title: Complex relationship.

A 9th grade student complained to her parents that her physics teacher constantly gives her low grades, finds fault and insults her. At first, the parents thought that their daughter was exaggerating but when she started coming home in tears, her parents decided to call the class teacher. The class teacher said that the girl had approached her with this problem, and she had advised the girl to prepare better for her lessons. The parents asked the class teacher to attend the physics lessons because they didn’t want to aggravate the situation and psychologically traumatize the girl with their presence at school.

The class teacher attended two physics lessons but did not notice any harassment or insults directed at the girl. After having a conversation with the class, the children confirmed that the physics teacher was saying offensive words to the girl but when the class teacher was present at the lessons the physics teacher was restrained.

Questions and tasks:

1. Analyze the behavior of the parents.
2. How should the class teacher handle the situation?
3. How to help the girl in a difficult situation?
4. How to resolve this situation?

Comments: This case helps students to test themselves in the role of a class teacher.

The students experienced difficulties in solving the case, as they felt sorry for the girl, and the class teacher was in a difficult situation; she has to protect the girl, maintain healthy relationship with the colleague and credibility. In solving this case, students paid great attention to human values, the status of the teacher, and the professional ethics of the teacher. The students came to the conclusion that humiliation of honor and dignity is unacceptable for the teacher and the school authorities should take strict measures against the teacher: attend the teacher’s classes, and, if there is evidence, carry out appropriate work to avoid such situations in general. Also, arrange work with a psychologist. Students do not deny the guilt of the class teacher, as this situation proves that there is no trust between students and the class teacher and her work with the class is questioned. The class teacher should organize class hours more frequently, keep close contact with parents. Moreover, the students discussed the relationship between parents and children, upbringing, psychological development of a person, the importance of parents in the formation of a person, etc.

Working with cases at the initial stage, students experienced slight difficulties, since they, as future teachers, tried to take the teacher’s side, and it was difficult to find a solution that would satisfy all participants of the case. Gradually the students learned how to process information quickly and correctly, participate actively in discussions, argue courageously, and interact actively with each other.

Results and discussion. After the completion of the research work, we checked the productivity of the case study in the formation of competences. We checked the level of formation of professional competences through tests, observation and questionnaire.

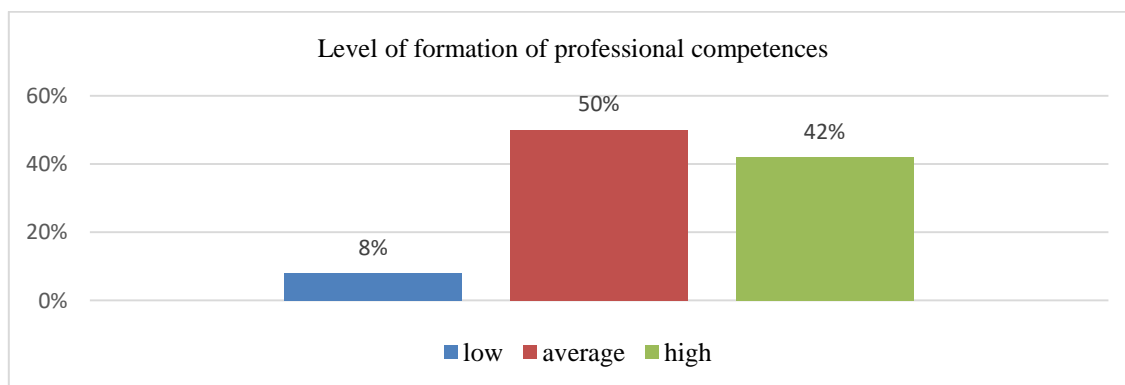


Diagram 1 Level of formation of professional competences

Diagram 1 shows that the level of competence formation among students was 42% - high level, 50% - average level and 8% - low level. It can be concluded that the case study method is efficient in the formation of competences.

We also conducted a Google form questionnaire to determine the level of students’ interest in using the case study method. The questionnaire included the following: the preferred form of teaching: traditional or case-based, the preferred format for using cases in the classroom, difficulties faced by the students in the process of case solving, the use of the case study method on the exam, the desire and willingness to participate in the creation of cases.

Table 1. Students’ interest in case study lessons

Types of lesson		Types of cases		Difficulties in solving cases		Exam form		Creating own cases	
Case study	traditional	Small with illustrations	big	Insufficient level of knowledge of theoretical material	Personal characteristics of students	case	traditional	yes	no
82%	18%	95%	5%	42%	58%	54%	46%	52%	48%

According to Table 1, more than half of the students (82%) believe that case study lessons are more intensive and contribute to the effective learning of the studied material, prepare for professional activity, develop personal and professional competences. 18% of respondents prefer the traditional form of learning, as they have become accustomed to it since school times. 95% of students give preference to small illustrated cases, as they can spend less time on reading and prepare for a good discussion. Among the main problems faced by the students were: insufficient level of knowledge of theoretical material (for example, knowledge of the psychology of a teenager, etc.) (42%), personal characteristics (fear of being ridiculed, uncertainty) (58%). 54% of students have a positive attitude towards solving cases on the exam, 46% of students choose the traditional form of the exam, explaining it by the fact that a case can have several solutions, lack of time to solve a case, the solution of one case cannot assess the knowledge of the whole course. Most respondents (52%) are motivated to create cases together with the teacher; students are willing to share difficult situations they encountered at school, 48% of respondents think that there may be difficulties in composing questions and tasks for cases, and interpreting the case solution because deep knowledge in pedagogy and psychology is required.

Educational programs for the preparation of future teachers are often criticized due to the lack of connection with the future profession, and the integration between theory and practice. Merseth believes that case study method should be used to fill this gap. He identifies three main reasons: to investigate complex and complicated challenges; to exemplify real situations; for stimulation of reflection [8].

University teachers are aware of the significance and importance of using the case study method in the classroom, but not everyone uses it, since a significant number of teachers are accustomed to the traditional teaching model, and it is difficult for them to master new innovative teaching methods. Also, it is not always possible to find cases that would fit the national context, and development of own cases takes a long time.

A similar study was conducted in Russia at the Arzamas branch of the UNN in 2018, which studied the effectiveness of the case study method in the preparation of future teachers. The analysis showed that the use of the case study method in the classroom activates cognitive activity, increases the formation of professional self-awareness and professional competences, and develops critical thinking [9].

Comparing the research results, we can conclude that the case study method is one of the most effective methods for training future teachers. This method contributes to the rapid and high-quality acquisition of professional competences, and also increases the interest of students in studying the subject. This is mainly due to the fact that the case study method develops reasoning and problem solving skills based on objective judgments. By solving problematic situations, students were able to test and prepare themselves mentally and emotionally for situations they might face in the future.

In this article, we conducted a study on students - future teachers of only one specialty "Foreign language: two foreign languages", and this is the main limitation because there was a small sample size of students. It would be possible to make a comparison on students - future teachers of different specialties, to interview teachers about the difficulties they encountered in conducting case study lessons.

Conclusion. Thus, the case study method complements the traditional form of learning by giving it an emotional dimension. As a result, students receive not only theoretical and practical skills, but also form personal and professional competences, develop reasoning and problem solving skills based on objective judgments. Solving cases, students checked their theoretical knowledge, and prepare themselves mentally and emotionally for situations that they may encounter in the future. Although case development is a rather complicated and time-consuming process, its introduction into Kazakhstan practice would be a great advantage in the training of future teachers.

We offer a number of recommendations for using the case study method in the preparation of future teachers.

1. Select cases that correspond to the future specialty and level of complexity;
2. clearly formulate goals;
3. analyze cases on relevant topics that contribute to the development of professional competences;
4. initiate a discussion.

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