

Application of Case Study Method in Teaching Students Specialized in Economics

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Abstract. The article focuses on the role of interactive methods in teaching students of economic areas of training, in particular, on the example of the analysis of the introduction of the case method into the teaching methodology. The objectives of the study were to consider the features of modern schools in Europe in the use of the case method; to analyze approaches to the use of the method in foreign countries. The advantages of the case study method over other teaching methods are listed, and the importance of the method in the formation of necessary competencies in teaching students is determined. The article analyzes the experience of implementing the case method in the teaching of economic disciplines. The study reveals the main advantages of using European methods of using the case format in a Russian university. The article determines that the case method can be a powerful tool in the development of critical thinking in future economists. At the same time, the importance of a comprehensive approach when using the method under study is emphasized.

1 Introduction

The use of the case method in teaching students of economic specialties seems to be the most reasonable and effective in modern realities. Proponents of this method in Russia and abroad have repeatedly emphasized its effectiveness, including the following authors: Ilyazova M.D. and Tulepbergenova D.Yu. [1]; Zhaksygulova G.K. and Nurpeisova A.A. [2]; Malkova L.L. and Kolaev A.A. [3].

The case method is becoming widespread in European universities. First, it is reasoned by the list of entrepreneurial competences, which a student should possess by the end of education, as defined in the recommendations of the EU Parliament [4]:

1. Have required competencies in the analysis of infrastructure and labor market conditions;
2. Have knowledge of business ethics and strive to comply with them;
3. Have skills of planning, making management decisions and keeping management records;
4. Master the skills of public communication;
5. Analyze risks;
6. Demonstrate initiator skills;
7. Have skills of team lead and motivating.

The implementation of the listed recommendations is supported by active use of the case method in European universities, increasing not only the motivation of students, but also the quality of learning. Transformation of the teacher from lecturer format into coaching format allows reducing the distance between the trainee and the learner, increasing the level of independence and developing proactive soft skills [5].

2 Materials and Methods

The case method is commonly interpreted as a qualitative method of studying phenomena based on particular situations. Since 1870, the Harvard University School of Law is a pioneer of this methodology [6]. It took 30 years for Harvard Business School to formally introduce it into the curriculum. The activation of professors of European schools in writing materials for classes using the case method began at the end of the 19th century (1890s). Currently, the main accumulator of materials on this method is the European Case Clearing House (ECCH), which unites over three hundred European and American educational organizations.

The difference in approaches of two classical case schools: Harvard (American) and Manchester (European) is of special interest. In adapting to the Russian methodology, the experience of the European school, which implies not choosing one, only right solution (which is characteristic of the Harvard approach), but forming a multivariate solution of a case problem, is seen as the most preferable.

We believe that the basis of case-based learning is problem-oriented learning, which implements three main components: lecture, seminar and independent work [7; 8; 9]. Both real-life situations and author's developments actualized according to economic realities are the tools.

Chinese educational institutions are characterized by a comprehensive approach in the use of the case method. The basis is the formation of entrepreneurial skills among students, including through problem solving in the framework of visiting school enterprises: industrial, agricultural, etc. at the next stages the implementation of this method continues, and its effectiveness is enhanced by creating an experimental base of pilot farms.

3 Results and Discussion

Let's consider implementation of the case method in the educational process of the Russian university using as an example the methods of teaching the Interdisciplinary Coursework Project on Financial and Economic and Managerial Aspects of the Organization Activities implemented for fourth-year students specialized in Management at Institute of World Civilizations (see Table 1). The focus group was group M1/BO17-2 students (24 people).

Table 1. Structure of the course unit with the indication of the applied case study technologies (compiled by the authors)

Theme No.	Training Subject	Type of Training	Type of Case	Case mode
1	Basics of Financial and Economic Analysis	Lecture	Training	Supporting Case

Continuation of Table 1

	Financial and Economic Analysis: Concept, Specificity and Essence	Practice	Practical	Case Study
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	Classification of Types and Categories of Economic Analysis	Practice	Practical	Case Solution
2	Analysis of the Use of Fixed Production Assets and Labor Resources	Lecture	Training	Supporting Case
	Analysis of Human Resources	Practice	Practical	Case Study
	Analysis of the Use of Fixed Production Assets	Practice	Practical	Case Solution
3	Preliminary Analysis and Evaluation of the Property Status of the Enterprise	Lecture	Training	Supporting Case
	Horizontal and Vertical Analysis of Balance Sheet Items	Practice	Practical	Case Study
	Analysis of the Financial Sustainability of the Company	Practice	Practical	Case Study
	General Assessment of the Property Status of the Organization	Practice	Practical	Comprehensive Case
4	Analysis of Business and Efficiency of Financial and Economic Activity of Enterprise	Lecture	Training	Supporting Case
	Liquidity and Solvency of Enterprise	Practice	Practical	Case Study
	Business Activity: Concept, Essence, Analysis	Practice	Practical	Case Solution
5	Theoretical Perspective on the Nature, Essence and Content of Management	Lecture	Training	Supporting Case
	Management: Definition, Essence and Concepts	Practice	Practical	Case Study
	Development of Management Theory: Modern Approaches	Practice	Practical	Case Solution
6	Analysis of the Organizational Structure of Enterprise	Lecture	Training	Supporting Case
	Concept and Essence of the Organizational Structure of Management of Enterprise	Practice	Practical	Case Study
	Types of Organizational Structures: Advantages and Disadvantages	Practice	Practical	Comprehensive Case
7	Analysis of the Staff Composition of Enterprise	Lecture	Training	Supporting Case
	Role aspect of Interaction Between the Person and the Enterprise	Practice	Practical	Case Study
	Content and Process Theories of Motivation and Their Application	Practice	Practical	Case Solution
8	Research and Innovation in Management	Lecture	Training	Supporting Case
	Organization of Innovation Management	Practice	Practical	Case Solution
	Innovation Management and Strategic Management	Practice	Research	Comprehensive Case

Three main types of cases were used in the discipline: teaching, practice, and research. Auxiliary cases were used as tools in lecture-type classes, the main purpose of which was to convey information. Three case formats were used in the practical type classes: exercise

cases (requiring quantitative analysis), solution cases (requiring development of a number of valid approaches) and comprehensive cases (requiring a comprehensive approach to the analysis). The use of case study exercises for the current and intermediate control allowed to increase the objectivity of practical skills assessment.

The results of case method implementation in the study of a particular discipline are presented in Figure 1.

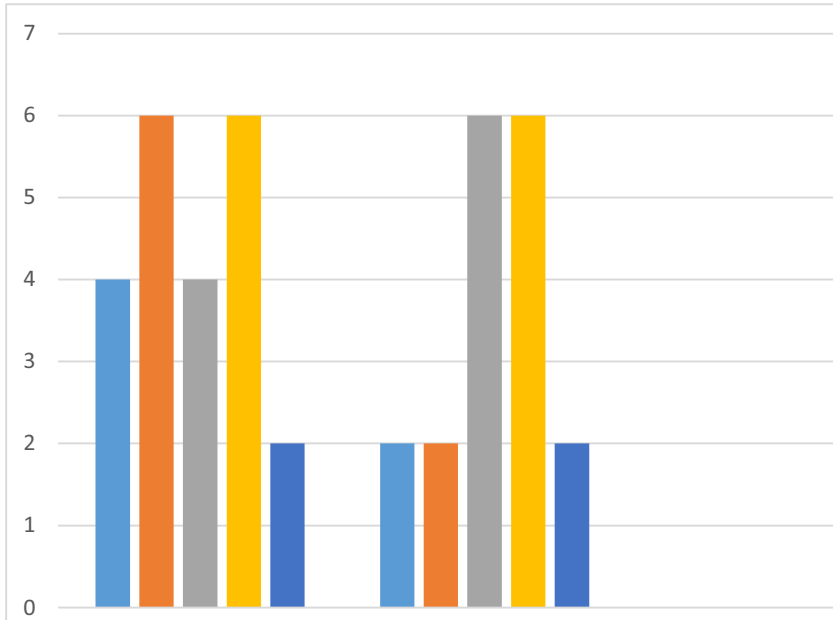


Fig. 1. Correlation of results of case method implementation based on student and instructor survey

The survey conducted will identify the main results. The students of M1/BO17-2 Group identified the development of critical thinking and acquisition of the skill to analyze complex and unstructured systems as the main advantages of using the case method. At the same time, the teacher of the course unit singles out the development of strategic thinking and the formation of analytical abilities in systems analysis as the main achievements of students.

4 Conclusions

As the main disadvantages of using the case method, students identified a high level of complexity of some types of cases and decreased motivation in case of failure. The instructor highlighted the labor-intensive nature of case assignments.

To summarize, it should be noted that the case method can be applied only as part of a comprehensive approach. As positive aspects, it is necessary to emphasize activation of the process of critical and analytical thinking development among students of economic specialties and focus on interactive strategy in teaching future managers. The use of the case method focuses more on practical skills, reducing the total amount of time needed for their sustainable formation. At the same time, it is necessary to clearly distribute the place of the case method in the training system, and implement it only in conjunction with other methods of training, allowing to form and consolidate the system knowledge of economic disciplines.

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