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Application of case-technology for development of critical thinking ability of students

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of experience of case study application in teaching of historical disciplines in higher educational institutions. Problem definition: Analysis of case study as an educational method; possibilities of application of the case study method in the study of historical events and turning points of history; analysis of seminar classes in the subjects "Alternative Possibilities of Development of Russia in 1917". Research objectives: To develop methods of application of case study in teaching of historical disciplines in higher educational institutions; to show the value of case method as an instrument for development of history students' critical thinking.

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1. Introduction

The integration of Kazakhstan into the world educational space demands training of a highly qualified specialist possessing new critical thinking, high mobility, competence, tolerance, ready for continuous professional growth. One of effective methods of development of students' critical thinking is active introduction of new forms and teaching methods including innovative educational technologies in the educational process. While traditional

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educational methods are based on a live broadcast of knowledge from the teacher to the student, innovative methods are not guided by mastering ready knowledge but by its development, by coauthorship of the teacher and the student in the course of study. The most significant method among innovative ones is the case method (creation of practical situations).

The case method was first applied at the Business school of the Harvard university in the 1920s of the XX century; here the first case situations were developed for the teaching of business disciplines to students. In 1954 the teachers of the Harvard university published a collection with the description and analysis of the case method. The second section named "The Case Method as Seen by Recent Graduates" is of special interest for us. There a clear description of the method, its opportunities, value and application borders are given (McNair and Hersum, 1954 is given: 76-178). Since then the teachers of the Harvard business school have published many works containing new experience of application of the case method, instructions on creation of cases (Barnes, Christensen, Hansen, 1994, 1994b; Hammond, 2002; Ellet, 2007).

The essence of the case is a description of a real situation, its analysis and creation of a model of event development. The case study is often applied in the teaching of economic sciences because this branch of science is very close to practice. Here the case-study is connected with a modern real economic situation. One of the main features of work with the case study is its interdisciplinary character. The knowledge accumulated during the study of many social and humanitarian and historical disciplines is mobilized while preparing of a case study. The basic principle of the case study method: students are offered to comprehend a real life situation (a real historical event or a phenomenon); its description and analysis demands activation of accumulated complex knowledge as well as acquirement of new knowledge. The case method allows to solve the following problems:

- 1) to train participants in decision-making on real practical situations, to form skills of separation of important things from minor ones, to define problems;
- 2) to impart the ability to interact to each other to participants;
- 3) to model especially difficult situations when the most capable expert is not able to capture all aspects of a problem individually, and the group is a basis in making of overwhelming part of group decisions;
- 4) to show multiple meaning of possible decisions.

Moreover, unlike educational tasks in similar situations there is no an accurately defined set of basic data which can be necessary for getting the only correct decision. Also a number of questions which require answers are missing in the structure of the case study. Instead the student should comprehend the situation stated in a case entirely to reveal a problem and questions demanding solution. Thus independence and initiative development, an ability to be guided in a wide range of questions connected with various aspects of studying of social and humanitarian and historical disciplines are provided.

2. Material and Methods

The condition of Post-Soviet historical science is often characterized as crisis. However, such explanation does not capture the essence of the changes occurring in it. Actually in its subsoil there is the most difficult, painful process of changes of historiosophical paradigms, renewal, revision and withdrawal of old methodologies. Now the interpretation of concrete historical events from the position of Marxist Soviet methodology will be insufficient; furthermore, methodological works of foreign theorists which contain different options of conceptual approaches to the comprehension of historical process have already been translated and published. Proceeding from told, we offer application of the case study method when studying historical events of a transition period, turning points of history. During such periods alternative ways of development appear, and every country (or people) chooses their own way. The case method, whose popularity among interactive methods of training is increasing, promotes development of skills of the analysis and critical thinking, demonstration of various positions and points of view, formation of skills of assessment of alternative options in the conditions of uncertainty. This article is devoted to the analysis of the

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