

METHOD OF THE CASE STUDY IN TEACHING ROMANIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

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Abstract

The case study is a method of direct confrontation of participants with a real, genuine situation, taken as a typical example, representative for a set of problematic situations and events. Initially, it was used as a method of scientific research (in medicine, economics, psychology, etc.), having roots in Ancient Greece (Solon) and Old China (Confucius), but later, the case study was extended to problems of education, being used by Professor ColombLangadall at Harvard School of Business (1935) (Harvard Graduate School of Bussines Administration).

The term comes from the Latin "casus" which means "fortuitous event". The purposes of this interactive method, valuable from the heuristic and applicative point of view consisted in: achieving the contact of the participants with the complex realities, genuine of a given field in order to their familiarization with the possible aspects and to develop their decisional, operative, optimal capacities and the abilities to solve any problems; verifying the operational degree of the acquired knowledge, skills and abilities, behaviors, in limited situations; the systematization and consolidation of knowledge, self-evaluation by each participant, their degree of applicability in the created situations; educating personality, attitudes towards other participants and respective case, handling with maturity the situations; exercising organizational capacities, leadership, evaluation, and decision like a real situation.

Key words: case study, interactive teaching methods, educational process, skills, methods, teacher, student.

INTRODUCTION

The case study method "mediates a direct confrontation with a real, genuine life situation" (Cerghit, 1997), with a pronounced active character and obvious heuristic and applicative valences. The case study is a "method of direct confrontation of participants with a real, genuine situation, taken as a typical example, representative of a set of problematic situations and events." (Oprea, 2007). This method aims the realization of contact of students / learners with complex, authentic realities in a given field and to

test the degree of operationality of acquired knowledge and capacities in limited situations.

For a particular situation to be considered and analyzed as a "case", it must have some particularities:

- to be relevant in relation to the objectives of the activity;
- to be genuine
- to be motivating, to encourage interest from participants;
- to have instructive value in relation to professional, scientific, ethical competencies.

Stages of preparation, support and evaluation of the case study:

- Clear, precise and complete presentation of the case in accordance with the proposed objectives
- Clarification of possible misunderstandings about that case;
- The individual case study - learners / learners are documented, identifies solutions to solve the case, and notes them;
- Group debates of the ways of solving the case - analysis of the different variants of solving the cases; the critical analysis of each of them; hierarchy of solutions;
- Deciding on the most appropriate solution and formulating the conclusions;
- Evaluation of the way to solve the case and evaluation of the participants.

The Romanian Language and Literature programs for the upper cycle of the lyceum, in force, propose in the XIth grade the realization of six case studies (in the common trunk), respectively seven case studies (on the humanist profile, the philology specialization), and at class XII three case studies (in the common trunk), respectively six case studies (on the services profile, the technician in tourism specialization).

The desire to innovate the teaching of Romanian language and literature is justified in the context of a student-centered educational intercession as follows: There is a risk that some teachers may approachprevaillingly traditional the issues related to the history of Romanian literature and the socio-historical context, cultural or occurrenceof some important moments of it.

That is why the syllabus requires the realization of case studies and debates which, together with the in-depth study of the text, must form activities that involve students in their own learning. The historical course of literature involves, besides knowing some aspects of the Romanian cultural phenomenon or forming an overall picture of it, and exercising the critical and autonomous thinking of pupils, the development of communication and reading skills on the texts or studied currents.

The case study method involves a student getting through some stages, at the end of which he will present the result of his work. The novelty of the method is that students can demonstrate originality in approaching and presenting the study, though, "for a student, originality is not to discover a whole new direction - because when we pretend this thing, we actually fall into templates - on the contrary, in personally living - with the riches, nuances, the changes that brings in this area his personality - an already existing direction".

In the methodological suggestions of the syllabus in force are presented the stages of the elaboration of the case study:

- The preparatory stage in which students receive bibliography, suggestions for topic development, or concrete tasks for exploring the topic;
- After a preliminary documentation, the students will make a general presentation of the topic, with the insertion of some fragments of illustrative texts.

The case study can be done by investigation or by projects developed by groups of 4-6 students (1-2 groups for each case study). Case studies will be allocated to groups from the beginning of the school year so that a group has a single case study. Each presentation will be followed by classroom discussions, in which colleagues can ask for clarification, comment on aspects they found interesting, and evaluate group activity. At his turn, the teacher will evaluate the activity of each group and will mark the students.

The rules for unfolding the method regard specifically the "chosen case". Thus, in order for a situation to be considered and analyzed as a "case" representative of a field, it must meet the following conditions: to be authentic and significant in relation to the preconceived objectives, condensing the essential; to have instructional value in relation to professional, scientific and ethical competences; to have an exciting character, motivating the participants to solve it, according to their training

and interests; to request the active participation of all pupils / students in obtaining solutions, assuming responsibility for resolving the case.

The role of the teacher, in the case of appealing to the case study method, is reduced to the exciting and provocative one of the case-solving intercession. With skill and discretion, he has to solve potential conflicts and show patience with the participants' difficulties in solving the case, focusing on active and productive, individual and group participation.

The advantages of the case study method are the following: by the fact that the case situation, chosen by the teacher, belongs to the studied field, and the students are trained in finding solutions, is ensured their closeness to real life and possible problems they can confront, "familiarizing them with a real-life approach strategy"; by the fact that it has a pronounced active character, the method contributes to the development of psychic abilities, critical analysis, decision elaboration and prompt resolution of the case, forming the skills of argumentation; by developing in group, develops interpersonal intelligence, team spirit, tolerance and mutual help, specific to cooperative learning; through active confrontation with a practical case, the method offers opportunities in building a bridge between theory and practice.

On the other hand, the limits of the application of the case study method consist in the difficulties related to portfolios realization, difficulties in assessing each student's participation in solving the case, concomitantly with the phenomenon of compassion or laziness, leaving the responsibility for solving the case to others; difficulties in accessing the sources of information necessary to resolve the case; the limited experience of some of the participants creates difficulties in finding the optimal solution with undesirable effects on the degree of motivational involvement in the activity.

Also in this school year, the feed-back received from students of XI C class, a mathematics computer science class, was a positive one, they considering that the case study elaboration was a good opportunity to know them, to collaborate and to get informed. Also, through the presentations they realized, they have demonstrated their creativity and ingenuity, surpassing the limits of the regular PPTs, using interviews, posters, games of type "Who knows win!" at the end of the presentation of their studies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This method places the student in the position of subject of scientific knowledge. It is a way of working through which students are put to discover the truth, rebuilding the way of developing knowledge through their own independent activity.

This type of learning takes place in a problematic setting, the method being a continuation of the problem and debate, a finality of them. Students are confronted with a problem situation, and for its solving no method is known. Solving can only be found through discovery and involves: organizing and correlating data, structuring and interpreting them, practicing thinking and using principles that require intuition, imagination and creativity.

For the discovery learning method to be fruitful, the teacher must first teach the student:

- to consult encyclopedias, treatises, documents, literary works and other sources, in order to make systematic and complete observations;
- to interpret objectively;
- to recombine reading sheets;
- to systematize texts in the bibliography;
- to pursue evolutional the proposed objective.

Finding solutions to solve the problem situation will transform the student into an investigation-discovery action. The immediate consequence is that the discovery method, though more difficult to use, is the richest in the inverse information flows, so much needed by the teacher.

If in a lecture, the teacher fails to keep the progression of learning under control since he presents his exposure from the beginning to the end, whether or not the students can assimilate the material, it is quite different in the case of discovery learning. It is based on the research, the student's own investigation, which in this case assimilates the new one very efficiently, if it complies with the following conditions:

- problem situation is registered in the system of concrete and mental operations that the student is capable of;
- the knowledge supply shouldn't be too poor or too complicated;

- the student to perceive and memorize data, facts, information, etc;
- the student to process and assimilate the accumulated material rationally;
- the student to formulate generalizations and integrate them into systems, in operative assumptions.

If these conditions are met the act of discovery can take place.

Regardless of its kind - inductive, deductive and analogous - the method has the following stages:

- a) confrontation with a problematic situation, stage in which is realized their desire triggering to search and explore;
- b) the realization of the act of discovery, which involves structuring and interpreting the data, using the thinking operations and highlighting the new;
- c) verbalizing generalizations and formulating conclusions;
- d) practice in what has been discovered, a step that consists in applying what has been discovered in new situational contexts.

The advantages of this method are:

- creates the premises necessary for an intense intellectual activity;
- the results of the discoveries constitute a lasting acquisition, while contributing to the assurance of intrinsic motivation;
- contributes to the acquisition of heuristic methods, of discovery;
- allows keeping under control the learning progression, ensuring the transmission of rich information flows from the student to the teacher.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The group of students who dealt with the case study "Latinity and Dacism" started from the double premise:

- the idea of latinity - affirmed to us by the generation of Moldovan chroniclers, by Constantin Cantacuzino Stolnic, by

Dimitrie Cantemir and the Transylvanian School, etc., who also promoted the idea of purism of the Romanian language;

- the idea of Dacism - which makes its presence felt with the interest of the romantics for the ethnogenesis and the traco-dacian mythology.

After the creation of the problematic framework, a debate was held on the fragments of "Memento mori" by Mihai Eminescu, "The Latin Race" by Vasile Alecsandri, "The Adoration of the Mother of Rome" by Gheorghe Asachi, "The Revolt of Our Non Latin Fund" by Lucian Blaga. The students concluded that the Romanian language and people had their own individuality, due to both the Dacian and the Latin elements, but not excluding the Slavic, Hungarian, Greek or Turkish influence.

They will practice new knowledge in the debate on "Romania between East and West". (XIth C grade)

WORK WITH MANUAL AND OTHER SOURCES

This didactic method offers the student, as an essential source of learning and training, the book and other similar sources, being one of the basic methods used in the Case Study.

In the XIth grade students should already know the role of independent reading. The highest quota of high school students' skills should be:

- the ability to compile reading sheets
- the ability to write notes, annotations and systematizations
- the ability to make commented summaries
- the ability to argument ideas and opinions
- assuming documentation and reading suppositions.

The teacher has to coordinate the ways students use these sources, reviewing from the beginning the typology of the reading sheets and giving them suggestions such as: the reading must be done with the pencil in hand, the quote must be written in its entirety and not within the sentence, to manifest cautious about what is not said in books, explicitly, realizing the synthesis in unity with the requirement of the case study, the observations must be objective and synthetic.

The teacher also has the responsibility to analyze the organization way of student's activities, providing documentary support (art albums, cassettes, CDs, books of literary criticism and literary works, etc.). Despite the fact that the Internet seizes the lives of our students and has become the main source of information, the role of the teacher is precisely to reorient them towards authentic sources. It must be emphasized that the student is the active factor of this method and its main beneficiary.

CONCLUSION

It can be mentioned that the method of case study in teaching Romanian language to high school classes is advantageous, but chronophagous. The teacher who once implemented it, always comes back to her, because the students through their being are eager: to experiment and investigate, synthesize information, examine and analyze, draw conclusions. All this contributes to the development of intellectual and creative potential, to the formation of a competent person and willing to learn throughout life.

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