THE EFFECTIVE METHODS IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES: WEB QUEST AND CASE STUDY

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Abstract: The use of case study in teaching foreign languages is one of the most effective ways to develop students' speaking skills. Case study involves the development of students' logical thinking as well as language skills. In addition, teachers can utilize web quest technology during the teaching process as a motivational tool to keep students on learning.

Keywords: case study, speaking skills, foreign language teaching, students' communication skills, critical thinking, web quest, best methods

Case study

The use of case study in teaching foreign languages is one of the most effective ways to develop students' speaking skills. Case study involves the development of students' logical thinking as well as language skills. Students automatically begin to improve their language skills while solving a problem

in a case study. They update their vocabularies in order to express their ideas and try to form sentences correctly.

Michelle Schwarz stresses that the method refines students' communication and critical skills in the process of applying theoretical knowledge and searching for solutions, fostering students' information literacy and increasing their collaboration and team work[1]. Information literacy is one of most current issues in education of XXI century. Therefore, teachers with the help of this method can develop not only students' language skills, but also their communication skills, team-working skills and critical thinking.

Teaching students how to apply theory in practice has always been the most difficult pedagogical process and it is that teachers face challenges a lot in the process of resolving this problem. Maryann Piotrowski considers that, due to their decisional rather than expository nature, cases combine theory and practice and are effective in sharpening the students' "ability to differentiate facts from opinions, relevant data from irrelevant, and trivial information from that which is vital to decision making"[2]. At the same time, it boosts students' data analyzing skills and stimulates critical thinking. For instance, if the students are given a problem for the case study, at first, they exchange the ideas with each other, secondly, they collect the data which are related to the topic and next they analyze the data by dividing them into relevant and irrelevant.

In her paper titled "The ABCs of case teaching", Vicki Golich notes that the case method is learner-centered, and is based on the interactions between students and teacher and students within a group[3]. Uber Grosse points out that the case study has a number of advantages, such as creating opportunities for students to read, speak, listen and write. In addition, increased learner participation, which is specific to the case method, has been found to have positive effects on learners' motivation and attitudes toward language study[4]. For example, if the teacher choose the topic due to the interest of the audience and encourages students on the topic, students' motivation will enhance for the lesson dramatically. Children love interactive games and they show their energy and social skills in creative games and activities. Thus, if the teacher is able to organize the lesson properly and focus the individual interests and abilities of pupils on the unique goal, they may achieve great successes in the teaching process.[5]

Web Quest

Nowadays, with the development of exchanging information, teachers also want to encourage their students to learn lessons online, so students need an access to the Internet and good understanding of Information Technology. Web quest is the best way to share the knowledge via the web and an inquiry based activity as well. Teachers give students a task and provide them with access to online resources for completing the task.

Teachers use this method, especially when they are going to introduce a new lesson or review a unit of course. The web quest model as educational technology was created in 1995 by San Diego University teachers Bernie Dodge and Tony March: a web quest is "created to catalyze students 'thinking at levels of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation" using information presented on authentic web resources that are used as assignments"[6].

Web quests have a clear, defined structure. However, teachers do not always follow this structure, but develop their own web quests according to the needs and styles of learning and channels of perception of

their students [7]. Web quests foster students' cooperative learning and teach students to be an independent thinker with the help of the real-life problems. In addition, teachers can utilize web quest technology during the teaching process as a motivational tool to keep students on learning.

A key section of any web quest is a detailed scale of evaluation criteria, on the basis of which, project participants evaluate themselves and teammates. A web quest is a complex task, so an assessment of its performance must be based on several criteria focused on the type of problem task and the form of presentation of the result [8]. Evaluating students is considered not an easy job in all methods. Thus, rubrics are the most beneficial choice for evaluating of web quest method. The

rubrics help the teacher to form a clear view of the students. Also it is significant to take into account the input of the students.

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