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THE USE OF EDUCATIONAL CASE TECHNOLOGY IN PRESCHOOL TEACHER TRAINING

Nowadays, while training educators for different types of schools, lecturers in higher educational institutions are aware of the imperfections in the educational process which are manifested in the incomplete realization of students' personal potential and insufficient stimulation of their self-expression and self-development.

At the same time, the development of preschool education worldwide, according to O. Radul, is attributed to key factors such as "the undoubted advantages of pedagogically sound organization of preschool upbringing and education, the increase in single-parent families (according to global statistics, this represents every third family), the positive trend of involving women in the workforce and improved preparation of children for school" [2, c. 136]. These factors have made educators in higher education institutions rethink the purpose and content of educational programs, revise their structure and scope and update teaching forms and methods in accordance with modern requirements.

As a result, educators are striving to rethink the purpose and content of educational programs, as well as their structure and scope, and to update the forms and methods of teaching in accordance with modern requirements.

In today's context, a competitive teacher is a person who is not overwhelmed with large amount of insignificant facts, but can quickly find and navigate information, distinguish the essential from the unimportant and the probable from the improbable, foresee the

consequences of actions, quickly make objectively correct decisions and act proactively.

One tool that helps students develop the ability to easily adapt to new conditions is the educational case, as it balances the information and activity components in the educational process.

The theoretical aspect of this problem is covered in the works by H. Becker, A. Bennett, L. Bickman, J. Debra, E. Catucci, A. Ehrlin, A. George, E. Melhuish, C. Ragin, R. Rosairo, P. Sammons, I. Siraj-Blatchford, K. Sylva, B. Taggart, et al.

The practical aspect is developed by J. Borsa, C. Corbett-Whittier, H. Simons, S. Soy, S. Stroot, M. Weishaar. et al.

A case in education is the description of a real situation or event which took place in particular field. It is written by the author to provoke discussion in the classroom, stimulate students to analyze it in detail, discuss productively and make decisions [1, p. 31-33].

The educational case is a real pedagogical situation or event experienced by an educator in their work which is used in the educational process to develop the future specialist's skill of solving problems in professional and pedagogical activity (Prybora T.) [3, p. 8].

An educational case is a comprehensive information complex that enables a student to understand a pedagogical situation holistically. It is determined by spatial, temporal, personal, organisational and other factors (Becker H., Ragin C., Simons H.) [6; 7 p. 3 4]

In the process of studying pedagogical disciplines, educational cases help students understand the importance of theoretical knowledge for the development of pedagogical skills. The training of future educators should be based on the current experiences of kindergartens. This is facilitated by the use of educational cases drawn from the practical experience of educators.

Educational cases are used for the training of both students seeking a Bachelor's degree and students seeking a Master's degree majoring in 012 Preschool Education. These cases are developed based on the experience of preschool educational institutions headmasters, educators and student interns in the Kirovohrad region.

Solving real-life pedagogical situations helps students understand that educational work requires creative approaches. Educational cases

are aimed at improving both professional and general skills. Future educators learn how to observe the educational process, analyze situations and correctly use information sources for their work.

Educational cases help to develop soft skills. Their tasks are based on Bloom's Taxonomy to enhance critical thinking. The educational cases can be used during lectures and seminars, self-study, internships, exams and pedagogical clubs.

The use of educational cases in lectures helps to illustrate theoretical concepts. Educational cases allow instructors to check how well students have learned and understood the material. They help to substantiate pedagogical conclusions. Educational cases are a convenient way to establish feedback from the audience. They increase interest in learning new material and also boost motivation while connecting theory with practice. To enhance motivation, the same case is used in lectures both before and after the material is taught. Solving the case beforehand helps students to be more attentive while studying the topic. It stimulates interest and encourages them to verify the correctness of their judgments against theoretical principles. Solving a case after studying a topic demonstrates the students the importance of theoretical knowledge.

Seminar classes are based on specially selected cases. This work should be clearly planned, structured and time-managed, following a specific algorithm. The first stage of the analysis of the educational situation involves familiarizing oneself with the case and forming a general idea of the educational environment where the event took place.

In preparation for the seminar, students should first carefully read the case. Then they review the questions presented at the end of the case and re-read the case, keeping these questions in mind. At this stage, students gain the understanding of the plot, which helps them form a general picture of the events described.

The second step is to identify the key actors (teaching staff, parents, and children). This step allows students to focus on critical aspects of the solution. The individual characteristics of these actors should be taken into account when preparing recommendations for resolving the problematic educational situation.

The third stage involves identifying the person or the group of people who made the decision that triggered the conflict.

The fourth stage focuses on determining the source of the conflict. When examining a specific case, it is crucial to answer questions beginning with *How...* or *Why...* Initially, it might seem that there is only one cause of the problematic situation, but with further analysis, students may gradually realize that there are multiple factors. During the discussion students assess the significance of these causes and rank them according to their importance.

The methodology for working with cases includes options such as collective discussion of the case read by the lecturer, if it is concise and easily understood by students. Another approach is combined search for the solution for the case which students have previously worked on during their independent study. If the case is more complex and requires detailed discussion, students work on it in groups. While searching for solutions, students can use literature and online resources.

In seminars, students learn to consider the laws of dialectics when solving educational cases. They analyze phenomena in terms of interconnection and development, identifying new qualities of the object of education. Students also explore various aspects of educational influence on a preschooler's personality.

During independent work, the organization can vary: collective independent work, where the same task is given to all students simultaneously; group work, where each group of 3–5 people is assigned a separate task; or individual work, where a case is given to each student individually. The use of cases of varying complexity ensures differentiation and individualization of the educational process.

Educational case studies can be used during students' training and work placements. During pedagogical practice students learn to identify problematic situations within the broader pedagogical process. During work placements students create cases that address problems arising in preschool settings. The tasks prepared by students during their practice can be discussed at the final conference on pedagogical practice [6; 7 p. 3–4].

Currently, Volodymyr Vynnychenko Central Ukrainian State University is continuing the process of testing educational cases for the training of specialists in the specialty 012 Preschool Education.

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