

# A Research on the Application of Dynamic Case Method in the Course of International Politics

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**Abstract:** *International Politics is a theoretical and practical course. The use of case method, especially dynamic case method, can not only guide students to fully understand and grasp the basic theories of international politics, and make them have scientific and rational analysis and judgment about some real international problems, but also learn and analyze the intricate international political problems and lay a solid foundation to form the correct values.*

**Key words:** *International politics; Case method; Dynamic case method*

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The case method is a kind of teaching method that was first used in law major and MBA teaching in School of Business in Harvard University in the 1920s, and it is a revolution to the traditional teaching method. Compared with the traditional teaching method, the application of case method has changed not only the method, form and contents of classroom teaching, but also the knowledge from single flow to two-way flow between teachers and students. The case method has been widely introduced into the teaching of international politics in China's universities since in the 1990s. At present the general trend of current teaching reform of international politics is to explore dynamic case teaching to train students' future-oriented abilities of observation and analysis, because the method can make full use of current abundant information resources, enrich the system of teaching contents, and, to a large extent, ensure the integrity of teaching system and students' knowledge structure.<sup>[1]</sup>

## 1. Necessity of dynamic case method in international politics

### 1.1 Requirements for basic features of the course

International politics is a theoretical, realistic and interdisciplinary subject. In terms of its theoretical feature, international politics theories have a long and enduring history. International politics theories have experienced four academic disputes such as morality and power, tradition and science, power and institution, institution and culture, and have kept developing in the series of debates since in the 1900s. As for its reality, on the one hand, the change of international situation calls for the guidance of theory, on the other hand, it also provides abundant materials for the study of international politics. From an interdisciplinary perspective, as a comprehensive discipline, it is closely related to the international strategy and diplomacy, history, law, psychology, sociology and many other literary and historical disciplines. Therefore, these features of the course require flexible and vivid teaching methods to produce good guidance.<sup>[2]</sup>

## 1.2 Inevitable trend of the development of teaching methods

The traditional teaching method is a kind of teacher-centered teaching mode. Although the teacher can easily complete the teaching task, it doesn't achieve the function to guide the students to take the initiative to learn, so it is urgent to carry out the teaching reform for the integration of students' subject position and teachers' leading role. To a greater extent, the dynamic case method has obvious advantages in dealing with this integration, because it pays more attention to students' subjectivity and the interaction between teaching and learning under the application of modern teaching technology.

## 2. Feasibility of dynamic case method of international politics

### 2.1 Effectiveness of dynamic cases for stronger sense of the times with teaching contents

The real cases from recent international events have great influences over the teaching of international politics. There have been new changes, new problems and new trends in international politics since the end of the Cold War. We have refined the hot international political issues with effectiveness and formed typical dynamic cases to further enrich the teaching contents. For example, the new structure of international politics cannot simply accept the interpretation of anarchy from realism, because a new situation has emerged in the international community since the end of the Cold War. "The system of international organizations with the United Nations as the center is becoming more and more active, and various international norms, laws and systems are expanding in different directions and fields, playing far more important functions and influences than before. The international system is like a big net, spreading more and more closely to all parts of the earth and all countries, changing the agenda of each country and the international community to varying degrees."<sup>[3]</sup> Therefore, only typical dynamic cases can be used to find the most reasonable footnotes for such a new proposition.

### 2.2 Relevance of dynamic cases for the integration of theories with the practice of international politics

In teaching, teaching contents should be extended to the relevant international political reality in a timely and appropriate manner, and typical dynamic cases should be used to explain the developmental trend of international politics. For example, when we teach the theory about the concept of new security, we should emphasize that it pays more attention to the new reality and new problems in the era of globalization. It does not deny the importance of national security and military struggle in the current stage, but tries to reveal the new direction of eliminating international threats. <sup>[4]</sup> Meanwhile, the teacher should introduce typical dynamic cases related to China's new security concept and overall concept of national security which were extracted and summarized before class into the teaching, and organize students to discuss the new security concept and China's significant contributions to regional security and world security after the Cold War.

### 2.3 Application of advanced teaching means as the material basis for dynamic cases method

With the development of modern technology, more and more new technologies such as multimedia and network are applied to teaching. Thus, the single traditional teaching method has been developed into the network multimedia teaching under the modern technology. With the support of modern information technology, the learning environment has been changed greatly. One is to use the technology to improve teaching, for example, the network connection can make the international current affairs and classroom teaching closely related, and the multimedia can present the history in a more three-dimensional way. The other is use the network to improve teaching, for example, the campus network and many relevant teaching databases have also been in teaching for a lot of teaching materials and data support.

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### **3. Implementation of dynamic case method in international politics**

#### **3.1 Building a multi-level dynamic case base**

Generally speaking, the materials in dynamic cases base update fast, which are closely related to world politics, international economy, national diplomacy and international organizations as well as global issues. With the deepening of information-based teaching of international politics in China's universities, the course of international politics is also trying to carry out the reform about the blended teaching mode combining online with offline teaching. For this, the dynamic case teaching should also reflect the characteristics of information-based teaching. Some cases are used in class, which are mainly refined and processed by professional teachers, others should be placed on the network platform for after-class learning and discussion, which are jointly built by teachers and students to implement the expansion and re-creation of knowledge. The overall design of dynamic cases should be consistent with the structural system of the course. The logical framework should contain the five parts with international actor, international system, motive power of international politics, main form of international politics and external environment of international politics. The five case bases should also be established in accordance with the course system. At the same time, we should also pay attention to the multi-level of dynamic case design in each case base.

#### **3.2 Implementation mode of dynamic case method**

The implementation mode of dynamic cases mainly includes classroom mode and course network platform mode.

##### **3.2.1 Classroom mode**

The classroom organization and implementation of dynamic cases teaching are relatively simple, mainly including three stages—before class, during class and after class.

Firstly, selecting cases before class

We should select a dynamic case closely related to the actual teaching contents as an example of new class to attract students' attention and make them into the classroom as soon as possible. The content of the case before class must be short, and the video case should be

appropriate. For example, two short videos were played before teaching soft power of Chinese culture. One is the influence of Confucius Institute in Western countries, the other is the effect of Beijing Olympics and Shanghai World Expo on the China's cultural strength. Thus, the student not only have a preliminary understanding of the soft power of Chinese culture, but also have a greater interest in the new teaching contents, and then enthusiastically participate in the study and discussion of the construction of the soft power of Chinese culture.

#### Secondly, Implementing cases during class

Dynamic cases are mostly used in classroom teaching. To a certain extent, the vitality of dynamic case teaching depends on the effect of their implementation in class. The application of cases during class mainly includes: one is the case that the teacher uses to elaborate key knowledge points, the other is the case that the students use in the discussion section for in-depth understanding of some knowledge points. For the cases during class, a complete system of cases is necessary, and the questions raised are essentially the sublimation of teaching contents, which is more conducive to the training and cultivation of students' creative thinking. Also, the following problems should not be ignored for the case teaching during class. Due to the limited time in class, students tend to deviate from the topic when discussing cases. Thus, the teacher should control the progress of the topic in time and guide it from concrete to abstract sublimation.

#### Thirdly, Consolidating cases after class

How to summarize after teaching knowledge points has become a hot topic in teaching discussion in recent years. It is a bold and innovative attempt to use dynamic cases to summarize knowledge points. We could call them an after-class consolidation cases. The consolidation cases after class should focus on enlightenment, and they should not be long. In concluding the chapter on global ecological security, the 3-minute video about "win-win cooperation for global ecological security" was played, the teacher made a systematic and profound summary of global ecological improvement from the effect of cooperative governance. To summarize knowledge points in the form of cases will make the whole class attractive, so that the teaching effect can further be sublimated. <sup>[6]</sup>

### 3.2.2 Course network platform mode

The implementation of network platform for dynamic case teaching is relatively complicated, but it is also a key link to reflect the teaching quality of international politics and its effect of modern information-based teaching. In order to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the online case study, the teacher should set a specific time and require all the students to participate in the discussion. The dynamic case teaching of the course network platform is a kind of teaching mode of blended learning to integrate online with offline course. Specifically, it can be implemented through the following steps.

#### Firstly, Identifying discussion topic

In order to give students more space to explore and create online, online discussion topics

should be large rather than small, so that students can plan a number of small topics around the big topic and collect international information of current affairs to write dynamic cases. For example, the teacher identified the big topic of online discussion about “how China’s soft power could play” after talking about the problem of national power. Based on this, the students can collect information on China’s international influence and then write some specific cases about China’s soft power.

#### Secondly, implementing case discussion

The online case study is the focus of dynamic case teaching in the course network platform. Before the case discussion, the students should understand the cases they are interested in and conduct the preliminary discussion in groups. After that, the leader of each discussion group will summarize the case, make a simple analysis of the discussion and present the views.

#### Thirdly, conducting evaluation and feedback

After one group represents the views, others can freely express their opinions, either show doubts or supplement them, which is conducive to the training and cultivation of students’ critical thinking. More importantly, the teacher should make the final evaluation and feedback. That is, the teacher should analyze the glitter and deficiency of each group, and then introduce new problems to be further researched and explored. Meanwhile, in the discussion involving the collision of Chinese and Western ideas, the teacher should also carry out the value education and guide students to establish a correct world outlook, outlook on life and values in the process of learning.

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