Extracurricular Work of Students in Teaching Foreign Languages

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Abstract: In the sphere of education, they tend to speak about the intensification of teaching. It becomes topical to search for technologies that would let a student improve the efficiency of his education and cognition. The branch of learning “Foreign Language” has a considerable potential for personality formation, while extracurricular work on foreign languages is important for the development of positive motivation of students. This helps a young person to adapt and to achieve success in society.

Key words: Educational competence • Intensification of teaching • Success motivation • Extracurricular work • Foreign language

INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of modern educational concept, the results of education are estimated, inter alia, by how a graduate is ready for successful activity outside educational system. Nowadays, a new approach is developing in education – a competency building approach. In the judgment of experts, the results of education expressed in the language of competence are the path to broadening the academical and professional acceptance, mobility and being in demand. The key skills necessary for a specialist are connected with his personal success. The basic ideas include the self-actuating idea of A. Maslow and the achievement syndrome of D. McClelland. A. Maslow attached a fundamental value to personal potential. These technologies should let a student improve the efficiency of education and cognition. System. According to Maslow’s theory, a teacher should promote self-development: “The purpose of learning is to bring about self-actualization and the goals of educators should include this process” [1]. D. McClelland on his turn emphasized that: “This plays an important role in status attainment research and has been found to influence both educational attainment and occupational aspirations of young people” [2]. The upward transition of self-consciousness through self-development with creative self-actuating and individualization is considered a fundamental condition for competitiveness formation [3]. G. Allport noted in his book “Personality: a psychological interpretation” that it is in the nature of young people to be future-oriented and to be free in realizing their creativity [4]. It follows from this that, while educating in university, future specialists should have a real opportunity to augment their creative potential of life realization by developing their competitiveness.

It becomes topical to search for methods of specialists’ competitiveness formation, cultivation of functional literacy elements and creative usage of them. That is why, in the sphere of education, they tend to speak about the intensification of teaching. It presupposes using methods, forms and means that brisk up and stimulate the educational and cognitive activity of students. Thus there is an active search for technologies of unfolding one’s personal potential. These technologies should let a person improve the efficiency of education and cognition.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Foreign language is in the confluence of general professional and special branches of learning. It is an educational environment that allows a teacher to form the language competence of students and to model situations when students should reveal their competitiveness. Foreign language has a considerable potential for personality formation. This is the most important factor for the formation of a free personality, a subject of one’s own life making who is conscious of the sense of his life
and work. Besides, learning foreign languages favours the development of thinking reflectivity and the formation of a coherent worldview; it helps students to combine information received during other courses because teaching material often requires to work over and reconsider already known information expressed in foreign language [5].

In accordance with state educational standards, independent extracurricular activity makes up 50% of full-time study at higher education institutions. Extracurricular activity has a row of peculiarities. For example, it should be organized on students’ spare time presupposing voluntariness. It is necessary to involve students in activity with flexibility and a variety of forms. Extracurricular activity should have a pronounced creative character. It should enrich students’ knowledge, promote the development of their capabilities and cultivate significant personal (intellectual and psychosocial) qualities that help young person to adapt and to achieve success in society.

The extracurricular activity in foreign languages is intended to develop such qualities as the ability to work with professional books, reference books, periodicals in a foreign language and dictionaries of special terms. Therefore, the main purposes are:

- To achieve a certain level of foreign communicative competence during the study of foreign language at a university;
- To prepare students for effective self learning of foreign language after graduating from university.

Now we can speak about a range of particular tasks that can be fulfilled by means of a foreign language:

- To teach students the basics of search and investigation;
- To promote the improvement of educational skills for working with a text, a dictionary, a reference book;
- To teach students various methods of information processing – from making an outline of a text to abstracting and annotating;
- To form specific communicative skills: to join a conversation and to keep it going, to accept and fulfill some communicative tasks that are essential in all kinds of activity including professional activity;
- To favor the activation of extracurricular activity and creative thinking.

Moreover, the extracurricular activity in studying foreign languages is important for positive motivation development. According to the theory of success motivation in all kinds of activity, motivation training promotes competitiveness development of a specialist, while his successful achievements in work consolidate the interest and positive orientation to the chosen activity [6]. Achievement motivation is aimed at wishing success or avoiding failure [7]. Another kind of motivation in extracurricular activity is an instrumental motivation. Its development is based on the feeling of joy and satisfaction because of performing some certain kinds of work. In the course of studying, the named function becomes an extracurricular activity task that is fulfilled by teacher with the help of various means.

The extracurricular activity on foreign languages corresponds to goals and objectives of the whole self learning activity on foreign languages and illustrates the essence of teacher’s work. Different forms of extracurricular activity promote involving teachers and students into co-creation.

The most productive didactic aids improving the efficiency of extracurricular activity on foreign languages are such kinds of activity as societies oriented towards scientific research of students. While working in a students research society, students join in the scientific research that goes well together with studies. Besides, it helps them to master the up-to-date methods of searching, processing and usage of information inter alia from foreign sources. It also prepares them for creative implementation of knowledge and skills obtained at university. Thus, motivational function (creating positive motives in studies, thinking activation, the stimulation of students’ initiative, cognitive interest to education and creative approach to work) becomes one of the main objectives of extracurricular work [8].

**Main part:** Among mass forms of extracurricular activity on foreign languages in our university, the most effective one is a subject decade of a foreign language (usually from 1st of April till 10-11 of April). The foreign language decade as a complex form is intended to contribute to purposeful organization and systematization of the whole extracurricular activity on foreign languages, activation of students research society formation of creative relationship between students and teachers. This decade becomes a kind of creative report for research society.
The following events take place within the framework of the decade: a competition of written works in foreign language (essay, composition), a country-specific quiz, Shakespeare festival, a recipe lesson about national cuisine, a contest of posters “Around Humor”, a contest of artistic translation of foreign poetry and a technical translation contest.

When carrying out a creative task, students acquire skills of research culture. The events of subject decade favour self-determination of students in life and professional sphere developing individual personal peculiarities of a future engineer.

During the decade of foreign languages we fulfill the tasks aimed at forming positive motivation towards learning foreign languages and developing the skills of analytical and heuristic thinking in solving problems. Teacher’s creativity is a necessary condition for the pedagogical process. It is considered a co-creation of teachers and students, joint activity, collaboration, participation in a common cause, opportunity and necessity to share experience between a teacher and a student. Educational and pedagogical activity carried out in collaboration of students with each other and with a teacher by the scheme of subject-subject interaction. The depth of this interaction depends on how the collaboration is organized, the number of people involved and their attitude to their joint activity. That is why collaboration has certain advantages over individual activity [9].

Over a number of years, a successful students research society exists in our Institute of Food Technology (Kemerovo) under the Department of Foreign Languages. It has a linguistic and culturological bias. The process of involving students in extracurricular activity presupposes a range of consecutive and interconnected steps: detecting the level of proficiency in foreign language, field of students’ interests and needs, desirable direction of their activity, surrounding society. The effectiveness of our students research society depends inter alia on fulfilling such conditions as involving students regardless of their learning curve; combining students’ initiative with the leading role of teacher; goal sets and activity prospects; publicity.

Within the framework of the students research society, extracurricular activity is organized with a glance to the following conditions:

- The interconnection of life and learning. This condition makes it possible to ensure the connection between extracurricular activity on foreign language and the conditions of students’ life and activity. This principal is based on wide use of local history materials and organizing meetings of people who use German language in their professional activity. Teacher’s role comes down to coordinating actions of students and relevant authorities that have information about businessmen dealing with German companies. Students willingly master the roles of “journalists” collecting information, organizing a meeting event, capturing and editing a video film.
- The communicative activity of students. A prerequisite for higher communicative activity of students in extracurricular activity is an opportunity to choose the most available kind of work. It may be a correspondence with foreign peers, reading foreign books or development of oral skills during the classes of the scientific society etc. For instance, a group of Russian-German students appeared; a society of students interested in translation and studying German poetry was formed. Members of the society are ready to describe the history of their nation by the example of their families and relatives. They can speak at a conference; publish a material; take part in a forum, a festival or a contest. We use the materials of web-sites Rusdeutsch, Goethe.de containing callings for contests.
- Combining collective, group and individual forms of activity. A competent combination of collective, group and individual forms of activity is based on good knowledge of foreign language teachers of students’ contingent, interests, abilities and plans. This allows them to select partners in the optimum and to cast parts.
- Connections between subjects in preparing and performing an extracurricular activity on foreign language. This condition realizes one of the requirements of system approach to education. Regarding this requirement, extracurricular activity on foreign language is not isolated but connected with other subjects. Connections between different subjects make students become convinced that they do not need a mechanical sum of knowledge in different subjects but their interconnected system that can change dynamically. This is what the specificity of their future professional activity demands [10].

Now let us set forth the generalized data on the efficiency of students’ participation in the activity of the students research society.
Table 1: The qualitative and quantitative indices of the work of the students research society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic year</th>
<th>Number of participants m</th>
<th>Number of published articles and theses m</th>
<th>Membership in forums, conferences, festivals, competitions etc.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/2009</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009/2010</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010/2011</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011/2012</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012/2013</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
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The table shows how the number of participants changes from year to year. This means that not only girls but also boys become interested in the activity of the society. It should be noted that during 5 years mentioned in the table the area of events was broadening. Our students went to various Russian and Belorussian cities 14 times. Resident participation in conferences, forums, festivals becomes a kind of report for students of the society. Awards received during these events are, to our opinion, an illustrative example of success motivation that keeps young people urging towards achievements in other spheres of activity.

CONCLUSION

The system scientific research performed by students in the context of the whole professional and personal formation makes it possible to succeed the objectives of training erudite and competent specialists. The participation of technical university students in the work of a students research society can be considered a practice-oriented form of joint creation of teachers and students. The analysis of collaboration between teachers and students shows that it exerts an indirect influence on the activity of a teacher. He obtains a positive reinforcement that is valuable for him.

So the students research society under the Department of Foreign Languages of the institute became a motivational environment that serves the purpose of creativity increase in educational activity of foreign language teachers. Besides, it helps students to decide what way to choose in life and profession and to individualize the personality of future specialist.

REFERENCES


