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ORGANIZATION OF STUDENTS' GROUP WORK IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Abstract. The revision and development of new approaches in the educational process in accordance with the changes in the requirements for the results of graduate training at a higher educational institution entails the search for ways to improve the universal skills of students. This article discusses issues related to the foreign language training of non-linguistic students. It deals with the problem of group work possibilities for improvement of their level of proficiency in a foreign language. It is shown that group work being organized within the framework of independent work develops skills of critical thinking, results planning, self-development and self-control. The author notes the importance of group work in the development of students' skills to apply the acquired knowledge in their future professional activity.

Keywords: group work, foreign language, students, skills, improving foreign language skills, professional training, professional activity.

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ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ГРУППОВОЙ РАБОТЫ СТУДЕНТОВ НА ИНОСТРАННОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

Аннотация. Пересмотр и разработка новых подходов в образовательном процессе, в соответствии с изменениями требований к результатам подготовки выпускника высшего учебного заведения, влечет за собой поиск путей совершенствования универсальных навыков студентов. В данной статье обсуждаются вопросы, связанные с иноязычной подготовкой студентов неязыковых специальностей и направлений подготовки, в частности, возможности групповой работы для повышения их уровня владения иностранным языком. Показано, что групповая работа, организованная в том числе в рамках самостоятельной работы по дисциплине, развивает навыки критического мышления, планирования результатов, саморазвития и самоконтроля. Отмечена важность групповой работы в развитии у студентов умений применять полученные знания в будущей профессиональной деятельности.

Ключевые слова: групповая работа, иностранный язык, студенты, навыки, совершенствование иноязычных навыков, профессиональная подготовка, профессиональная деятельность.

In the context of contemporary socio-economic changes, the requirements for the quality of university graduate training are significantly increasing. Education is considered to be not only a way of obtaining knowledge, it is most likely to be used as a kind of a tool for professional sphere. Investment in education aims to promote prosperity and change in community. There appears the tendency of moving away from achievements directed at the qualifications of specialists in a particular professional field. In addition, today's employers want to hire competent university graduates who are ready to work in a competitive and cooperative environment [1]. The real situation leads to the development of skills of lifelong education. The national project "Education" highlights that one of the most urgent goals involves assisting Russian universities to enter the top ten in the world. It is important to train graduates who are able to compete in the global labor market, to be academically

mobile and ready for self-development and self-study in the frame of the world sustainable development. In this regard, life-long education appears to be a key condition for labor productivity growth and provides an opportunity for retraining, qualification improvement and employment assistance. Online courses from leading universities can improve the quality of professional training of students.

Vocational education and the requirements for its results have changed at different stages of social development. In the middle of the last century, the emphasis was made on the quality of knowledge, skills and abilities. Nowadays, the community expects graduates to be mature professionally and socially. Changes in the education system should be coordinated with the main industries, services, and public sector. It is very important for the expansion of students' practical skills to get support from the state and community whereas the state needs human resources being capable of updating knowledge and mastering new skills, as well as being able not only to find a job for themselves, but also to create new places for others.

The main thing in professional training, based on the development and demonstration of knowledge, skills and abilities in a particular subject area, is undoubtedly expected to be educational results orientation necessary for future professional activity. In this regard, awareness and the theoretical knowledge foundations fade into the background. The skills of solving problems and new technologies mastering, the capabilities of self-estimation, social roles fulfillment, navigation of the labor market and self-organization come first. In this aspect, we should note the importance of conversations, debates, conferences and forums, as well as students' independent work. We consider students' research work, especially research organized in groups, to be one of the most promising in the formation of independent thinking and cognitive activity.

A number of factors influence the quality of education. First, it is the level of education in a modern university, the content of training courses, the qualifications of the teaching staff. Then, it should be mentioned that the results of research work, production practice organization, and the provision of learning process with information and digital resources and introduction them into educational process are unquestionably not less important. The learning process should be organized taking into account the students' motivation to acquire new knowledge and to monitor personal achievements and learning outcomes. Among other things, teachers' achievements also play the important role in quality education.

The analysis of students' achievements allows teachers to modify approaches in the learning process, change the methods and techniques used in the classroom. It is necessary to form a positive attitude towards the subject being studied, to carry out an individual approach to each student with the help of multi-level tasks and to implement both current and final control of the acquired knowledge [2]. The important role in the educational process is facilitated by the use of business

and role-playing games, which assume situational problems decision and allow students to become acquainted with peculiarities of the labor market and to develop skills of collaboration. Group work is based on the positive relationship between participants of the educational process, who strive to satisfy both professional and personal interests, provides for the division of functional roles and helps find solutions in conflict situations.

We would like to note that this research is conducted within the framework of teaching a foreign language to students of non-linguistic faculties. In this regard, it is important to focus on the need to master the skills of foreign language. There is no doubt that the foreign language training of graduates of non-linguistic faculties is extremely important in their future professional activities, since today more and more employers expect their prospective employees to have both expertise in their professional field and command of at least one foreign language.

Turning to the interpretation of the concept of “group work”, we note that scientists define it as a form of organizing educational and cognitive activities [3]; a collective form of social interaction and joint coordinated activity of teachers and students [4]; group work is a game, a game of learning, a game of organization, a game of thinking [5]. This kind of work involves two or more students to complete an educational task based on cooperation and stimulating the use of a foreign language on their own initiative. The purpose of group work is not surely limited to completing the tasks; its goal is to develop communication skills and cooperation. Sharing a point of view of the above judgments, we consider it important to emphasize that group work can be organized both in the classroom environment and as independent work. As part of this study, we are examining the possibilities of group work in the framework of independent preparation for research work in a foreign language.

Group work in foreign language classes promotes critical thinking skills, joint planning of learning outcomes, discussion and mutual control. Often, group work assumes choosing a leader who can take the responsibility for the deadlines to achieve the main goal of a project. Working together in small groups contributes to such skills as setting communication rules, conducting a dialogue as the main human activities. Furthermore, respectful and constructive reaction to speech partners, feedback, as well as the distribution of tasks between participants are of great interest during organizing work in a group [6].

An example of students’ group work can be the participation in different scientific events. A student conference is such an event in the preparation of which the independent work of students also occupies a significant place. The scientists claim that, being explained by the very nature of this event, student conference plays the important role in increasing the internal motivation of the participants [7]. As the part of the annual conference “Science Kaleidoscope”, which is held at the Department of English Language and Intercultural Communication of Saratov State University,

there are poster sections “Programming Languages” and “Information Technology Jobs”. The preliminary work includes the search and processing of material on the research topic, the results should be presented in a poster report. On the day of the conference, participants are expected to present their reports with visual support on the poster. The participants note the opportunity to focus on the skills they possess in the best possible way, since other part of the work can be assigned to other team members. Understanding that others can compensate the lack of some skills makes it easier to collaborate. In general, they say, there are no problems with the distribution of responsibilities, if they manage to find like-minded people.

To conclude, we should point out that interaction of group's members to each other can be defined as a community in miniature. The relevance of group work is expected to transfer the acquired knowledge and mastered skills to the professional world and use them successfully.

Considering group work as a way to improve the quality of the educational process, it should be noted that such work is effective and meets the needs of both teachers and students. Special tasks for skills of information extraction as well as abilities to solve educational problems increase the importance of group work along with students' self-esteem, thus motivating them to life-long education.

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