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Professional Culture of the Specialist of the Future

THE SPECIFICS OF DEVELOPING WORLDVIEW COMPETENCIES IN THE UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

The article reveals the methodical specifics of developing worldview competencies that are intermediate between existential skills – soft skills, and professional skills – hard skills, in the contemporary competency-based model of a specialist. A complex innovative teaching methodology that includes face-to-face lectures, practical sessions, and electronic technologies is considered through the example of the “Politology” discipline. A tool for developing the intellectual and personal resource of students is shown. The purpose of the work is to search an effective pedagogical model of developing worldview competencies in the context of mastering the course of "Politology" in the non-humanitarian university environment. These competencies include political self-identification, activation of civic position, and formation of patriotism. The research objective is to identify the most interesting, meaningful and effective pedagogical methods through testing and interviewing full-time students. Empirical methods of observation, comparison, measurement, theoretical methods of induction and deduction, abstraction, generalization, systematization and interpretation of facts, as well as a mental experiment are used in the article. The study confirmed the hypothesis that the humanities cannot and should not be transferred into electronic distance learning format in the context of digitalization process, since the development of soft skills and associated worldview competencies occurs mostly in interpersonal interaction in face-to-face team work environment.

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Keywords: Worldview competencies, soft skills, hard skills, intellectual and personal resource, pedagogical technologies, humanities.



1. Introduction

Contemporary education is inconceivable without the adoption of new pedagogical approaches. Rapidly changing environment, globalization, enculturation do not leave any chance at survival of outdated educational methods.

The transition of the Russian education into the framework of the Bologna process raised a wide range of questions concerned mobility and recognition of workforce skills, competencies of specialists, levels of teaching, a choice of disciplines, contemporary teaching methods, etc. (Vilkov, 2015).

One of the priority components of this process is the highlighting of soft skills. As noted in “Educational Ecosystems for Societal Transformation” the Global Education Futures report, the world is adopting new, competence-based model, and soft skills lie at the core of it.

The development of worldview competencies through innovative pedagogical methods in the course of teaching humanities is an important, systemic factor in training bachelors, specialists, master’s degree candidates and postgraduate students in the university environment; because worldview competencies serve as a peculiar filter between soft skills and hard skills, between existential skills and contextual, specialized skills (Borisov & Koz'min, 2019; Goffe & Monusova, 2017; Gordon & Martin, 2019).

It should be noted that approaches to such methods were previously outlined within the educational process at the universities of Irkutsk city (Goroshchenova, 2015).

Humanities play an important role in shaping the worldview and ideology, citizenship, cultural character and personal growth of future specialists in industry, economics, medicine, politics and culture. For example, “the queen” of the humanities – “Philosophy” – forms a holistic worldview, teaches to generalize and analyse; as an academic discipline, “History” aims at understanding and accepting historical destiny, shows causation and incidence, and experience that must be considered in the future; the discipline “Sociology” reveals the structure of society, showing at the same time the interconnections and functions of each institution; “Cultural Studies” develops personal growth, cultivates spirituality and values, and teaches tolerance; the discipline “Russian language and Culture of speech” – determines the very nation identity, its peculiar features and self-consciousness; “Politology” aims at patriotism, forms an active citizenship, reveals organizational and leadership qualities.

“Politology” is the science of politics, as an independent academic discipline in the curricula of universities has appeared relatively recently, in the 1990s years of the last century. It is designed to explain, analyse and make the right decisions in the context of political and socio-economic crises (Denisenkova, 2017; D'yachenko, 2017).

2. Problem Statement

Examples of effective methods of teaching “Politology” of colleagues from other universities and countries were considered by authors. The experience of projects in the process of mastering social and political disciplines, the use of innovative technologies in teaching humanities in technical university environment; the use of unconventional methods of political knowledge transfer were reviewed. We were interested in any effective forms of practical training in the higher education environment, and also examined the methods of teaching “Politology” in the United States. Due to the consideration of such a

broad methodological base, we managed to develop our own methods for conducting “Politology” classes, to launch this technique in test mode, and now it can be easily applied to other humanitarian disciplines.

3. Research Questions

A set of questions were raised by the researchers in the context of digitalization and widespread adoption of electronic technologies in the higher education environment: How to achieve the correct proportion and the balance between distance e-learning technologies and the full-time face-to-face work with students? Is such offline-online hybrid more effective than the traditional with solely full-time and the innovative solely distance e-learning models? In order to create the most effective model what should be chosen as a leading component in such a hybrid model – full-time face-to-face work or e-learning course? In what form should these two components appear? How to develop the logical component of “Politology”? What is the best way to develop students' critical thinking within the course? To what extent can gamification methods be involved in full-time work? Are gamification methods effective and why?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the work is to search for an effective pedagogical model of developing worldview competencies in the context of mastering the university course "Politology" among students of a non-humanitarian university. The hypothesis of the study is the assumption that the process of mastering the humanities can be digitized only partially, while retaining the leading role of interpersonal direct interaction for developing existential skills and worldview competencies. The objectives of the study are also to identify the most interesting, meaningful and effective pedagogical methods, through testing and interviewing students in the full-time department.

5. Research Methods

Empirical methods of observation, comparison, measurement, theoretical methods of induction and deduction, abstraction, generalization, systematization and interpretation of facts, as well as a mental experiment are used in the article.

The empirical basis for the research is the study of the students learning activity at the premises of one of the Siberian universities in the process of "Politology" mastering. The total number of students engaged in innovative methods and tested is 165 full-time students (Irkutsk National Research Technical University).

Competencies developed by the discipline "Politology" are culture-universal (key, worldview competencies). A student who has completed the course should have the capacity to analyse the main stages and patterns of the society historical development in order to form a civic position, and realize his/her rights and freedoms as a citizen of the Russian Federation. In the process of mastering of the discipline, a student should learn to understand the political processes that emerge in Russia and the world, be able to analyse events; understand and justify his/her worldview position, interacting with colleagues from different social groups on the basis of moral norms and values accepted in the society, the principles of tolerance and

mutual respect; to practice tolerance towards other cultures, give a qualified assessment of political events, parties, systems.

The applied innovative methods in the teaching the discipline “Politology” became for us the key to success and the possibility of applying the gained experience in teaching other humanities. The basis of the methods involves the development of personal perception of the discipline by students, the use of completely different methods of teaching the discipline together allows to take into account the individual peculiarities of personality and, at the same time, enhances the integrated mastering of the discipline: listening and recording lectures, watching recommended films, logic tasks, writing an essay, group lessons, joint discussion of pressing policy issues, making up crossword puzzles, passing training and final tests, working with electronic-learning courses.

According to the curriculum, bachelors study the discipline "Politology" during the third-fourth year of study at university in an amount of 2 credits/units (72 hours). Lectures and seminar classes alternate during the semester. The lecture material is given in the form of presentations, and the seminar classes include individual and team work of students. In addition, in the process of developing full-time course, we enabled students to access the electronic learning resource in the MOODLE system, which made it possible to work out the topics more thoroughly and identify the level of achievement, using various types of electronic testing. Structural and logical scheme proposed for the discipline "Politology" by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation is presented in the form of modules with major sections: "Introduction to Politology", "History of Political Science", "Political System of Society and its Institutions", "Political Processes and Political activity”, “ Global policy and international relations ”, “ Applied Politology” (Vlasenko, Ivanova, & Ryazantseva, 2018; Zolotareva, 2018). Students studied these sections in the e-learning course “Politology”, after that they were tested.

Contemporary students tend to have a “mosaic thinking” based on the advantage of the visual over other types of perception. Taking this feature into account, we attached several documentary films on various topics to additional materials, the films made by famous journalists, observers, and TV presenters: A. Karaulov, V. Solovyov, A. Pimanov, S. Medvedev. After watching films, the students were given the task to make a reappraisal, draw up a scheme of causation and incidence, using the theoretical knowledge in the discipline, and indicate the political methods to influence public opinion. It should be noted that, despite its simplicity, the students coped poorly with the task. There are objective and subjective reasons for this. Objective reasons lie in the format of the modern information society, associated with a general decline of critical thinking ability; subjective reasons are associated with the problems of contemporary education in general. In our opinion, one of the subjective reasons, that could be easily influenced, is the general lack of the formal logic course in the curriculum, which is an important link in the educational process, and in the development of intelligence and thinking (Frolova, Chernykh, & Bykovskaya, 2018; Samsonova, 2016).

In a seminar class environment students were regularly given assignments that contributed to their understanding of the subject through personal contact with events, personalities, identifying their own attitudes / opinions towards political events, processes, systems. For instance, in the “History of Politology Thought” section students were given the task to describe the political structure of one of the ancient states (Babylon, Egypt, China, and Ancient Greece) from the point of view of a slave and a lord. In the “Political

Leadership” section, university students were supposed to choose a well-known politician and write an essay of “If I were ...” type. In this case, students assumed several social roles in terms of a mental experiment. This type of activity was rated by students as extremely fascinating. The majority of students were scrupulous about the accomplishing assignments. In order to assume the role of a leader and literally “be in political leader’s shoes” one had to learn his biography, timeframes of when he lived and acted, study the resources of that country (political, economic, geographical, social, international).

Following a thorough analysis of all the materials listed above it is possible to say: “If I were a political leader, I would do much more / less / better / differently ...” The discussion of political parties in contemporary Russia was of considerable interest among students. The programs of the largest parties, the biographies of the leaders, their past and present were considered and discussed in the framework of seminar classes, the programs were compared with the current political conditions, laws, and proposals of the authorities. The discussions aroused a great interest, a stormy reaction and, equally important, many students expressed their political self-identification, a lively civic interest and conscious patriotic sentiments.

Another interesting and worth mentioning seminar class, in our opinion, was the class with the discussion of the essays on the topic “Why is it important to go to the elections?” While the students reacted rather sluggishly to the teacher's calls for active participation in the elections (the reason for students' scepticism is that they feel their voices mean nothing, and others will vote for them) at the beginning of the semester; their civic position has changed significantly after studying the course and after active discussions about current political issues; we believe, this changes are our small victory in the struggle for civil society in Russia.

6. Findings

The results of the study were a welcome surprise both for researchers and students. The discipline “Politology” was of considerable interest among students, they have learned a lot, developed active citizenship. This is especially valuable considering that the number of contact hours for the discipline, as well as the general lack of the associated logic course in the curriculum.

An important feature of the experiment was that in addition to the full-time course of the discipline, there was a parallel independent electronic course, in which the students were engaged under the supervision of a lecturer. Revising the covered topics, fulfilling written assignments that coincided with the seminar’s ones, and passing through electronic control, the students unwittingly increased knowledge of the subject, solidify knowledge learned through lectures and seminars.

105 students of 165 student have completed the e-learning course on 87.7%; 52 students have completed the course on 71.2%, 8 students failed to cope with the course for various reasons (were expelled, by reason of illness etc.) According to our survey, students consider the most effective and interesting following parts of the course: 1. Discussion of political situations, events, processes. 2. Essay "If I were ..." 3. The political system through the eyes of a resident of that time. 4. Analytical work on documentaries.

7. Conclusion

A number of problems were revealed: despite the impressive success of the methods of studying the discipline through personal experience, there are still some points that negatively affect the process, the solution to these problems must be envisaged on a step-by-step basis:

1. Time constraints, 72 hours is not enough to cover the complexity of the discipline.
2. The inability to verify-identify a person engaged in the e-learning course. Therefore, we cannot say with 100% confidence that these students have successfully completed the e-learning course. A more accurate study requires full-time testing at each stage, which is quite challenging task for both students and teachers.
3. Imperfect equipment that fails the e-course, as well as its mobile application.
4. The human factor (diseases, expelled students, etc.).

The study revealed that assuming various social roles was of considerable interest for students and this very process, in particular, contributes to the evolving of personal uniqueness. Students appreciate the moments of gamification in the educational process; they want to play a part, to get new experience associated with a new social position, transformation. This technique also enhances the integrated mastering of the discipline and purposefully puts the student into a situation of necessity to develop their soft skills - the ability to make decisions, mostly non-standard ones, to exercise will, increase self-awareness, self-control, regulate their emotional state, move on to a decisive action, etc (Ahmad, Chew, & Zulnaidi, 2019; Allala, & Abusukkar, 2018; Gruzdev, Kuznetsova, Tarkhanova, & Kazakova 2018; Li, Yang, & Lui, 2019; Quieng, Lim, & Lucas, 2015; Ricchiardi, & Emanuel, 2018; Srednyak, 2018; Stal & Paliwoda-Pekosz, 2019; Tokar, 2014; Tomic, Jovanovic, & Milikic, 2019). It is to be recalled that soft skills are defined in the Global Education Futures report as central to the new competence-based model of the future specialist.

Also, the importance of “Politology” in the educational work of the university was realized, as even a short but effective university course can raise the level of citizenship in a student’s personality.

We came to the conclusion that this hybrid, offline-online model gave the best result in comparison with solely full-time and solely distance e-learning models, which were applied to part-time students. At the same time, it should be noted that this hybrid model proved to be effective due to the leading role of full-time, or offline training, the e-learning course served as a supportive for the students' individual work, helped consolidate the material learned through lectures and seminar classes, helped to prepare for presentations during seminars, support students who are dropping behind, etc.

The hypothesis that the humanities cannot and should not be transferred into electronic distance learning format in the context of digitalization process was confirmed, since the development of soft skills and associated worldview competencies occurs mostly in interpersonal interaction in face-to-face team work environment.

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