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Professional Culture of the Specialist of the Future

STUDENT CONFERENCE AS A FORM OF SCIENTIFIC INTERACTION DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The article discusses the student conference in the Southern Federal University as a form of development of the open interdisciplinary researching platform in the Southern region. It is shown that the strategic goal of the Southern Federal University is to preserve and develop the scientific, educational and cultural environment, to ensure the upbringing of students who do their best to serve Russia and the entire world. To achieve this goal, the article proposes to transform the old and proven forms of education in higher education into modern and relevant ones. The authors suggest implementing the project of the student conference to the open, interdisciplinary scientific and educational event, when it is conducted in their cultural hometown with the involvement of employers. The main purposes of the project are: to educate citizens with active citizenship, to bring up people of culture who love their small homeland; to implement an individual student learning path; to form student research competence; to get familiar with the labor market in the Southern Federal District; to adapt and attract foreign students to study at Southern Federal University; to attract schoolchildren to study at Southern Federal University. Particular attention is paid to the intercultural and inter-ethnic nature of the event, which allowed students to unite under the auspices of linguistic and pedagogical sciences, that is, sciences that study and teach communication and interaction between people of different nationalities and cultures.

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Keywords: Student conference, Southern Federal University, interdisciplinary, adaptation of foreign students, individual trajectory of student learning.



1. Introduction

1.1. Federal universities in Russia.

At present, there are ten federal universities in Russia that play the leading role in research, education and innovation activities in their federal districts. Today's federal university is actually a centre for the development of education and science in the region. Russian President Vladimir Putin (2018) emphasized during a telebridge on January 25 with leading institutions of higher education in the country, "Federal universities have become centres of attraction for talented people, talented young people, strong scientists and researchers including those who truly determine the development of modern science" (para 7). One of these universities is the Southern Federal University, founded in 2006.

1.2. Southern Federal University.

Today, the Southern Federal University is the leading scientific and educational center of the Southern Federal District. The strategic goal of the university is to preserve and develop the scientific, educational and cultural environment of the South of Russia, ensuring the formation of a civic consciousness designed to best serve Russia and the entire world. The university sees its historical role in the preservation, accumulation and enhancement of the moral, cultural and scientific values of society. The Southern Federal University (SFU) development program for 2011–2021 provides for the resolution of a number of tasks in order to achieve the strategic goal. Let us single out those provisions that concern the training of specialists: purposeful, anticipatory training of specialists and scientific and pedagogical personnel in accordance with the needs of various sectors of the economy of the Southern Federal District; to form on the basis of the university the core of the innovation system of the Southern Federal District through the creation of an infrastructure to support innovation activity and the creation of small high-tech enterprises; to perform fundamental and applied research, to manufacture innovative products; systematic updating of the content of education and the development of variability of educational programs in the spirit of innovation, creativity and professionalism in accordance with the requirements of the region's labor market; the expansion of the foreign students' attraction, graduate students, other categories of students (Government of the Russian Federation, 2015). Borovskaya (2014), rector of SFU until 2018, noted: "The university aims to become a model of quality education in the South of Russia. It can be done through the implementation of breakthrough scientific research, the formation of highly qualified human resources, the implementation of such areas of training, whose graduates will be in demand not only in the region and in Russia, but also at the world level" (p. 58).

One of the ways of reaching the goal is to ensure conditions for student personal growth through modernization of the educational process in SFU such as motivate students to participate in research and present the results in student conferences. Few research studies have focused on student conference as a form of scientific interaction development. Previous research in this area has contributed to the understanding of different separate aspects related to the problem under investigation: potential possibilities of a student conference as a form of interactive cooperation (Schukin, 2008); the importance of research within the undergraduate curriculum (Healey & Jenkins, 2009; Walkington et al., 2011); the advantages of participating in research conferences of different levels for undergraduate students and a

number of strategies for broadening it (Walkington, 2014); the role of participation in an international conference in students' educational development as scholars (Coryell & Murray, 2014); student scientific conferences as one of the forms of motivation in teaching foreign languages (Dusko & Anisimova, 2016); theoretical models of culture shock and adaptation in international students in higher education (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008); pedagogical potential of the humanitarian student conference in a technical university (Zimina & Terentyeva, 2017)

2. Problem Statement

The purpose of this work is to consider the student conference as an option to transform the old and proven form of education into a modern and relevant model of the development of scientific interaction within the university, contributing to the achievement of student personal growth during training.

2.1. Modernization of the educational process in SFU

To date, many results have been achieved. As part of measures to modernize the educational process in SFU, an Education for Innovation system was introduced. It allows students to participate in research; a model of asynchronous learning and building an individual trajectory is being implemented; students' independent work is provided with constantly updated content materials focused on the tasks of individualizing educational trajectories and built on block-modular teaching complexes.

2.2. Student conference

Student Conference as an integral part of the organization of scientific knowledge allows to solve the following tasks:

- to improve the quality of future specialists' training in the field of fundamental disciplines;
- to determine the effectiveness and quality of students' preparation from the standpoint of their literacy, the general educational level;
- to promote and broaden the horizons of young people in the field of natural science and technical disciplines, as well as in the field of humanities;
- to generate interest among the younger generation in creativity and develop the skills of independent activities;
- to identify gifted and talented students to ensure their future creative activity;
- to form a new level of innovation culture among the younger generation;
- to draw the attention of industry and business representatives to the scientific and technical developments of young people;
- conference participants acquire specific competences for further research work through creative discussions with representatives of young people from other universities.

3. Research Questions

In the article, we tried to answer the following questions:

What are the potential possibilities of such a form of interactive cooperation as a student conference?

What are the results of this form of methodological work, like a student conference?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this work is to consider the student conference as an option to transform the old and proven form of education into a modern and relevant model of the scientific interaction development within the university, contributing to the achievement of student personal growth during training. It was important for us to determine the potential possibilities of the student conference as a form of interactive communication, to analyse the results of this methodological form.

5. Research Methods

During the study, we used the following methods of pedagogical research:

Learning from experience - to study advanced models of pedagogical experience of holding student conferences in higher education.

Pedagogical experiment - a scientifically posed experience of transforming the pedagogical process in precisely accounted conditions.

Modelling - to plan and design a student conference, cognitive activity management, results diagnostics.

Observation - as a specially organized perception of the students' activities during the preparation and holding of the conference.

Questioning - to mass collect polls of conference participants.

Quantitative methods - to process the results of observations and experiments.

6. Findings

6.1. III International conference of students, postgraduate students and young researchers

“Languages and cultures in the world of today”.

One of the successful projects of the department is holding annual student conferences. This tradition originates from the times of the Taganrog Radio Engineering Institute, when since 1964 the Department of foreign languages, and then the Linguistics department was headed by professor, doctor of pedagogical sciences Irina Andreevna Tsaturova. For more than 60 years, every April, a student scientific-practical conference was held at the institute at all faculties. The Linguistics department preserved this tradition, and today work within the sections of the English, German and Russian languages has grown into an International conference of students, postgraduate students and young researchers “Languages and cultures in the world of today”.

In 2017, the III International conference of students, postgraduate students and young researchers “Languages and cultures in the world of today” took place at the Linguistics Department at the Southern Federal University (Taganrog). We can say that this is an open, interdisciplinary scientific and educational event held in the framework of the week of academic mobility and based on the cultural and educational space of the city of Taganrog, with the involvement of employers. More than 180 students, undergraduates of all educational programs and young scientists united under the slogan "I respect other cultures - I value my own." These are students, undergraduates, graduate students, young scientists from Russia, Lugansk People's Republic, Uzbekistan, India, USA, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea and a number of other countries interested in interdisciplinary areas' modern trends in the field of linguistics; translation studies; intercultural communication; linguistic culturology; philosophy; languages (Russian, English, German), methods of teaching foreign languages and Russian as a foreign language.

6.2. The main provisions of the conference.

1. *Scientific-practical student conference contributes to the education of a person with an active citizenship, a man of culture.*

III International conference of students, postgraduate students and young researchers “Languages and cultures in the world of today” was focused on the personality of the student and set as its goal not only the development of professional competencies of the future specialist, but also the formation of a cultural, educated and creative citizen. The organization of the entire conference process corresponded to the needs of the student’s personality, and was defined not as the transfer of knowledge, the development of skills and organization of learning, but as the realization of the student’s personal needs. The main characteristics of the project were civil orientation and culture.

The special significance of the event is that it was held in the cultural and educational environment of the city of Taganrog, which is represented by the Taganrog State Literary and Historical-Architectural Museum-Reserve (n. d.). Immersing a student in the cultural and educational space, we developed the following general cultural competencies: the ability to navigate in the system of universal values; the ability to realize the value of humanistic values for the preservation and development of modern civilization; the ability to master the legacy of national scientific thought, aimed at solving humanitarian and human tasks; the desire to improve and develop society on the principles of humanism, freedom and democracy; readiness for continuous self-development, improvement of their qualifications and skills; the ability to understand the social significance of their future profession.

When implementing the project, we also tried to introduce future specialists to the national culture, historical memory of Russia and our native city, to involve students in the social and cultural life of our city and university. Creating an environment of cultural identity based on the cultural and educational space of the Southern Federal University and the city of Taganrog contributes to the education of a citizen with an active position, a person of culture interested in developing their small homeland and Russia (Bondarevskaya, Bogomolova, & Yeranosyan, 1997). As a result, students planned to visit other museums in the city and region.

2. *Scientific-practical student conference allows you to implement an individual trajectory of student learning.*

The international scientific-practical student conference of students, postgraduate students and young researchers at the Southern Federal University, as an open, interdisciplinary scientific and educational event, allowed the student to implement his individual training program. As part of the educational process of a university with a large number of faculties, areas, educational technologies and a student body, the conference gave students the opportunity to realize various educational proposals and their co-organization, to build interdisciplinary connections. In this case, the educational space for the student begins to be defined not so much by some rigidly defined, uniform curriculum for all, but to be a co-organization of various educational proposals into their own educational program. Creating a scientific product for a scientific-practical conference, a student, acting within his own educational program, has the opportunity to choose educational proposals, the ability to overcome the boundaries of a predetermined curriculum, and has the opportunity to design his own educational movement independently. Preparing for the conference, the students used the opportunity of a motivated, mediated learning to move from the state of a passive performer to the position of an active subject of self-learning, self-development and self-improvement; they develop initiative in shaping the content of their education. It is especially important that the conference took place at the university during the week of academic activity. Students were able to get acquainted with the educational space of the Southern Federal University and other universities outside their city. The conference participants showed themselves to be specialists of a new type: they are ready to adapt to rapidly changing living conditions, generate new ideas, take responsibility for decisions made, be sociable and work in a team. As a result, a project was drawn up for the implementation of joint work of students from different specialties, a list of articles for translation into English was also prepared, elective courses and courses of choice were selected. The most popular courses among linguistic courses are “Intercultural Communication in the Information Society”, “Methodology of Scientific Creativity”, “Theory of Argumentation and the Basics of Rhetoric”. The students considered additional education programs in SFU, advanced training programs, and programs of the second higher education.

3. Scientific-practical student conference contributes to the formation of the research competence of students.

The conference showed that the conference participants had an integrated view of the organization of active research activities. The work on the preparation of a scientific article and a scientific report led to the formation of the skills of creative research search, planning, organizing and implementing theoretical and applied research to solve actual problems in the studied area.

The main value of the research work during the conference was that students were able to reveal their individuality through learning as an independent research activity. The conference created conditions for the manifestation of motivation, the choice of presentation options of research activities' products, the method of self-esteem, reflection, the search for meaning, support for individuality, uniqueness and originality of each student in the process of research.

The following tasks of the organization of research work were implemented:

- the skills of research work were formed and on their basis the in-depth and creative development of the educational material of the main educational program in the specialty was achieved;

- the methodology and methods of scientific search, the system of professional knowledge about the specifics of scientific knowledge, the criteria of scientific nature and scientific methods of knowledge were mastered;
- the skills of abstracting, review and analysis of scientific sources, generalization and critical evaluation of the results of scientific-theoretical and empirical research were formed;
- the planning skills of theoretical and experimental research and practical implementation skills of theoretical and experimental research were formed;
- the skills of qualitative and quantitative analysis of research results, their generalization and critical evaluation in the light of existing theoretical approaches and modern empirical research were developed;
- the skills of design and presentation of the scientific work results in oral (reports) and written (annotation, abstract, analytical review, course work, creative research work, essay, article, presentation, final qualifying work) form were developed;
- the skills of working in research teams and familiarization with the methods of organizing scientific work were mastered.

Based on reports at the conference, scientific articles were prepared, which were then published in the proceedings of the III International conference of students, postgraduate students and young researchers “Languages and cultures in the world of today”. It was decided to continue the scientific research activity.

4. Scientific-practical student conference forms the skills of academic speech (oral and written) and increases of publication activity.

One of the tasks in modern higher education is to form competences in the field of scientific communication. This knowledge helps students prepare any scientific work from an essay to a dissertation. The conference showed that the majority of students reporting at the sections are ready to enter the academic community, can adequately communicate with the research field, can present the results of their own research in an understandable and accessible way to other members of the academic environment. All the presented works had a clear structure and composition of a scientific work, an academic style of speech was showed in all the works, references to other authors were used correctly.

5. Scientific-practical student conference “Languages and cultures in the world of today” raises the level of language training at the university, forms the professional intercultural competence.

The university foreign language course in the modern concept of foreign language teaching in a non-linguistic university is an integral component of the professional training of a modern specialist of any speciality and is intended to be communicative-oriented and professionally-oriented. It should be noted that scientific student conferences contribute to the achievement of the goal of foreign language education at a higher educational institution: the formation of professional foreign language competence, increased motivation to learn foreign languages, mastering them as a means of informational activities and intercultural communication in the context of future professional or academic activities. The conference is a simulated, but close to real, situation of professional communication, which forms and develops the personality of a specialist who wants and is able to participate in foreign language communication in the framework of professional subjects, as well as in discussing the problems of the

modern world, culture, politics, healthy lifestyle. Much attention is paid to the discussion of various aspects of foreign languages' learning. After the conference, questioning allowed us to identify that the interest in learning foreign languages, the level of language training, and experience in professional communication in English, German and Russian have increased. The conference showed that students can and, most importantly, want to study foreign languages, they are ready to choose additional courses to study foreign languages, as well as special courses of a foreign language for professional purposes, courses of academic speech in a foreign language, and intercultural communication.

It should be noted that the participants of the conference were able to discuss the peculiarities of the socio-cultural organization and cultural values of representatives of other countries and cultures. Understanding that the communicative behaviour of foreign interlocutors and Russians is based on the peculiarities of the national mentality allows students to avoid communicative failures, and this applies to different aspects of communication - distance, space, gestures, expressions of emotions, tempo of speech, tone, speech pauses and even smiles.

As a result, it can be concluded that the conference contributed to the development of the necessary competencies in professional intercultural communication. They help students choose an adequate strategy to conduct professional discourse and structure the most typical strategies of communicative behaviour during professional interaction (performance and communication at international conferences, implementation of joint projects with foreign partners, making presentations, meetings, establishing personal contacts).

After the conference, students registered for the Competition in English for students, which is traditionally held at the Linguistics Department in April.

6. Scientific-practical student conference helps the adaptation of foreign students during their studies in Russia; helps to attract foreign students to study at the Southern Federal University.

Competition between national education systems has become in many ways the key element of the global competition arena. The national high school is also becoming more actively involved in this process, which is confirmed by decrees of the country's Government to create favourable conditions for attracting students from different countries. This year, the Russian Federation, according to another rating of countries with the best higher education system conducted by QS, took the 26th place out of 50. Nevertheless, Russia is among the top 10 countries in terms of attractiveness for foreign students. Additionally, the "Concept of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the field of national personnel training for foreign countries in Russian educational institutions" (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, 2002), states that the priority direction of state policy in the field of national personnel training for foreign countries in Russian educational institutions is "training of the foreign states' intellectual elite in order to ensure Russia's long-term political and economic interests in the regions of the world. As well the use of foreign specialists' potential - graduates of Russian universities - to create long-term favourable conditions for the development of political, trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation between Russia and foreign countries."

One of the promising areas of investment attraction for the Southern Federal University is the provision of educational services to foreign citizens. Therefore, the conference set itself the task of inviting foreign students to participate in the conference. It should also be noted that much attention was

paid to foreign students studying at the Southern Federal University. Therefore, the conference set as its task social adaptation of foreign students. Due to the fact that the conference was held in cooperation with the Centre for the Adaptation (Integration) of Foreign SFU Students in Taganrog, a special section “Russian for Special Purposes” was created, at which foreign students could present their scientific works in Russian. They also took an active part in the work of other sections and in other conference events. Foreign students especially liked the event in the museum, where they could get acquainted with the rich history of Russia, presented and carefully preserved in the museums of the city. It can be concluded that the conference contributed to the adaptation of foreign students to the educational system of the Southern Federal University.

As a result of the analysis of the results, a system of measures was developed to facilitate the adaptation of foreign students to the educational environment of SFU, which is directly related to the increasing competitiveness of SFU on the international education market, with the economic benefits of both the educational institution and the country's economy as a whole.

7. Scientific-practical student conference - a platform for getting acquainted with the labour market of the Southern Federal District.

The conference held meetings with potential employers. The students had the opportunity to ask all the questions of interest in the field of work in translation organizations. Graduates of SFU and other universities also took part in the conference. After the conference, agreements on scientific and industrial practice were signed; a plan for the implementation of joint research projects was drawn up. Graduates were invited to the Graduation Day in the SFU in spring, and also invited to actively participate in the work of the SFU trustees.

8. Scientific-practical student conference advertises SFU educational programs and attracts schoolchildren to study at the Southern Federal University.

Schoolchildren of the city of Taganrog were invited to the conference. They had the opportunity to get acquainted with the educational programs of SFU, to see the scientific bases of the university, to talk with the students of SFU. They actively participated in the work of the plenary session, asked questions at breakout sessions. According to the results of the work, it was decided to organise a Competition in English for schoolchildren, which was held at a high level on 9/12/2017. 245 schoolchildren from the city of Taganrog took part in the competition. All schoolchildren were invited to the Open Doors Days at SFU.

Thus, we concluded that student conferences are necessary at the present stage, because they:

- contribute to the education of a citizen with an active citizenship, a person of culture;
- allow you to implement an individual student learning path;
- contribute to the formation of research competence among students;
- form the skills of academic speech (oral and written) and contribute to increasing publication activity;
- increase the level of language training at the university, form professional intercultural competence;
- contribute to the adaptation of foreign students during their studies in Russia, help attract foreign students to study at a Russian university;

- introduce students to the labour market of the Southern Federal District;
- advertise the educational programs of the university to attract schoolchildren to study at the Southern Federal University.

7. Conclusion

A large number of participants, a high level of scientific reports' preparation, and the relevance of the areas discussed at the conference - all this is primarily due to the more active involvement of students of federal universities in research work in an interdisciplinary field, in enhancing their creativity, awareness of building individual learning paths, in expanding intercultural and international contacts. Therefore, we can say that the student conference at a federal university is a good form for the development of an open interdisciplinary research platform in the region. It is especially significant that all the sciences represented in SFU were able to unite during the student conference under the auspices of linguistic and pedagogical sciences, that is, sciences that study and teach communications and interaction of people belonging to different nationalities and cultures.

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