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INTERACTIVE LEARNING IN FORMATION OF COMPETENCIES IN BASICS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

This article examines the influence of linguo-communicative and sociopsychological aspects in the formation of competencies of students in the basics of business communication. The forms of organization of training are being replaced with one another, subject to modification, transformation, integration and consolidation depending on the conditions occurring in the world, the requirements of the modern labor market, economic and political changes and scientific and technological advances. Within the framework of this study, the most popular and effective approaches, both time-tested and recently announced, have been identified with methodological potential in building a holistic picture of education that activates professional business communication of students in higher education. Online lessons have a positive impact on the development of certain aspects of students. In the process of certain pedagogical approaches, the skill of the practical use of the language is being improved. An effective balance among information, multimedia products, psychological techniques and modern technology is shown. The article analyzes the main groups of interactive teaching methods. After analyzing the main methods of interactive learning, it became obvious that in connection with the modernization and digitalization of the modern education system, these methods acquire a new interpretation due to the intensive development of interactive technologies as means of communicative learning.

Keywords: Business communication, formation of competencies, interactive learning

1. Introduction

The priority problem in the system of training future specialists is the insufficient level of interaction between teachers of vocation-related disciplines and business communication basics in the process of designing the linguo-professional content of training. It allows defining clear requirements to the level of business communication proficiency, developing successive interdisciplinary programs of all levels of professional education with regard to technological, socioeconomic and other requirements. The adaptation of innovative and traditional methods is demonstrated in this article. In modern conditions the scientific substantiation of professionally-oriented education in the field of business communication becomes a particularly urgent problem of the higher education system. The integration of communicative and operational-technological modules, which are based on simulation modelling, recreates the subject and social content of students' future professional activity in real and virtual educational space. So it becomes an especially actual problem of the higher education system. An example of such methods of education is the interactive method, which adapts the potential of both traditional communicative and the latest interactive technologies (Gikandi, 2021).

- Teachers working in technological universities use various innovative methods of pedagogical technologies that not only diversify the educational process, but also bring it closer to real professional situations. One of these methods is a case study. It is a case study of a specific situation or an educational practical case containing a problem. It refers to the methods of active problem-situation analysis, and in education it is used as a tool for solving practical problems that contribute to the development of students' independent thinking, communicative competence and meta-subject skills.

- In Russia, other names of the "case study" method are also used: the method of specific situations, the method of studying situations or business stories, case technology. The American researchers were the first who introduced the concept of "situational challenges" (Dodge, 1995; Garvin, 2003a). Researchers working with case studies use several variants of the listed names simultaneously in their works, without making a clear meaning distinction, using each term according to the context, applying both Russian and English variants of spelling. In foreign sources, the most common ones are case studies, case methods, situation analyses and situation methods.

- Since there are no significant differences in the interpretation of each of these terms, so we will define them by synonyms (Sprenger & Schwaninger, 2021).

2. Problem Statement

Let us consider one of the all historically established approaches to the development is the case method.

The Harvard approach to the case method emerged at Harvard Law School and the pioneer of Case Studio is considered to be Christopher Columbus Langell. In the late 19th century using the Socratic method, developing the trial and error method he invited students after studying the topic to make their own conclusions and present their own interpretations and analyses. This approach was very different

from traditional teaching by inductive empiricism and had many opponents. After a while the method became popular in other law schools. The "Master of Business Administration – MBA" is a program which included a mandatory course of the situational analysis method "The Art of Doing Business" (Sagaravasi, 2012). Currently, three schools at Harvard are actively building the learning process on the case method (Hitt, 2021).

- Designing professional activities involves developing and documenting the idea of creating an electric power company or product. Also designing engineering activities and products implies describing a company development model, taking into account consumer demands and subsequent calculations of project efficiency. The study was conducted at Stavropol State Agrarian University among the second-year part-time agricultural engineering students. Two tests were conducted: the first one – at the initial level, the second one – after the training in project technologies and their application in the educational process.

- They differ in principles, peculiarities. For example, competition or collaboration, single solution or variability. But each school retains the basic characteristics of a case study: 1) a case is considered effective if it describes real, not fictitious, organizations and their professional problems; 2) the case requires students to feel responsible for their decisions, i.e., to really enter the role; 3) the case must contain sufficient information for the students' work.

- Currently, Harvard case study is an intensive training of students using innovative technical means.

- Since 1920 the Harvard method has been applied in the European education system. In 1965 the Manchester Business School was opened, where the case method was approached creatively. This school provides interactive learning, so the Manchester or project-based business learning method has been developed and is still widely used today. This method allows students to be involved in solving real business cases of existing companies (Hart, 2020; Zorina et al., 2019). Students are encouraged to choose a job in an industry and are offered an internship in a company that is experiencing specific difficulties. The challenge for students is to find a way to deal with the problem and achieve its realization.

- The leader in case collection and distribution is the Case Storage and Distribution Centre of Great Britain and Ireland, established in 1973 on the initiative of twenty-two higher education institutions. Since 1991 it has been called the "European Case Clearing House – ECCH". It consists of about one hundred and forty organizations that provide and use cases (Richards, 2006; Thorne, 2009).

- In Russian education with a course on modernization of education at higher education institutions, a mass renewal of disciplines and courses has begun. This has led to an expansion in the number of interactive teaching methods. Case studies are used in the form of situational tasks with similar methods and objectives. The goals of this method are to develop logical and analytical thinking, independent search and decision making, as well as to prepare students for various professional situations and teamwork.

- In the investigated problematics of the application of project technologies in the linguistic-professional training of students, the web quest deserves special attention. Dodge, the creator

of the Web-Quest, calls it a modern type of research project based on the ideas of problem-based project learning, carried out through Internet resources and video conferencing. A web quest can focus on writing a report, completing a questionnaire, or creating a themed website. For example, a short-term and simple task is the possibility of implementing a student project, a longer-term and more complex goal is planning the execution of a package of documents accompanying the project.

- The Web-Quest technology has a strong educational potential, as it integrates problem-search, contextual learning, communicative approach, active learning methods, ICT. It offers the use of group work, thereby contributing to the development of communication skills and cooperation skills and can integrate interdisciplinary links, stimulate critical thinking development, increase motivation for learning (Miller, 2006).

- The theory of problem-based learning finds methodological implementation in the method of "case study". The method of production situation analysis or the method of "case study" is the consideration of a complex organizational, economic or managerial problems close to the real situation (Nunan, 2004).

- Let us note that in the study of interactive specificity it is important to identify and describe motivational factors. A number of studies confirm the fact that interactive technology provides a high level of motivation in the process of mastering linguo-professional skills.

- For a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of students' motivation and involvement in this activity, let us turn to the socio-psychological aspect of this issue (Ahmadi, 2021; Zorina et al., 2018).

- A number of American scholars argue that immersion, i.e. psychological immersion in the simulated situation, is the main advantage (Garvin, 2003b). As noted earlier, it seems that the most effective one is to teach business communication on a functional level with a specific situation in mind. In educational settings this is achieved by modelling situations of professional communication. For example, at a practical lesson on the topics "Energy Consumption Planning"; "Engineering business"; "Responsible leaders"; "General mathematics for energy power: calculating costs, selling prices and making a profit"; "Marketing environment of a company"; "Growth and management of energy business", "Business correspondence" students are offered a web-quest.

- This business situation is aimed at evaluating and developing managerial competencies: planning in a competitive environment; organization of long-term plans, operational planning; coordination of teamwork, motivation; setting priorities; setting tasks for subordinates and controlling their execution; communication skills: conducting business negotiations (Miller, 2006).

- The linguo-communicative criterion reflects the knowledge of linguo-professional communication and is revealed in the following indicators: 1) mastery of professional terminology, special subject vocabulary; 2) mastery of speech turns and etiquette of professional communication; 3) mastery of effective oral and written communication skills of official style; 5) mastery of the ability to establish and maintain contact in conditions of verbal

and nonverbal professional foreign-language communication, as well as flexibly respond to changes in the topic or conditions of communication.

- The cognitive-activity criterion indicates the presence of students' knowledge in the field of professional foreign-language communication, strategies, techniques, behaviour styles and is determined through the following indicators: 1) possession of skills to resolve typical and atypical communicative tasks in different situations of professional interaction; 2) possession of planning skills, independent search, analysis and synthesis of obtained data, using and managing different information sources; 3) possession of skills of independent decision-making (Nunan, 2004).

3. Research Questions

The theory of problem-based learning finds methodological implementation in the "case study" method. The method of analysing production situations or the "case study" method is a consideration of a complex organizational, economic or managerial problem, close to the real production process. Students are asked several questions that stimulate an active search for rational solutions, taking into account the acquired skills and abilities, as a result of which professional communication is activated.

In the context of our research, it seems appropriate to consider the value of training not only as a form of corporate, but also as linguo-professional training of students of higher education or games.

Particular interest is the potential of using simulation as a method of interactive teaching in communication technologies and the need for a comprehensive application of traditional and innovative interactive teaching methods.

4. Purpose of the Study

- To demonstrate the fact that innovative interactive learning technologies should be focused not on knowledge, but on the activity approach.
- To create fundamentally new opportunities for organizing the educational process in the field of education interactive technologies.
- To accurately and rationally determine the methods and means of information delivery so that they become the intellectual core of informatization of modern society.
- To take into consideration the individual psychophysiological characteristics of students, contributing to saving resources of study time, mainly focusing on the content aspect of educational activity.
- Through clarity and conciseness, to provide visualization of modelling various processes in the study of theoretical and practical material and thereby to contribute to improving the quality of activity learning.

5. Research Methods

In the process of professional training digital technology is widely applied as a means of optimization and visualization of operational activity, as well as virtual learning.

In the linguo-didactic aspect this Web-Quest can be interpreted as a method of linguo-professional training in the contextual learning and advanced specialization, integrating features of game-technical, discussion, problem-based, project-based and training technologies. Web-Quest is aimed at modelling the interdisciplinary content of future professional activity and activation of students' business communication in practice-oriented situations of professional communication. When selecting the levels of formation of special professional foreign language communicative competence of future specialists in the sphere of state hospitality, the quantitative characteristics for each of the indicators were determined:

- 0 points – basic level of the indicator formation;
- 1 point – average level of formation of the indicator;
- 2 points – advanced level of formation of the indicator.

The linguo-communicative criterion of formation of competences of pro-professional communication in a foreign language reflects knowledge, abilities and skills of students in such aspects as grammar, vocabulary and listening. In order to evaluate these abilities future bachelors were offered to take tests, to write a memo on a given topic, to compose a dialogue.

As part of the practical application of this technology, two types of tests and test tasks were conducted. The results of the analysis showed that, in general, students cope with tests on out-of-context use of common professional terms, but difficulties are caused by the tests aimed at revealing knowledge of special subject-oriented vocabulary and terminology, as well as speech patterns and etiquette of linguo-professional communication.

Dynamics of special professional communicative competence formation of students on the basis of Web-Quest integration into business communication training were notable.

The training results are characterized by the prevalence of the average level of formation of linguo-communicative (45 %) and cognitive-activation criteria (57 %) in the initial test, which significantly increased at the final stage up to 67 and 79 %. We also note the positive dynamics in increasing the number of students with the advanced level in the final test from 12to 32 % in terms of the linguo-communicative criterion of professional competence formation, as well as in increasing the percentage of students with an average level of the cognitive-activation criterion from 24 to 43 %.

6. Findings

As a result, it became possible to achieve the following tasks: mastering speech patterns and special terminology; communicative techniques of conducting professional communication.

The ways of resolving conflicts and ethics of professional behaviour in typical and atypical situations of professional communication are also demonstrated and explained.

Formation of skills to make decisions in professionally oriented contexts and mastering the cognitive-activity specifics of professional interaction; activation of social and professional adaptation of students in the process of modelling situations of operational and management activities of various levels of complexity became actual skills in students' behaviour.

7. Conclusion

The study makes it possible to make the following generalizations:

- In general this pedagogical method acts as an analytical tool for modelling business processes of real production activities, as well as pedagogical technology aimed at visualization of professional activity and activation of practice-oriented learning in the system of higher education.

- In the linguistic and socio-psychological context, this technology can be interpreted in terms of business psychology, cognitive and constructive pedagogy.

- This method allows students to increase their self-esteem and develop a sense of confidence in the behaviour and problem solving.

- It also helps students to acquire professional knowledge in dialogical forms of communication, which is an important factor in learning.

- It allows students to master the skills of behaviour and interaction in a professionally oriented environment.

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