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SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING METHOD IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES

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САМОСТІЙНА РОБОТА СТУДЕНТІВ ПРИ ВИКЛАДАННІ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ ЗА ПРОФЕСІЙНИМ СПРЯМУВАННЯМ

The article outlines the peculiarities of students' self-directed learning organization in mastering foreign languages for professional purposes; the concept 'self-directed learning' is disclosed and its multiplicity and complexity has been proved. The authors consider self-directed learning as an important component of educational process, as a method of teaching and self-education, and as an important factor in the theoretical and practical training of students for future professional activities. The types, forms and methods of self-directed learning used in the process of teaching foreign languages for professional purposes are analyzed; the main approaches to encouraging students for successful self-directed learning are characterized. Special attention is paid to teacher's professional and methodical preparation for effective independent work organization; pedagogical conditions for this process efficient implementation have been defined. The article notes that self-directed learning includes the main trends of modern methodology of teaching foreign languages, namely: development of speech, language, educational and cognitive competences; individual approach in teaching, motivation for mastering a foreign language at the level sufficient for professional communication.

Key words: self-directed learning method, foreign language for professional purposes, forms, types and methods of self-directed learning, foreign language communication, professional skills.

Анотація. У статті розглянуто особливості організації самостійної роботи студентів у процесі вивчення професійно орієнтованої іноземної мови, визначено сутність поняття "самостійнаробота", доведено його багатозначність та складність. Проаналізовано самостійну роботу як важливий складник навчально-пізнавальної діяльності і самоосвіти майбутнього фахівця. Подано види, форми і методи самостійної роботи, що використовуються у процесі вивчення іноземної мови за професійним спрямуванням. Охарактеризовано основні підходи до продуктивного виконання студентами самостійної роботи. Особлива увага приділяється ролі викладача в організації самостійної роботи та виокремлюються педагогічні умови за яких цей процес стає більш ефективним. Наголошується, що організація самостійної роботи з іноземної мови за професійним спрямуванням має враховувати основні тенденції роз-

витку сучасної методики навчання іноземних мов: комунікативну спрямованість, активізацію мовленнєвої та мисленнєвої діяльності студентів у процесі оволодівання мовою як засобом спілкування, підвищення мотивації навчання, індивідуальний підхід до студентів і розвиток інтересу до предмета та майбутньої професії.

Ключові слова: самостійна робота студентів, іноземна мова за професійним спрямуванням, форми, види і методи самостійної роботи, іншомовне спілкування, професійні навички.

The paper aims to consider scientific approaches concerning the application of self-directed learning method in teaching foreign languages for professional purposes; to analyze its forms, types and methods.

Problem statement. In the context of globalization of the professional environment and communication, foreign language proficiency has become an integral part of professional competence of a specialist in any field of modern life. However, according to numerous scientific works, the realities of the educational process in higher educational establishments indicate certain problems that prevent students from mastering a foreign language at the level sufficient for professional communication. They are: bad commands of English, lack of motivation for mastering English, reduction of academic hours for foreign language learning. In this regard it is necessary to use more effective methods and facilities of studies, develop new methodical systems and teaching technologies, aimed at the formation of foreign languages professional communication skills.

Analysis of researches and publications. For several years great effort has been devoted to the study of self-directed learning. Scientific works of many scholars Drozdova (2013), Esipov (1961), Honcharenko (1997), Maning (2007), Moroz et al (1997, 2003), Pentyliuk (2015), Silen, S. &Uhlin L. (2006) and others reveal some aspects of this problem. Such

direction of studying as using self-directed learning method in teaching foreign languages for professional purposes was not the subject of separate conceptual research.

Outline of the main research material. Self-directed learning is an integral part of educational process. It promotes the formation of students' creative abilities, expands their multicultural worldview, and develops their critical thinking. Article 50 of The Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" states that it "is one of the forms of the educational process organization", which provides for the maximum activity of students in various aspects of education, such as mental work organization, search for necessary information, participation in research work, competitions, conferences, etc. The outstanding Ukrainian scientist *(Honcharenko 1997)* in his pedagogical dictionary considers self-directed learning as various types of individual and collective educational activities of students, which are carried out in class or at home, under the guidance of a teacher, but without his participation, independent performance of various cognitive tasks, and application of previously acquired knowledge.

There is no unanimity among researchers in the approaches to understanding the concept of "self-directed learning". In keeping with *(Drozdova 2013, p. 156)* it is the main pre-condition for deep and lasting mastery of knowledge. In her opinion, it promotes the development of students' creative activities, connects their knowledge and skills with practice". Moroz et al (2003) considers self-directed learning as students' activities conducted without the direct guidance of the teacher, although supervised and organized by him. *(Pentyliuk 2015, p.223)* believes that it is the highest type of educational activities which requires a sufficient level of self-awareness, reflectivity, self-discipline, responsibility, which accords the process of self-improvement and understanding. *(Maning, 2007)* describes self-directed learning as "a process in which individuals take the initiative

without the help of others in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources, and evaluating learning outcomes". Silen, S. &Uhlin L. (2006) define self-directed learning as "an essential concept in problem-based learning, and, in a broader sense, student-centred learning".

Summarizing the approaches to the concept of "self-directed learning" we can conclude that it is regarded as a method of teaching and self-education, as didactic connection of different methods. It is an important factor in the theoretical and practical preparation of students for future activities, the necessary knowledge, skills, moral and psychological qualities formation.

It should be noted that self-directed learning as a method of teaching foreign languages for professional purposes is characterized according to certain features and properties, for example:

clearly defined task that requires independent performance;

lack of direct participation of the teacher in this task;

timeline for completion of activities;

teacher's indirect guidance of the students' cognitive activity;

learning goal.

Self-directed learning is one of the components of educational process, it is a system of organizational and didactic activities aimed at training professionals in various fields and majors.The teacher's professional and methodical preparation plays an important role in this process. Students' cognitive activities, their motivation for mastering foreign languages, self-discipline and self-organization depends on the teacher's ability to organize self-directed learning properly, to develop a set of logically constructed didactic and cognitive tasks at each stage of independent work. At the same time, self-directed learning in mastering foreign languages for professional purposes is aimed at improving the level of students' communicative skills and abilities. Therefore, it provides for the integration of different kinds of

activities. Each type of self-directed work has its specific goal the students must realize and accept. Before setting a learning task the teacher instructs students on the procedure and methods of their work. Then students think over the sequence of tasks performance and the conditions necessary for achieving the educational aim. Moreover independent work should correspond to students' educational abilities and ensure gradual transition from one level of difficulty to another. It should be organized in order to form students' skills of self-directed learning in educational, scientific and professional activities and develop their abilities to take responsibility for the quality of learning, to solve the problem of improving language proficiency. Thus, there are the following conditions of successful self-guided learning implementation:

• variety of types of independent work;

• the content of the work and the form of its implementation;

• individual approach to self-directed learning organization;

• detailed recommendations;

• teacher feedback.

There are several approaches to encouraging students for self-directed learning:

• systematic, when students' self-guided work is conducted under the teacher's supervision in class, and involves the interconnected development of different types of speaking activities;

• activity, when students' independent work is directed on active language and speaking activities, work with dictionaries, glossaries and reference literature, the use of active and interactive methods of self-directed learning;

• communicative, when self-directed learning involves preparing students for communicative activities and their implementation during self-guided work;

• personal, when the motivational sphere of students, their individual psychological features when working with educational material are taken into consideration;

• cultural, when in the course of self-directed learning students learn more about the culture of the country the language of which is being studied, by means of the use of authentic educational materials.

According to the place and time of its performance, the nature of teacher's supervision, and the methods of monitoring its results, there are the following types of students' self-directed work in teaching a foreign language for professional purposes: short-term and long-term; classroom and extracurricular; personally controlled by the teacher; controlled by the teacher indirectly (using instructions, rules, study aids etc.) and uncontrolled by the teacher (by personal initiative of the students).

Depending on the forms of its organization, self-directed learning can be divided into frontal, group and individual. Individual tasks are an important element of students' independent work. They can be used in foreign language learning to control the knowledge of each individual student or several groups of students. At the same time, individual tasks should correspond to the level of students' knowledge and their psychological features. Individual self-directed learning comprises different kinds of tasks:

• frontal – when all students perform similar tasks;

• group – when students work at tasks of different complexity;

• individual – when different tasks of the same complexity are performed either by a group or by individual students *(Moroz, 1997).*

Self-directed learning is a necessary stage in the process of mastering language and communication units, search for necessary information and its adequate application in intercultural communication. When learning a foreign language, certain competences contributing to the formation of students' readiness for independent activities are used:

• educational-organizational (abilities to understand the purpose of educational activities and define tasks for its implementation);

• educational-intellectual and creative (abilities to define and explain different concepts, express opinions, reasoned arguments and participate in project activities);

• control and evaluation (abilities to correct mistakes and evaluate achievements).

We emphasize the importance of interactive learning in classroom independent work organization. It is performed by means of teacher-student speaking activities development and transforms the process of knowledge accumulation into practical application of acquired communicative skills in everyday realities. Such teaching methods as case-study, project, presentation, a method for analyzing professional situations, business games, study tours, employment-trip etc. are very important for efficient self-directed learning. They optimize the process of students' communicative, initiative, independence, and organizational skills formation; enable them to make decisions in atypical situations; teach them to work in team.

One of the elements of extra-curricular self-directed learning, that requires special attention, is reading professional literature. Intensive reading enables students to master a large number of language combinations, grammatical structures and lexical phrases for much shorter period of time. Systematic home reading is an important source and means of students' active vocabulary enrichment and their speaking activities development. Professional texts should be related to lexical and grammatical material the students have learnt before. Some scientists state that professional literature reading should not be complicated by other activities (like texts discussion, etc.). In our opinion, this statement is controversial, as additional exercises and tasks are necessary for further English speaking activities development. When working at English professional texts, considerable attention is paid to reading and writing competence formation, which is divided into three traditionally defined stages: Pre-

Reading Activities, Reading Comprehension, and Post-Reading Activities. Pre-Reading Activities are aimed at motivation readers for task performance, their prognostic skills development, preparation for text perception. They are based on certain text "signals" (headings, certain quotations from the text, titles, and events from previous sections). The students are offered several options for the events development; they are offered to express their vision of the problem.

The tasks on reading comprehension should encourage students to read texts carefully, to get the main idea of the text and to understand the meaning of the definite text fragments. Working with foreign periodicals, students should perform such tasks as professional vocabulary learning; titles of articles analysis, writing advertisements, making a plan of an article, etc. (Esipov, 1980).

Conclusions and perspectives for further research. Analyzing all the above mentioned we can conclude that properly organized self-directed learning contributes to the successful and effective foreign language mastery, deepens and broadens students' knowledge, increases their interests in cognitive activities, diversifies and develops their learning skills and techniques as well as ensures the development of students' creative competencies. To achieve the educational goal when teaching a foreign language for professional purposes we should take into account psychological and pedagogical conditions of independent work organization. They are: forms of self-directed learning, which motivate students for educational and cognitive activities; methods, principles and approaches to its organization, control on students'achievements as implementation of forms, principles and purposes of self-directed learning.

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