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PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN PANDEMIC SITUATION

ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНАЯ ПОДГОТОВКА В УСЛОВИЯХ ПАНДЕМИИ

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ABSTRACT

VOCATIONAL TRAINING, PANDEMIC,
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The article touches upon the problem of self-isolation caused by the coronavirus pandemic and the need to provide educational services to Belarusian students. A new stage in the development of vocational training occurred during the period of self-isolation during the pandemic. Teachers had to carry out online training sessions in the form of seminars, conferences and lectures, working remotely from home. That recent experience has shown both positive and negative aspects of educational platforms and services, the capabilities and the limitations of the pedagogical impact using online services by teaching the discipline "Foreign language".

АННОТАЦИЯ

ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНАЯ ПОДГОТОВКА,
ПАНДЕМИЯ, ДИСЦИПЛИНА «ИНОСТРАН-
НЫЙ ЯЗЫК», ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫЕ ПЛАТ-
ФОРМЫ И СЕРВИСЫ, ОНЛАЙН ЗАНЯТИЯ

В статье затронута проблема самоизоляции, вызванная пандемией коронавируса, и необходимость продолжить оказывать образовательные услуги белорусскими УВО. Именно нацеленность на безопасность обучения явилась стимулом развития профессионального образования, так как преподаватели столкнулись с необходимостью проведения занятий, вычитки лекций и организации конференций удалённо, работая из дома в режиме онлайн. Такой опыт выявил как положительные, так и отрицательные стороны образовательных платформ и сервисов для педагогического воздействия на примере дисциплины «Иностранный язык», которые освещаются в данной статье.

The functioning of higher educational establishments (HEEs) as a social institution is carried out according to standard curricula approved by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus. Introduction of competency-based vocational education in Belarus has made it possible to train specialists according to market demands. In particular, Belarusian graduates are experts who are ready to mobilize their personal resources necessary for the qualified conscious solution of professional tasks in typical and atypical situations.

Researchers (O. M. Bobienko, A. V. Khutorskaya and others) propose to distinguish all competencies of a specialist on two basic grounds: universal and professional. Universal competencies are divided into general scientific, social-personal and instrumental ones. Professional competencies can be divided into general professional and professional-specialized ones [1, c. 10].

The researchers and scientists, working on the matter of "professional competence" (S. Ya. Batyshev, V. S. Bezrukova, V. I. Mestechkin, Yu. G. Tatur, A. Shelten, O. N. Shakhmatova and others) agree that special professional competencies can be formed and assessed within the framework of one or several academic subjects. They stress that universal competencies are acquired as an integrated result of education and are fundamentally supra-subject. The first ones represent the ability of an individual to effectively solve a certain class of professional tasks (diagnostic, design, etc.) adequately to a specific situation, the latter are invariant with respect to the type of professional activity [2, c. 14].

The study of foreign languages in non-linguistic higher educational establishments is conditioned by the content aspect of the standard curricula for the academic discipline "Foreign language" for non-linguistic specialties. According to the program, training takes place within the framework of classroom practical classes in direct educational cooperation with the teacher. For the intensification of learning, as well as the effective formation and development of competencies, a symbiosis of traditional and newest teaching methods with the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) is widely used: the project method, game technologies, "case-study", "portfolio" technology, technology of small groups, modular competence technology and others.

The need for self-isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the wide possibilities of ICTs. The situation showed the primary pre-condition of Belarusian HEEs for successful distance learning, carrying out training indirectly through modern educational platforms and services such as Moodle, Zoom, Skype and others.

The need for self-isolated indirect interaction involuntarily forced teachers to demonstrate their creativity and use all the capabilities of ICT to the full as

effectively as possible. In particular, teachers had to use a computer with Internet access from home as the main teaching tool. They've also gained experience in conducting online classes, training sessions, consultative workshops, delivering lectures and organizing conferences, working remotely from home.

Analysis of existing methodological and multimedia resources of the contemporary educational milieu, trends, challenges and perspectives allows us to assert that most of the known technologies and teaching methods can be used in a remote-controlled education. The most effective methods are innovative computer aided language learning (CALL) ones. Such information and communication technologies can help students develop critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills that are necessary both for work with large amounts of information and for taking the best decisions in each professional situation.

Among the advantages of remote online classes have been identified the following:

- access to wide educational Internet resources, which might be impossible in poorly technically equipped classrooms;
- saving of time and commuting expenses for both students and teachers;
- Internet-based training sessions provide an opportunity for the dispatcher to draw up a flexible and convenient schedule for everyone;
- opportunity to attend classes without the risk of infecting others;
- physical isolation of students contributes to the better discipline in the classroom due to the concentration on learning materials, and not on creating a favorable social group status through interpersonal interaction;
- a change in the role of a teacher: from the traditional one of a "classroom mentor" to the role of a "supervisor-organizer" due to the indirect pedagogical impact;
- online approach may lead to recruitment teaching staff on the criteria of territorial convenience, but only on the criteria of competence up to the involvement of native speakers in the educational process in future;
- remote online conferences on the Zoom platform allow to expand the number and geography of participants;
- to develop not only speaking but also listening skills, and not in an ideal environment of sound perception, but as a conversation via video communication, which is more expected in future employment;
- formation of communication skills on professional topics through telecommunications in a foreign language, which is even more important for professional growth than direct communication, owing to the specific nature of the Belarusian labor market;

- formation and development of online communication skills on the platforms Zoom, Skype, Navek Meet, as well as studying these service capabilities.

However, after such online classes, teachers feel more tired than after on-site classes with students. Great fatigue is caused by the novelty of teaching methods, the fact that communication is no longer as natural as in the classroom, and a number of other disadvantages:

- quality training is impossible without high-speed Internet;
- inability of platforms to provide simultaneous feedback of the interlocutors due to a real-time mode failure;
- interrupting the speaker cuts off the end of the interlocutor's phrase, so the naturalness of a conversation with expression of opinions and dissents turns into a lonely speech of the speaker in the unnatural silence of listeners. Though there is an opportunity to express the attitude to the information in the chat or by using emoji. Nevertheless, it doesn't represent the full picture to the speaker on how his message is perceived (that is particularly true when delivering lectures);
- technical illiteracy; lack of a comfortable separate workplace at home, both regarding students and teachers;
- home environment prevents the change of the atmosphere of "relaxation and rest" to the atmosphere of "student cognitive activity";
- students' choice to study online by hiding their faces and workplaces behind graphic avatars, which makes it impossible even to imitate real communication;
- lack of centrally developed teaching aids with electronic support for students and teachers in accordance with the standard educational program.

On the basis of the considerations outlined above, it can be argued that the effectiveness of using educational online platforms is based on the principles of the joint creative process of students and the teacher, mutual desire to exchange experience, interaction and correction of learning.

The use of active methods equips students with basic knowledge and forms the competencies necessary for a qualified specialist. It should be noted that the activation of the educational process presupposes the assimilation of professionally significant knowledge through the search for ways and means of solving important theoretical and practical problems independently or carried out under the guidance of a teacher.

Thus, further modernization of the educational process, taking into account the positive experience of using educational platforms, is inevitable. The resources of the subject "Foreign language" are multi-faceted and they are a fertile ground for the formation and development of personal competencies of the future professional. Mastering a foreign language is a specially organized activity based on a certain

teaching method that takes into account the individual and age characteristics of students. Consequently, many hours should be devoted to study such a discipline as “Foreign language” by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus, both in class and online. Along with all of the above, it should be borne in mind that the guarantor of the rapid and high-quality formation of professional and linguistic competencies of students in any type of study (online and offline) is the teacher’s methodological literacy, and not the access to Internet resources itself.

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