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EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY AS AN ELEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Key words: extracurricular activity, student foreign language acquisition.

In the course of realization of relevant academic programs instructional systems of each specific university chair are an integral reflection of a combination of the teaching and educational processes accounting for their discipline-specific peculiarities.

Due to their vast academic, pragmatic and educational potential foreign languages allow for a very harmonious combination of the mandatory in-class instruction and targeted extracurricular activities.

In a specialized higher education institution offering relatively compact training in foreign languages in terms of in-class course hours, extracurricular educational activity is an essential instructional solution to improve the quality of students' foreign language proficiency.

Extracurricular training in foreign languages is especially effective if naturally integrated in students' leisure activities. As the latter is a conscious and targeted activity allowing students to cater to their own needs, personal interests, to choose activities for self-actualization, self-affirmation and self-improvement. Extracurricular training within students' leisure activities hence turns into a realm where knowledge, skills and competencies – either acquired during an in-class training or auto-didactically – are applied. This underpins its essential educational,

developing, stabilizing, integrating and compensating potential [2].

Extracurricular activity encompasses any students' activities undertaken in the context of the relevant higher education institution but beyond the academic process, reinforcing students' personal development, satisfaction of personal interests, expanding and deepening of students' professional knowledge, as well as establishing students' essential professional competencies [1].

The extracurricular training organization must be of systematic nature and take into account peculiarities of the foreign language training outside the class room. It has been established that the efficiency and the effectiveness of the extracurricular training in foreign languages directly depend on the following principles: consideration of the student's language proficiency and consistency with the respective in-class training; consideration of age peculiarities and interests of students; focus on communication; combination of collective, group and individual forms of instruction; consideration of interdisciplinary factors [2; 3].

Establishment of any system implies certain interdependencies between objectives, content, forms and methods of the teaching and educational process. End objectives of the extracurricular training in foreign languages include, inter alia: expansion and deepening of knowledge, skills and competencies in foreign language communication proficiency; facilitation of the development of individual creative skills and establishment of individual behavioral style of students; intensification of students' interest and motivation for foreign language learning, encouraging of cognitive and linguistic interests; increasing the creativity level of the educational environment; creative interaction with students; promotion of students' experience in intercultural interaction and cooperation; promotion of students' linguistic, intercultural and professional knowledge; comprehensive personal development, including intellectual, emotional, spiritual and moral aspects.

In the context of extracurricular training in foreign languages typically several major functions are distinguished, which exist in a direct interdependency and interrelation, complement and reinforce each other: 1) teaching function (establishment and improvement of language competency, repetition, deepening, expansion, and reinforcement of the training material, establishment of intra- and

inter-disciplinary connections); 2) development function (encouragement of intellectual and spiritual growth of students, development of their attention, memory, thinking process, speaking abilities, activation of cognitive capabilities etc.); 3) educational function (confidence and readiness to undertake professional activity, strive for learning, cultivation of discipline, assertiveness, patience and resistance etc.); 4) diagnostic function (identification of language proficiency competency of students, identification of the material absorption level at each training stage, diagnostics of difficulties and identification of training effectiveness); 5) management / planning function (acquisition of information regarding the training process and the consistency of obtained results versus planning, management of the didactic process by means of methodology modification in accordance with the level and individual peculiarities of students); 6) assessment function (assessment of students' activities and respective results thereof in the course of extracurricular training); 7) motivational function (creation of positive motives and incentives in the training process, activation of the thinking process, stimulation of students' initiative, cognitive interest for learning and creative approach thereto) [1].

In the teaching process the mentioned functions become objectives of the extracurricular training, which the teacher can achieve by a variety of means. The expansion of the extracurricular training structure can significantly magnify students' motivational environment and cognitive activity. Teaching and educational routes hereby must target specific objective, take into account content-, activity- and values-related preferences of each individual, and thus must exhibit variety. Among the existing technologies and forms of foreign language training the most productive ones in the development of students' creative thinking are issue-based, research and collective/ group technologies. These allow for training of creative specialists with a skill set of scientific research competency, independent analysis of the possible implementation strategies of the existing theoretical and empirical research achievements.

A preparation of an extracurricular training event requires establishing of very favorable prerequisites for unfolding and demonstrating students' creative potential, as well as for developing their creative thinking. This allows for the establishment of

an inner motive to form and articulate a thought in a foreign language, as well as a desire to take part in the communication process – i.e., a foreign language communication competency is developed. During extracurricular training events foreign languages become tools of learning and development. It is the ability of the chair's teaching staff to establish a favorable environment for the development of students' unconventional / creative thinking, skills to adjust to and subsequently to change a specific environment, that will ultimately define the quality of students' education in the future.

Prior to students' undertaking of the extracurricular training the teacher should provide instructions for training assignments, including specification of the relevant objectives, content of the assignments, timeframes, approximated workload, key requirements regarding assignment results, and evaluation criteria. In the course of the instruction process the teacher should also point out typical mistakes made during the assignment.

Members of the foreign language teaching staff of Tavria State Agrotechnological University apply various forms and methods of extracurricular training, inter alia:

- Encouraging students participation in scientific research activities (groups of specialized translation, preparation of scientific research publications, PowerPoint presentations, pecha-kucha and video presentations for student scientific conferences, as well as poster-sessions in foreign languages);
- Organization of the so-called "Foreign languages decade" (organization of podium discussions, colloquia with participation of native speakers; creative contests for the best foreign language essay; press-conferences with native speakers, university faculty members and international scholarship holders; intellectual contests (e.g. "Brain ring"); theatrical mini-performances; quiz-sessions; provision of entertainment content on the chair's website);
- Collective discussions of current topics with relevant experts and native speakers in the framework of the English discussion club "Ukrainian Youth for Sustainable Development".

In summary, the technology of an integral combination of the in-class and

extracurricular training systems in the foreign language teaching process improves the level of students' foreign language proficiency capabilities and reinforces the actualization of a range of important components of the quality of modern education, such as dialogue-orientation, creativity, innovation and pragmatic orientation.

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