Обучение межкультурной коммуникации в свете метода проектов и массовых открытых онлайн-курсов

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Аннотация
Данное исследование рассматривает процесс обучения межкультурной коммуникации с привлечением массовых открытых онлайн-курсов (МООК). В данном отношении метод проектов представляется одним из эффективнейших образовательных средств в свете МООК и определяет их главные параметры, которые обосновывают разумность использования данного метода в условиях МООК-образования.
Ключевые слова: массовый открытый онлайн-курс, МООК, метод проектов, межкультурная коммуникация, иностранный язык.

Project-Based Learning and Massive Open Online Courses Spotlight on Teaching Intercultural Communication

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Abstract
This study explores the process of teaching intercultural communication with the involvement of massive open online courses (MOOCs). In this respect the project-based learning is one of the most effective educational tools in keeping with MOOCs and determines their main parameters that justify the reasonableness of using this method in the context of MOOC-education.
Keywords: massive open online course, MOOC, project-based learning, intercultural communication, foreign language.

Current trends in the use of ICT in various fields allow us to reconsider some approaches to the professional activities of the future specialist. One of the areas in which topical problems of raising the level of professionalism are solved is education and the training of professional communication in a foreign language.

Like any other science, pedagogy assimilate the achievements of scientific and technological progress. That is why educational standards were formed by meeting the processes of optimization and informatization, increasingly gravitating toward electronic forms of education and upbringingx [1, 2].

The result of such transformations was the creation and widespread introduction of distance education, implying remote interaction between the "sender" and the "recipient" of knowledge carried out through interactive ICT.

The idea of using ICT in the educational process is not new. The emergence of new services and new formats of interaction of specialists from various professional communities in virtual space has led to the fact that many universities that developed courses in the framework of electronic, distance or open education transferred part of the learning process to the network[3, 4].

One of the new forms of distance education has become massive open online courses (MOOCs) [5, 6]. Within the framework of MOOCs students have access to educational facilities that expand and supplement the scope and content of classical distance learning resources. Such an expansion of the content of the learning process within the framework of MOOCs is achieved through the use of a variety of educational tools, including one of the most effective tools - project-based learning.

In this article we turn to the learning processes of professional communication in a foreign language using massive open online courses, consider the project method as one of the most effective learning tools within the framework of MOOCs and outline the key characteristics of massive open online courses that justify the use of the method of projects within the framework of this form of distance learning [7].

According to the definition proposed by UNESCO, MOOCs are educational or research resources that are publicly available. The founders of such courses are the scientists Brian Alexander and Dave Cormier who developed the concept of MOOC while working on the course "Connectivity and Connective Knowledge" [8]. The abbreviation itself consists of four terms, namely massive, open, online and course. The educational process is automated through the introduction of electronic distance learning systems Moodle, eFront, OpenElms, ATutor, Learn eXact, etc.

It is obvious that the quality of the distance dialogue carried out for educational purposes is determined by the quality of the interaction between the "provider" and the "recipient" of knowledge. That is why the main features of distance learning are, on the one hand, the use of indirect mechanisms and communication channels, and on the other - the maximum potential for activating individual, independent activities aimed at self-development [10, 11]. It is worth noting that the latter aspect occupies a special place in the context of higher professional education, since under the conditions of modern social and professional requirements, the skill of exercising autonomous self-training is considered today as one of the most important. As a result, an analysis of current trends in the use of ICT in education allows us today to review and reassess the existing approaches to teaching professional communication in a foreign language [12].

Massive open online courses as a form of distance learning also require the adaptation of educational material to features remote interaction between teachers and students. Thanks to new technologies, distance education becomes

interactive, allowing listeners to interact with a mentor, orient themselves in a large mass of open educational information [13].

In this connection, a particular interest is the method of projects which can be considered as one of the most effective tools for teaching professional communication in a foreign language within the framework of MOOCs.

The method of projects today is considered to be the most optimal means of activating the process of teaching students. This method most fully reflects the two basic principles of a communicative approach to learning a foreign language: motivation for learning and personal interest [14, 15]. The concept of the project method is based on the emphasis and development of cognitive operations carried out by a student in the learning process. The teacher also acts as an assistant, offering methods and technologies of teaching that give students the opportunity to independently acquire knowledge of a professionally-oriented foreign language in the process of solving practical problems.

Despite the high popularity of distance learning, not every such project is effective today. The effectiveness of training largely depends on the attention to the student's personality and consideration of its individual characteristics [16]. Therefore, at the present time, there are clear trends in the individualization of the entire learning process.

One of the goals that a teacher sets himself is the formation of a personality readiness for self-regulation and achieving this goal becomes possible by shifting the emphasis from learning to cognitive which in turn implies a modification of the functions performed by the teacher. These functions vary within each individual stage of the project work where the teacher acts as an adviser, assistant, controller, source of information and curator [17]. The main function of the teacher in this case is not to communicate some established knowledge, but to teach methods of work that allow you to acquire this knowledge. The result of the application of such pedagogical practices is the stimulation of the work of each individual subject of the educational process, based on the development of creative activity and initiative.

Thus, this method of updating linguistic cultural knowledge is based, first of all, on stimulating the cognitive apparatus of subjects of learning through their carrying out a project activity that presupposes a certain degree of autonomous functioning, the realization of a person-oriented approach and also the direction to achieve a practical result [18, 19]. In this case, the teacher is assigned the role of coordinator, assistant, directing the process to the most fruitful, from the point of view of expediency and effectiveness, the channel. Other principles that ensure the effectiveness of teaching professional communication in a foreign language include: the dynamic nature of the educational process, presence of a problem component, application of communicative-situational approach, interactivity, group interaction, introspection. An important factor is also the motivation to acquire and assimilate supporting knowledge, stimulation of social and business competencies (organizational training, research of available data, decision-making, structuring, collective interaction, dispute management, cooperation, presentation of results, analysis, etc.) [20].

The implementation of the project method in the educational process implies, therefore, the fulfillment of some basic requirements. Such requirements include:

- presence of a problem requiring research and solutions;
- practical value of the expected results;
- autonomous work carried out both in educational and extra-curricular time;
- systematization of the content of the project task;
- application of research methods [21].

In the process of teaching a foreign language this method can be implemented to master a wide range of topics, since the thematic selection is carried out taking into account the practical value for the student. In the framework of this article, the project method is considered as one of the most effective means of teaching professional communication in a foreign language within the framework of MOOCs [22]. In order to justify the practical feasibility of using the project method within the framework of this form of distance learning, we turned to the analysis of project assignments proposed by one of the most popular projects in the field of massive education - Coursera. In accordance with the results of the analysis we outlined some key parameters of massive open online courses, substantiating the desirability of using the project method within the framework of MOOCs.

Practical usefulness. The use of ICT technologies in accordance with the aims of teaching implies the implementation of the principle of mixed education, which, in essence, involves a combination of standard and distance learning forms and allows to improve the quality of higher education focusing on the interaction of teacher and student, as well as on the individual abilities of each student, taking into account his cognitive needs. This, in turn, allows us to achieve the most significant practical results.

The system organization. The clarity and consistency of the organization of the content in MOOCs is evaluated in the context of both the content (interactive structuring of the training material) and the temporal aspects (daily assignments, weekly tests, quarterly projects, etc.).

Communicative experience is largely determined by the permissible framework and opportunities for interpersonal and group interaction between students, who should be given the opportunity to evaluate and analyze work and achievements of fellow students. This is primarily motivated by the value of communicative experience, obtained in the framework of distance learning practices, as well as practical value, expressed in the development of communicative, social and educational-cognitive competencies.

Accumulation of knowledge. This parameter as a whole correlates with the development of students' ability to process and accumulate information coming through electronic data transmission channels. This quality property of massive open online courses, in our opinion, can be provided in the most rational way by applying the project method.

Technological process of the educational process. This parameter reflects the need to introduce and use modern methods of distance knowledge transfer. The content of the distance courses is organized in the form of Internet pages, multimedia presentations, interactive exercises, audio and video files that function through built-in plug-ins, as well as other training tools stored on the web server.

The gradual increase in the complexity of tasks. This parameter generally refers to one of the fundamental requirements of the educational process. Each course (and each project in should be developed on the basis of a step-by-step approach to ensure a gradual transition to each subsequent level of complexity in accordance with individual abilities and indicators of each individual student.

The integrated coherence of all types of educational activity implies the need to combine different types of educational activities within the integrated information space to build a comprehensive knowledge base necessary for the implementation of future professional activities. The structure of MOOCs is based on the following three fundamental components: individual goals and practical results, project activities and collective discussion.

Individual goals and practical results. At the beginning of each course, students formulate individual goals - what they want to achieve and how it will contribute to their professional activities. At the end of each module, the students compare the received practical knowledge with their own expectations and record the result of their activities. Thus, each student determines the individual practical usefulness of the work being done for himself.

Project activity. MOOCs offers design tasks. Each project assignment is designed to apply the knowledge and skills gained in the module and is always offered just before the control tests as the most time-consuming and comprehensive task. Thus, the clarity of the structural organization of the course is observed, a gradual increase in the complexity of the proposed tasks is ensured.

Collective discussion. The purpose of this element of the course is to provide deep and wide interpersonal and group interaction between students while peer reweaving or having conversation on MOOCs` forum discussion board.

Summarizing all of the above, it is necessary, first of all, to note that in the conditions of modern realities the problem of creating and implementing professionally oriented massive open online courses is relevant for Russian universities, since the professional communication of specialists in a foreign language is a dynamic phenomenon based on consistent and purposeful evolutionary processes. Effective management of this phenomenon should be based on an integrated approach that would address the problems of providing quality educational services provided within the framework of MOOCs. Providing high-quality content for massive online courses, in turn, implies the use of appropriate training tools, including the method of projects which has proved to be one of the most effective tools for developing professional knowledge and skills within the framework of the MOOCs.

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