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A country studies conference as a means of formation students' linguistic and cultural competence

While working with the language material foreign language teachers in one way or another use various information about the countries of the language learned.

One of the ways of its presentation is a student country studies conference, which is annually held at our University. Its subject matter may vary. But as a rule it is devoted to the problems of culture, education, sports, art, and youth pastime both in this country and abroad.

The teaching experience proves that the students are particularly interested and curious things about history, literature, theatre, cinematography, music, customs and traditions of the English-speaking countries.

At the same time teaching practice reveals that the informational level of rural school students as for different aspects of cultural life in English-speaking countries is rather poor. It happens to be so because most of the country studies texts published in English textbooks are often not vivid, they are dull, with the lack of authentic texts, pictures and illustrations in them. As a result these factors reduce students' interest in obtaining new knowledge about English-speaking countries.

Thus this kind of conference is of great value in the process of teaching English and is a source of additional motivation for students to study a foreign language.

Thanks to usage of bright interesting linguistic and cultural materials the students' reports are not overloaded with 'dry' official information. The process of mastering the language turns out to be a kind of creative activity and as a result students 'open' the country of the language learned.

To crown it all, it should be mentioned here that a conference as a method of teaching requires deep and thorough methodological organization on the teachers' part as well as serious preparation on the part of the students.