Modern Education Technologies for Pre-Service Foreign Language Teachers

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the problem of modern education technologies in the pre-service training of teachers in the logic of the competence-based approach, due to the requirements of the Russian National Curriculum of Higher Education and in connection with the transition to the tiered system of professional training. The author describes the application of one of the most up-to-date and efficient technologies aimed at developing pre-service foreign language teachers’ professional competence at the course of professional training - Network Electronic Portfolio. Detailed analyses of its structure alongside with the experimental data are presented in the research.

Keywords: education technologies; pre-service foreign language teacher training; competency-based approach

1. Introduction

The main fields in reforming higher education are orientation to personal abilities, humanization, scientific integration, transition from subject matters to educational areas, shift to high-technology instruction. One of the necessary conditions for the realization of these directions is introduction and implementation of new educational (pedagogical) technologies.

The goal of a higher professional education institution in accordance with the Russian National Curriculum is a professionally competent graduate with a range of competencies in various fields, especially teaching.

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2. Research design and methodology

Professional competencies of pre-service teachers are personal formations developed in the course of the basic and variable parts disciplines studies of the professional cycle in the process of teacher training, which include, alongside with cognitive and behavioural aspects, a long-term personal commitment to the professional activity (Kruze, Oskolkova and Ozhegova, 2012).

At the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the state higher professional education institution "Perm State Humanitarian Pedagogical University" (Russia), a competency-oriented concept of pre-service foreign language teachers’ training has been developed and applied (Bezukladnikov, Kruze, and Mosina, 2013). Subject to the provisions of the National Curriculum of Higher education and competency-based approach to the pre-service teachers’ professional competence requirements, a "model of a pre-service teacher’s set of competencies", which are formed by a student in the course of higher teacher training education was presented. Special attention is paid to the formation of special competencies (Bezukladnikov, Shamov, and Novosyolov, 2013).

In order to efficiently provide the pre-service foreign language teacher's special competencies development, new modern teaching methods and education technologies, such as “Collaborative Training”, “Project Work Method” “Web-quest” and etc., have been applied. Their distinguishing features are student-centered and activity-based approaches; focus on personal and professional development of a multicultural and polylingual pre-service teacher; creation of a favorable psychological climate; wide use of pedagogical interaction; independent work skills formation (Gural, 2014).

The need for such a technological support of the educational process is determined by several reasons: existing contradictions in the methodological science itself (against the background of its active development in recent years); pluralism of the modern system of foreign language education, variety of training programs. These reasons, and also the need for a conscientious, active, creative attitude of a per-service teacher to educational and professional activity increase the importance of students’ self-education and formation of independent academic work of culture (Bezukladnikov, Zhigalev and Vikulina, 2014).

One of the most up-to-date technologies aimed at special competencies forming is the Network Electronic Professional Portfolio, developed at the Department for Foreign Language Education at Perm State Humanitarian Pedagogical University (Bezukladnikov and Kruze, 2012).

The technology is based on the following principles:

- continuity (continuous data collection);
- diagnostic nature (existence of a criteria model which can be correlated with a real condition, system or process);
- problem-solving orientation (inclusion of the most problematic indicators in the criteria structure to draw conclusions about deviations in the education process);
- technological efficiency of the tracking criteria (inclusion of the maximum information in the criteria model);
- wide change detection range (possibility to identify the anomalies);
- feedback;
- scientific background (scientific validity of the model and parameter tracking);
- self-improvement (possibility to modify the monitoring structure).

The competency-based approach to education as the entity of personality focused, activity-based and technological approaches, is the cornerstone of the technology.

The portfolio consists of 7 parts: introduction, news, portrait, passport of lingual and didactic competencies being formed, professional biography, personal file and profile of the further professional self-development and career trajectory. Students’ personal professional portfolio work starts at the beginning of training at the university. While attending special classes, they become familiar with the goals and objectives of use, features and principles of work with this technology. At this stage, they are able to get their professional development program, understand the steps necessary for forming their teaching competencies, and the assessment criteria that are supposed to motivate their learning activities and striving for continuous self-development (Bezukladnikov, Novosyolov and Kruze, 2014).

After receiving their personal login and password, students begin to create a personal portfolio starting with the section "Portrait", where in the blank text field they tell about themselves, explain the choice of their profession,
present their ideas about the qualities necessary to achieve success in their career path. Students also articulate their personal goals in preparing for their professional activities, using the terminology that is common and understandable at this stage. The "Portrait" is saved in the portfolio, and, as a further step, the student has an opportunity to compare their initial understanding of the profession with those obtained by the others over the years of training, noting their expectations and observing their professional growth. This section provides the educators with information about the student's personality, interests and preferences, making it possible to offer them their individual "routes" in the educational activity and problems for their research work (Gural and Smokotin, 2014).

In the future, students work through “Biography”, where they record their personal achievements and success in academic, subject fields and pedagogical practices, write research and methodological papers, participate in student conferences, seminars, forums, etc., assessing the level of their special competencies development. The "Personal file" section of the electronic professional portfolio is a kind of personal students’ media bank. Here they keep the results of their creative teaching, research and professional activities, which, at any time, may be submitted to prove and illustrate their achievements. Professional electronic portfolio that is hosted on the university server is accessible from any computer with the Internet access, which enables establishing and maintaining a remote contact and meeting the student's learning needs, thus offloading the curriculum and training premises.

The Electronic portfolio management is carried out by a teacher-webmaster responsible for inserting the students’ marks after their passing exams and administering and maintaining the use of this platform.

The students complete the work with the professional portfolio delivering a multimedia presentation and defending the created professional profile in front of the State Examination Commission. They analyze the problems they had during their academic and professional activities and how they overcame them. Graduates also evaluate their career prospects for the future.

3. Results

The effectiveness of this technology was verified in the course of experiential training, which took place in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

The diagnostic results are given below (Table. 1, Fig. 1, Fig 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>28,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>22,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>24,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>25,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The level of reflectiveness of graduates in 2011 - 2014

Fig. 1. The level of reflectiveness of graduates in 2011 – 2014.


Fig. 2. The total of indicators of long term motivation and ability for professional activity of graduates 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014

Conclusion

The data obtained during the experiment has proved the application efficiency of the technology “Professional Portfolio” in the education process aimed at training professionally competent pre-service foreign language teachers in accordance with the requirements and demands of the global society. It provides the implementation of distant interaction and widens the collaboration possibilities between students and teachers, develops students’ independent work skills and self-reflection. Pre-service foreign language teachers become more creative and professionally competent personalities capable of planning and following their own educational route.
References


