

# ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКИЕ НАУКИ. ТЕОРИЯ И МЕТОДИКА ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

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## САМОУПРАВЛЯЕМОЕ ОБУЧЕНИЕ ИНОСТРАННЫМ ЯЗЫКАМ

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**Аннотация.** Существенной характеристикой человека в современном обществе является способность к самообразованию и саморазвитию. Информационное общество требует от человека повышать способность к получению новых знаний, делать выбор, самостоятельно развиваться и повышать свои знания, умения и навыки на протяжении всей жизни. Социальный и экономический успех отдельного человека, его конкурентоспособность зависят от его готовности расти в профессиональном плане. Современная высшая школа видит одной из своих задач воспитание в молодых людях готовность учиться и умение самообразования. Самостоятельная образовательная деятельность получила мощный импульс в сложившейся ситуации пандемии. Выход студентов многих вузов на карантин создал объективные предпосылки для расширения самостоятельного обучения. Статья направлена на раскрытие особенностей самостоятельного обучения в изучении иностранных языков. Авторы раскрывают базовые навыки, которые могут помочь студентам организовать самостоятельное обучение в рамках изучения иностранных языков, указывают на источники мотивации и определяют индивидуальные образовательные маршруты. Авторами разработан и апробирован практико-ориентированный курс «Учиться учиться», основная цель которого – развитие у студентов способности организовывать самообразовательную деятельность по изучению иностранного языка.

**Ключевые слова:** английский язык, студент, обучение, языковые навыки, самообразование.

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## SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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**Abstract.** The essential characteristic of a person in modern society is the ability to self-educate and self-develop. Success of a person in the information society depends first of all on ability to produce new knowledge, innovations, ability to acquire new knowledge, to make choices, to study and self-educate throughout the lives. Only those who constantly develop and maintain their professional skills at a high level can achieve social and economic success and be competitive. One of the main tasks of the higher school is to prepare young people

for constant self-educational activities, to equip them with necessary skills and abilities. Self-directed educational activity has received a powerful boost in the current pandemic situation. The quarantine of students of many universities has created objective prerequisites for expanding independent learning. The article aims to reveal the peculiarities of self-directed learning in foreign language education. The authors reveal basic skills that can help students to organize their self-directed learning in foreign language education, point out sources of motivation and define individual educational routes. The authors designed and tested a practice-oriented course “Learn how to learn”, the main purpose of which is to develop students’ ability to organize their self-educational activity in foreign language learning.

**Keywords:** English language, student, teaching, language skills, self-directed learning.

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Success of a person in the information society depends first of all on ability to produce new knowledge, innovations, ability to acquire new knowledge, to make choices, to study and self-educate throughout the lives. A famous American scientist A. Toffler noted that people who have to live in a super industrial society need to have new skills in three key areas: the ability to learn, ability to communicate and the ability to choose. In schools of the future it has to be taught not only the sum of knowledge, but also the ability to operate with it. Students have to learn how to learn [11, P. 449]. Another famous philosopher John Dewey wrote that the most important attitude that can be formed is that of the desire to go on learning [3]. It is proved that learning projects are mostly undertaken by individuals outside of formal education provision on a substantial scale. Thus, a well-known British scientist N. Sargant revealed that one in six people are trying to learn about or teach themselves something informally - at home, at work, or elsewhere [10, P. 15]. A famous writer Ch. Hayes has developed the idea that people should take control of their own learning and adopt self-directed inquiry as a lifelong priority. He underlined that when people fail to take control of their education, they fail to take control of their lives [5, P. xiv6].

It should be noted that self-directed learning is discussed according to one or more of three main conceptualizations: 1) independent learning, which connotes learning in isolation, or is represented by the ‘lone’ learner who makes all of the decisions about goals, content, effort, time, and evaluation, etc. Assistance from others is routinely accepted and rejected according to the learner's own whims

and standards. 2) Distance learning, which connotes physical distance between the learner and a teacher or an agent where the learner is constrained in some degree by a curriculum devised by others; but learner behavior may include some of the activities noted in the other two conceptualizations. 3) Psychological control, which connotes the necessary element in the definition is found in the learner's psychological independence (control) rather than in social or curricula elements. Thus, neither the setting, nor the format of the learning activity, necessarily determines if learning is self-directed. In the context Lifelong Learning the system of open learning is widespread at European universities, which provides great opportunities for international integration in the area of vocational education and self-education [6, 8].

Self-educated people are not dependent on others for knowledge. If they need a specialized skill, they know how to acquire it without dependence on authority. One of the most important skills needed to be an effective self-directed learner is goal setting skills. Many students have not learned how to determine what is important and then how to select from among alternative possibilities. These students have become accustomed to having questions and problems identified for them rather than developing the cognitive ability to engage in problem identification and problem posing. As a consequence, they also may have limited observational skills that inhibit their ability to determine what is important in their learning environment. Thus, when working with people with little experience in self-directed learning, careful attention should be given to helping them to imagine possible outcomes of results of their learning, and then encouraging them know how and why to choose from among multiple desirable goals. The other important skills are information processing skills. Self-directed learner is able to attend to and process information by the at least one if the following skills: Observing – the ability to see and do and understand. Seeing and translating – the ability to translate visual information to notes and records, or the ability to graphically reproduce visual information and to relate it to existing information schemes. Reading – the ability to read, translate, and comprehend written

material. Listening – the ability to receive and process aural information and relate it to existing information schemes [2, 6].

So, these are basic skills that can help to organize your self-directed learning in foreign language education. Those students who wish to continue learning the most important thing is to stay in contact with English. Today there are a lot of ways to do it. They can find an English language TV or radio channel, watch English language films, especially those with subtitles, listen to songs, or read English language newspapers, magazines, and novels. Students should also use the various sources of learner literature, reading and rereading as many books at their level of proficiency as possible. Besides, students can also be encouraged to use the Internet for learner sites or as a varied general English language resource. They can also sign up for Internet-based courses [2, 4, 7].

Designing individual educational routes in the process of foreign language learning is proved to be quite effective. We consider the individual educational route as purposefully projected individual educational program providing to the student a position of the subject of educational professional activity promoting formation of its self-educational activity on the basis of psychological and pedagogical support of its choice in self-realization [8]. Creating the so called ‘personal plans’ is one of the ways to help students in studying. We can settle personal plans of study for future use based on the students' personal needs. Accordingly, we may make them complete 'work cards'. This card should contain first the aim (for example: to improve my vocabulary) and then different tasks (for example: read at least three magazine articles every week). A student should note down three words, which meanings he wants to know. He is to look the word up in the dictionary. Then find the words again in the next week's article and check (with the dictionary) if they mean the same in the new article. If we do not have time for such procedure, we can offer general work plans for anybody and everybody in which we list, for example, three good techniques for maintaining listening ability and the source where to find necessary material) or give details of Internet sites for language learners. Besides we can encourage students to stay in touch with each other after the course either by letter,

e-mail, or through meeting up with each other from time to time. That way they can consult each other about problems, talk about the best magazines or books to read, share the most enjoyable web sites, or tell each other the best places to find speakers to talk to. It's well known that for learning languages motivation plays a very important role in it.

Actually, motivation is a keystone in learning, especially in self-directed language learning. In general, motivation describes the arousal, control and sustain of behavior necessary to satisfy a need or attain a goal. A favorable attitude to language learning can be developed in students in the case they are motivated to gain some goal that they have set themselves. And a teacher can only help students to attain that goal.

The analysis of appropriate literature shows that there are intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. The first one – intrinsic motivators – like challenge, mastery and curiosity frequently lead a person to great efforts in order to obtain the goal. And in this case the reward for effort comes in the form of the inner satisfaction and feeling of accomplishment after overcoming a problem, acquiring knowledge and experience or mastering some feat of endurance. No obvious reward in material form results from such effort. On the other hand, extrinsic motivators involve the satisfaction of needs such as the desire for recognition, praise or financial reward. Gratification can be observed by others and may in some cases be measured in monetary terms, publicity or degree of fame achieved [12].

We can point out several sources of motivation. 1. The attitude of the society we live in. Outside the classroom there are various views on foreign language learning. Whether the learning of English is considered important in the society? Is language learning a part of the curriculum of high or low status? Are British cultural images positive or negative? All these views on language learning will effect the student's attitude to the process of studying. The nature and strength of this attitude will, in its turn, have a profound effect on the degree and length of motivation the student brings to class. Even adult students, having made their own decision to study English, will bring the attitudes from the society they live in. Such attitudes

are being developed over years, whether these attitudes are thoroughly positive or somewhat negative. 2. The attitude of the significant surrounding: apart from the culture of the world around students, their attitude to language learning will be greatly affected by the influence of close people. The influence of parents and older siblings will be crucial. The attitude of a student's peers is also important. If they are critical of the subject or activity, the student's own motivation may suffer. If they are enthusiastic learners, they may take the student along with them. 3. The teacher and his value: clearly the major factor in the continuance of a student's motivation is the teacher. It is worth pointing out that his or her attitude to the language and the task of learning will be vital. An evident enthusiasm for English and English learning would be prerequisites for a positive classroom atmosphere. 4. The methods taken: it is vital for both teacher and students to have some confidence in the way teaching and learning take place. When either of them loses this confidence, motivation can be disastrously affected, but when both are comfortable with the method used, success is much more expected. It is known that regardless the age of students and the level of their knowledge the teacher is faced with a range of motivations. Interest in learning a foreign language for professional purposes can serve as an important source of motivation. Nowadays, an increasing number of professions include knowledge of a particular foreign language. A specialist who speaks a foreign language is more successful and demanded. A. Rogers points out, that people forget that initial motivation to learn may be weak and die; alternatively, it can be increased and directed into new channels' [7, P.61]. Increasing and directing students' motivation is one of a teacher's main responsibilities. D. Allwright argued, though, that teachers cannot be responsible for all students' motivation. Motivation is mainly the students' responsibility! [1].

We interviewed our first-year students using specially designed questionnaires to check whether they have the appropriate skills to organize their self-education activities in learning foreign languages. Unfortunately, many individuals have not learned how to determine what is important and then how to select from among alternative possibilities – or to even imagine possibilities that have not been given

to them by authority figures. Conducted researches showed that most of the students (54%) did not know how to organize their self-education activities in learning foreign languages, they had no experience of organizing their self-education, and besides students had a negative experience of independent work at school as pupils when independent work was used only to facilitate the teachers' work, without creating conditions for further self-education activities in learning foreign languages; about 36% of students were involved in self-education activities in learning foreign languages from time to time although they understood the importance of self-education, and only 10% of students were constantly engaged in self-education activities in learning foreign languages.

Having analyzed survey results, appropriate literature and practical experience, we have developed and tested a special course for the first-year students called "Learn how to learn" at Kazan Federal University, which gave its positive results. This practice-oriented course is based on the structure of a modular curriculum.

The main aim of the course is to master the concepts of the essence and structure of self-educational activities in learning foreign languages, introduce students to the techniques of rational organization of educational work in foreign language education, techniques for working with educational information, digital and electronic technologies. The course includes 26 hours of classroom sessions consisting of lectures, presentations and practical classes and 8 hours of individual tutorial. For more effective mastering of this elective course we have designed special guidelines on the organization of self-educational activity in foreign language learning for students [9].

The main purpose of the elective course "Learn how to learn" is to develop students' ability to organize their self-educational activity in foreign language learning.

This course is focused on the following tasks: 1) introducing students with available experience and theoretical researches on the problem of self-education; 2) explaining the role of self-education in human life and features of self-education activities at the Higher School; 3) formation the concept of self-education

of university students, its essence, content and structure; 4) equipping students with self-education techniques: organizing self-educational activities, working with different sources of information. While studying this course students should be able to organize their self-education in foreign language learning, use effective methods and techniques of self-education, build an individual educational route and create language portfolio.

The elective course program “Learn how to learn” involves studying three modules. In the first module of the program students are introduced to the theoretical aspects of the self-education development of university students: the development of self-education in native and foreign pedagogical science; nature, content and structure of educational activity of students; details of competence-based approach in developing self-education in foreign language learning. The second module focuses on the designing students’ individual educational routes and language portfolio. The third module involves introduction of organizing techniques on students’ self-education, rational organization of academic work, techniques on working with educational information, IT technologies, as well as for organizing students’ self-education in foreign languages.

Different educational forms, means and technologies were used during approbation of this elective course: brainstorming, role-playing and business games, work in small groups, active games, lecture-seminar, lecture-discussion, lecture-consultation, seminars, independent work, group and team work.

At the end of the course we once more interviewed our students to know if there are any changes in their attitude to self-education and their ability to organize their self-education activities in foreign language learning. The results are the following: most of the students (68%) are extremely interested in self-education activities in foreign language learning and now they know how to do it; 29% of students stayed indifferent to their self-education activities in foreign language learning and only 3% of students didn’t want to be engaged in self-education at all.

Summing up we can say that in general the approbation of this elective course was successful and we achieved positive results in organizing self-education

activities in foreign language learning. This elective course is only the first step to help first-year students to organize their self-education activities in foreign language learning in order to be able to educate themselves for further language education.

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