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Methodology for optimization self-education of foreign students of technical universities: from the experience of Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture

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Abstract

Self-educational process is one of the most effective forms of language learning for foreign student. During this process they acquire necessary knowledge and skills, learn how to work systematically, and consequently to develop their own style of thinking. The selection of didactic material and extracurricular activities help to broaden the horizons of foreign students and provide multicultural education.

Since Ukraine's independence, academic subjects in higher education institutions, including technical ones, have been taught in the state language. The new challenges facing higher education are dictated by the globalization of informational, cultural and educational processes. Teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language plays a key role in achieving these goals. And since Ukrainian language is not only an academic subject for foreign students, but also the language of the socio-cultural environment, its effective learning contributes to the formation of highly educated personality. Therefore, the aim of our research pilot project was to improve teaching and learning process and to develop new methods and organizational forms of teacher-student interaction.

We have developed a methodology based on functional materials that help students to apply language skills on the daily basis as well as for their future professional activities. In this process, the teacher plays a significant role and his or her role is to teach students how to work independently; to select individually educational texts; to advise on the choice of a rational way to complete tasks and to provide individual consultations to students. At each



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stage of learning, it is important to maintain an optimal ratio between students' guided activities and their independent work, when the role of classical teaching should decrease and the role of self-education increase. However, it should be noted that at the initial stage, foreign students do not yet possess an enough established self-strategy and tactics for learning new subjects, because their language level is quite low: on this stage the role of the teacher as mentor should prevail.

Our research team has differentiated the types of independent learning activities performed by foreign students at KNUBA. Based on the results of the scientific analysis of the problem, we have determined the certain sequence of the educational process.

The first stage of this process includes laboratory team work. At this stage the simple topics for discussion as household, visiting library, nature, weather, etc. should be offered.

The next stage includes independent work elements, however, the presence of teacher as mentor is still very present. On this stage we involve foreign students in preparation of excursions to construction sites, introduce them to the technologies of building churches, theaters, hotels, historical buildings. This effectively enriches the vocabulary of foreign students with terminology, especially in the field of building construction and architecture.

In addition to the above-mentioned facilities related to the in-depth study of engineering and architectural disciplines, our university actively involves international students in the preparation of the annual celebration of the Day of Ukrainian Writing and Language. The aim of this activities is to motivate students to read Ukrainian poetry in original version and to compare it with translated one into their native languages. This type of independent work results into improvement of their self-organization. At the traditional folklore evenings held at the National Museum of Ukrainian Literature, foreign students listen to folk songs. This is effectively complemented by attending of exhibition of applied arts, including national clothing, woven carpets, pottery, wicker and reed weaving, baked loaves, etc. All this makes it possible to increase the level of communicative competence and to introduce foreign students to the values of our culture. Meetings with writers, singers and painters is also



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important for establishment of feeling of our national values. For example, we organize regularly literature evenings with the winners of the highest Taras Shevchenko Art Prize.

The next stage of our methodology is to motivate foreign students to extracurricular independent learning activities. This is the logical conclusion of the educational cycle, when the students may independently implement all previously acquired knowledge, skills and abilities in various types of intellectual and practical activities, thereby testing their strength and compliance with his/her communication needs. An example is participation in thematic conferences.

According to the experience of the research group from the Department of Linguistic and Communication at the Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture, the essential key to teach foreigners national language is to establish sustainable and individual-oriented multi-step methodology based on mentored organization and supervision of independent work of students. This methodology is an effective tool to establish high professional qualities of further specialists for social and professional communication. The very essential issue is to establish cooperation between student and teacher who supervises independent work.

Keywords: language level, student's personality, foreign students, motivation, independent work, methodology of education, extracurricular educational activities.