

Virtual mentoring of young foreign language teachers in the organization of extracurricular activities

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Abstract. Modern students belonging to generations A and Z cannot imagine their life without the virtual world, so there is a need to use innovative approaches to organizing lessons and extracurricular activities in foreign languages. Digital technology plays an important role in this process, but not all teachers can quickly adapt to work in the new format. The issue is especially relevant for beginning foreign language teachers who do not have sufficient experience to effectively organize extracurricular work as an integral form of teaching foreign languages. This paper aims to consider virtual mentoring as a form of adaptation of teachers to modern digital technologies for organizing extracurricular activities of students belonging to generations A and Z. The analysis of scientific and methodological literature on this topic allowed the authors to identify a description of particular cases of the use of digital educational systems in teaching various aspects of a foreign language in the classroom and the need for the formation of digital literacy of the student. The paper clarifies how extracurricular activities can improve the students' progress in a foreign language, proposes a form of virtual mentoring as a modern and convenient model of interaction that can increase the virtual competence of foreign language teachers, highlights and describes the features of children of generation A and Z, based on the study of which it was established the need to introduce a large number of digital technologies and the transition to a distance learning format when organizing extracurricular activities.

Keywords: virtual mentoring, generation A, generation Z, extracurricular activities in foreign languages.

1 Introduction

In the context of the implementation of the Federal State Educational Standard (FSES) of primary education and basic general education of the new generation, the educational and developmental potential of the foreign language as a school subject becomes more relevant. Learning a foreign language takes place outside the linguistic environment with a relatively small number of hours, which leads to a decrease in the desire and interest in learning a

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foreign language [1]. Based on this, extracurricular activities in a foreign language gain relevance and can serve as one of the factors for creating a linguistic environment, which will affect the level of student's motivation, as well as the formation of an integral fully developed personality [2].

In addition, the current stage of development of information and telecommunication technologies, undoubtedly, affects students, changing their perception of the world and the idea of the learning process. The teacher, in turn, has to find new approaches in the organization of educational activities at school, which will increase interest in the foreign language as a school subject by adapting to the learning styles of students.

A review of scientific and methodological literature has shown that most authors research particular cases of the use of information technologies in teaching modern generations [3], describe their digital competence [4, 5–8], and substantiate the need for extracurricular activities with the requirements of the FSES [5], but do not take into account ways to improve the virtual competence of the teacher who will organize extracurricular activities for modern students.

2 Methods

The paper analyzes the current state documents, modern academic literature of Russian and foreign authors on the issues of mentoring, extracurricular activities, the characteristics of generations A and Z. We used the comparative analysis method and the method of logical inference. Preference was given to a corpus of relevant papers published over the past 5 years.

3 Results and discussion

A foreign language, possessing its variability, allows one to achieve positive results in the organization of extracurricular activities [6]. It should be noted that in the organization of extracurricular activities, the teacher acts as an assistant and mentor, as a result of which the student can show their full potential without being in the assessment system.

It should be noted that extracurricular activities can be effectively organized within the school.

Correctly organized extracurricular activities at school can ensure the continuity of educational programs, the school teacher has complete information about the positive features of a homogeneous group of students and possible difficulties in mastering the material, will be able to set tasks that allow them to achieve maximum results in the formation and improvement of foreign language communicative competence, which will increase the efficiency of the educational process in general.

Modern students belong to generations A and Z, who need to be offered innovative forms of extracurricular activities in a digital format [5].

Generation Z includes the children born between 2000 and 2010. They are the first generation of the digital world that cannot imagine their life without mobile Internet and other high-tech devices [7]. In turn, generation A refers to the children born after 2010. The key differences between Generation A and Z are in the high degree of individualization and rationalization of their activities due to the constant use of tablets and smartphones from early childhood.

Let's highlight the most characteristic features of these generations, as well as the factors that contributed to the formation of their personality [8]:

1. A perception of virtuality and reality as an integral, unified world.
2. A shift in emphasis from live communication to textual communication due to the extensive spread of social networks and instant messengers.

3. Inability to imagine a world in which there was no modern technology.
4. Decreased interest in reading books, the main source of information is the Internet.
5. They grow up early and feel older than they are.
6. Lack of embarrassment when interacting with a teacher, open unwillingness to interact with incompetent teachers.
7. Striving to obtain immediate results in any activity.
8. Expressed visual perception of the material (video and photographs attract attention and provide better memorization) [9].
9. High-speed processing of a large flow of information (content), adaptability to rapidly changing conditions.
10. Propensity for self-education (active learning through video lectures, reading reports on the Internet).
11. Virtual communication with friends from social networks is equivalent to communication with real friends.
12. No need to spend time on the street, the virtual space serves as a platform for organizing activities in their spare time.

Changes in the lifestyle and perception of students force teachers to turn to modern technologies, to look for the forms and methods of teaching that are most natural for them. In the context of the implementation of the requirements of the FSES for such generations, digital technologies acquire special significance. Nowadays, there is an urgent need to introduce a distance learning format when organizing extracurricular activities. The distance learning format allows one to increase interest in the subject, building an individual plan of work with each student [10].

The development of digital technologies in teaching undoubtedly motivates students to participate in school contests, scientific conferences, and intellectual games. Distance learning forms open up a huge spectrum for the formation of independent creative work of students and also allow one to use project activities in full. The teacher, in turn, gets the opportunity to conduct additional consultations with those children who need it. Extracurricular activities in teaching a foreign language allow the teacher to identify the abilities and interests of students, thereby helping them with the choice of a profession.

There is a tendency for widespread mentoring as a special direction of the teacher's professional development. For the competent organization of extracurricular activities in the field of foreign languages, a more experienced mentor is needed to share their experience with the teacher who is starting to master the profession [11]. The work of the mentor is to eliminate the professional deficit of the less experienced colleague, the central role in such training is the practice [12: 56].

A special interaction model can be distinguished in the mentoring system. Virtual mentoring is the use of information and communication technologies during the interaction of the mentor with the less experienced colleague or a group of them [13].

Virtual mentoring includes various models (namely traditional, situational, group, short-term) of traditional work that can be implemented remotely. We believe that it should be classified as the most effective and rational option for interaction due to significant advantages over the face-to-face format:

1. The attraction of the best specialists in the field of teaching foreign languages, regardless of the territorial characteristic (the less experienced teacher will be able to receive methodological and other support from several qualified mentors in foreign languages);
2. Updating the principle of taking into account the characteristics of students of generations A and Z.

Generations A and Z force to pay attention to the organization of video conferencing, the widespread use of platforms for distance learning, online services, social networks, communities to involve them in active extracurricular activities. To understand the principles

of platforms and services, what effect they have, to reflect on what results can be achieved with their help, under the guidance of a mentor, the less experienced teacher should try the role of a student in practice, be involved in active innovation and creative activity.

Thus, increasing the digital competence of the young specialist through the virtual mentoring considered in the paper will serve as a factor that improves the quality of students' extracurricular activities: the teacher will provide competent advice on working with the platform, outline goals and objectives based on their own experience in the digital educational environment, and track the progress of the student. These aspects acquire special value in the changing conditions of life (introduction of a high alert mode), and familiarizing students with a new, modern approach to the educational process facilitates the transition to a distance work format.

Students, when receiving individual, remote consultations in the digital space, will not doubt the high level of qualification of their teacher, which will have a positive effect on the psychological component of learning (teacher-student relationship); when working independently, they will be able to practice at a pace that is comfortable for them; increase the efficiency of their activities when memorizing material from visualization in the Internet space; will be able to gain additional competencies in their familiar virtual reality, which will increase motivation for learning activities in general, also providing an educational impact [14, 15].

4 Conclusion

The organization of extracurricular activities, contributing to the disclosure of potential, the successful formation of the necessary competencies in students, is one of the priority tasks of teaching and educating the young generation. To implement extracurricular learning, the teacher needs to adapt the working methods. The greatest difficulty in organizing, stimulating, and monitoring the educational and cognitive activities of the class arises among specialists who have recently started working at school.

Virtual mentoring of young foreign language teachers can speed up the process of their adaptation to the profession, increase their competence in the field of information technology, which will bring students' extracurricular activities to a different quality level. Moreover, the results of the study of the characteristics of generations A and Z confirm that modern digital technologies, as well as the use of various platforms in the educational process, will contribute to the active involvement of children in extracurricular activities in a distance format.

As a promising direction for the development of research, we can name the improvement of existing and the development of new special platforms, digital resources for organizing the continuity of programs following the goals and content of learning at school, as well as the creation of advanced training programs for virtual mentoring of both young and older foreign language teachers.

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