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PROJECT-BASED WORK IN DISTANCE ESP CLASSROOM

Abstract. *The article deals with the peculiarities of the implementation of the project-based work of students in distance ESP learning which should improve their foreign language skills, help them obtain new job-related knowledge and practice their soft skills. It analyzes factors that complicate the formation of ESP competence and suggests ways to solve these problems. The article also presents tools that can be used during distance ESP learning.*

Keywords*: distance ESP learning, project-based work, foreign language skills, soft skills, tools.*

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ПРОЕКТНАЯ РАБОТА СТУДЕНТОВ ВО ВРЕМЯ
ДИСТАНЦИОННОГО ИЗУЧЕНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА
ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОГО НАПРАВЛЕНИЯ

Аннотация. *В статье рассматриваются особенности реализации проектной работы студентов в процессе дистанционного изучения английского языка профессионального направления, которая может улучшить их знания иностранного языка, помочь им освоить новые знания, связанные с работой, и улучшить межличностные навыки. В ней анализируются факторы, которые усложняют формирование компетенции в английском языке профессионального направления, и предлагаются пути решения этих проблем. В статье также представлены инструменты, которые можно использовать во время дистанционного изучения английского языка профессионального направления.*

Ключевые слова*: дистанционное изучение английского языка профессионального направления, проектная работа, навыки иностранного языка, межличностные навыки, инструменты.*

We really need to pay attention on the importance of foreign language in professional performance encourages teachers and to devise modern and effective teaching methods and techniques. Teachers always should start with the learners' outcomes – match the real students' real needs and expectations. Studying foreign language involves developing reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. It can be challenging for students, especially when they are exposed to real life, job-related situation or even under the condition of distance learning.

Distance learning is an individual process of acquiring knowledge, skills, abilities; the way of human cognitive activity, which occurs through the indirect interaction of distant participants in the learning process in a specialized environment with the use of information and communication technologies.

The purpose of distance learning is the provision of educational services through the use of modern information and communication technologies in certain educational or educational-qualification levels [1].

The goal of this research is to analyze the project-based work of students in distance ESP learning which should improve their foreign language skills, help them practice their soft skills and obtain new job-related knowledge. All of these skills can be addressed in a foreign language course for a profession with project-based learning (PBL) implementation since according to the research PBL approach improves not only language skills but also soft skills [2].

Project-based learning is teaching method that suggests students finding a solution to a motivating or engaging question that involves working with authentic field-related resources and lasts an extended period of time [3]. According to "Gold Standard PBL" [4], this method will develop the students' knowledge and understanding as well as their key success skills if such work meets the following requirements: challenging problem or question, sustained inquiry, authenticity, opportunity for students to make their own decisions, opportunity for reflection and revision, and the opportunity to publish the final material [5].

The peculiarities of project-based work in distance ESP learning:

• It motivates to work actively, because it is a great challenge;

• It allows to acquaint students with difficult and contradictory problems, and also motivates to look for ways of their decision;

• It allows to catch learners' interest, to activate their creativity;

• It demonstrates to students the real possibilities of using the usual tools (such as textbooks and the Internet) to learn and implement their ideas.

The complexity of project-based work during distance ESP learning is as follows

• It is difficult for project participants to communicate and interact with each other.

• Projects require a lot of time, but do not guarantee that students will learn large amounts of ESP material.

• It is often difficult for a teacher to monitor and support students' project work, as well as to evaluate it objectively.

• There is a threat of declining student motivation in general and interest in project work in particular.

• The complexity of the implementation of presentation and reflection stages of work.

Ways to solve these challenges:

• Make projects interdisciplinary (offer tasks that combine ESP material and subjects in the specialty).

• Alternate individual and group projects.

• Use modern technologies and available services (social networks, popular applications, videos, etc.) for project work.

• Do not overload students with project work (you can focus on mini-projects or short-term projects).

Tools that we can use during distance ESP learning

• Google Docs (for creating/editing/discussing text materials; for generating ideas; testing knowledge, etc.).

• Google forms (to survey; to identify common interests; to discuss ideas; to test knowledge; to get feedback).

• Google-presentations (to present the results of project work; to motivate students' project activities; to discuss complex topics in detail).

• Online tests (to check/update knowledge; to get acquainted with important issues; to motivate project work).

To sum up, working on the project the students become acquainted with the project managing strategies developed by Project Management Institute [6]. They develop a plan which includes all the tasks, resources and roles necessary and the stages of the project, they make the schedule with milestones and final date; they also try to predict the risk. The next task will be to define success criteria at each stage and share responsibilities.

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