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Развитие профессиональной мобильности специалистов путем обучения межкультурной коммуникации в рамках центра дополнительного образования

Building up professional mobility of specialists by means of teaching cross-cultural communication at the center for supplementary education

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Аннотация В статье описывается технологический цикл обучения межкультурной коммуникации в центре дополнительного образования. Основным результатом разработанного курса обучения стало повышение профессиональной мобильности обучающихся.

Ключевые слова межкультурная коммуникация; профессиональная мобильность; Классы Конфуция; культура повседневности; металингвистические стратегии обучения.

Summary The article describes the technological cycle of teaching cross-cultural communication at the center for supplementary education. The major outcome of the carefully designed curriculum has proved to be a high degree of professional mobility of learners.

Key words cross-cultural communication; professional mobility; Confucius classroom; culture of “everyday-ness”; metalinguistic learning strategies.

Integration and globalization processes, drastic changes in contemporary Russian society, constant expansion of international communication prove that

further development of human race is only possible on terms of dialogue between different religious, national and cultural communities that are able to understand and accept a foreign culture as equal to one's own.

We can see clearly that cross-cultural communication is the result of a process of culture integration caused by the course of development of modern information civilization. The aim of it is to work out a new image of the world which can provide stable identification. In this relation the laboratory for inter-ethnic communications of RSVPU systematically works on realizing an international project "Confucius Classroom". The "Confucius Institute and Classroom" international project has been established on the initiative of Hanban/Confucius Institute Headquarters. It's an institution affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education.

As it is stated on the official website "it's committed to providing Chinese language and cultural teaching resources and services worldwide, it goes all out in meeting the demands of foreign Chinese learners and contributing to the development of multiculturalism and the building of a harmonious world"[5]. This year Hanban celebrates the 10th anniversary of "Confucius Institute and Classroom" project. Up till now 440 Confucius Institutes and 646 Confucius Classrooms have been opened in 120 countries. Confucius Institute Headquarters/Hanban admits that they are "benefiting from the UK, France, Germany and Spain's experience in promoting their national languages"[5]. But using other countries' experience Hanban pursues a crucially important policy: "Confucius Institutes/Classrooms *adopt flexible teaching patterns and adapt to suit local conditions* when teaching Chinese language and promoting culture in foreign primary schools, secondary schools, communities and enterprises[5]. This means that the Headquarters actually gives a free hand to host university in establishing the pattern and structure of the teaching process. This fact makes the project an innovative ground the capacities of which can be used at its best to fulfill the goals of teaching the dialogue of cultures, cross-cultural communica-

tion, increasing the professional potential of contemporary specialist via mastering a foreign culture, developing professional mobility of learners and so on.

In modern situation of education systems integration the ability to cross-cultural communication is seen as a major personal and professional characteristic of a contemporary young professional. Here the contradiction arises between the need of the society for highly-qualified professionals possessing knowledge and skills of cross-cultural communication and their real opportunities of participating in the process of this communication. Hence – the extreme topicality of singling out the conditions for forming the readiness to cross-cultural communication and creating a new paradigm of teaching language and culture.

Drawing on best pedagogical practices we are seeking to understand how learners best acquire language and cultural awareness with a view of specific target – to create an innovative course design that would fulfill the overall objective for our students – *to function globally*.

The way to solve this ambitious task - creating a new paradigm – is actually constructing a technological cycle of learning which consists of a number of carefully structured modules.

Here we present the modules which turn to be indispensable and comment on the most pronounced points.

- Culture practice module

Naturally, the emphasis here is on cultural practices. Entering the sphere of culture via practical activities proves to be highly effective and pursues several aims:

- to enhance the learners' motivation;
- to adapt the consciousness of the learner to the perception of a foreign culture;
- to counterpoint the native culture on the background of assimilating the new one;
- to facilitate the acquisition of the target language.

Here we introduce a variety of submodules: courses on Chinese traditional painting “Guo-hua”, calligraphy, tea-tasting ceremony, the art of paper-cutting, Chinese martial arts “taijiquan” and “taijijian” and similar.

- Chinese festivals module

In order to invigorate the learners’ motivation and engagement we hold a colorful and versatile Chinese festivals program. The experience shows that students at different levels display high degree of motivation to participate in these activities and this model has worked well.

- Language learning module

The language learning is a core part of the curriculum and is characterized by dynamic instruction – theme-based language classes, web-quests, wide use of multi-media are woven throughout the design of the curriculum. The accent is done on two points here – firstly, students are encouraged to acquire metalinguistic learning strategies, metalinguistic awareness and sensitivity are central to it; secondly, ongoing teacher collaboration is key to maintaining a common language environment and a common mode of functioning in an effort “to design and deliver a purposeful cluster of courses that answer students’ demands and help them in achieving their goals”[4, p. 145].

- Chinese communicative club

Here we have turned to such a phenomenon as “culture of everyday-ness” and introduced a new practice in the curriculum. This notion has established itself in modern philosophic and culturological literature. Culture of “everyday-ness” can be viewed as “a universal way of human existence, which has its own time and space limits. It is a form of organizing everyday routine activities of a person, organizing human relationship, their institutionalization” [2, p. 18].

Structures of “everyday-ness” are often considered self-evident. However, it is “everyday-ness” that lies at the basis of demographic, ethnic, national and cultural formations. Studying everyday culture enables us to understand the fundamental principles of ethnos, nation, culture, civilization functioning.

Everyday culture manifests itself via peculiarities of activities, consciousness and behavior as well as via things, works of art and craft, tools, idiosyncrasy of speech, which characterize a certain group of people. Here we are particularly interested in the discourse of “everyday-ness” by mastering which students can considerably improve their communicative skills and language fluency.

The purpose of the activity is the following: based on the cultural material presented in a native language and linguistic material presented in a target language students are introduced to everyday culture and everyday discourse respectively. The participation of both local and native Chinese teachers and informal casual atmosphere encourage certain positive results. Firstly, the language barrier is removed. Secondly, we create a specific authentic space where students absorb practical details of everyday culture and efficiently master the discourse of “everyday-ness”.

The exams module

The center is certified to hold a range of international exams on the Chinese language: HSK – Chinese proficiency test, HSKK – Chinese speaking test, YCT – youth Chinese test (both written and oral), BCT – business Chinese certificate. Students are motivated to participate in international exams as it is confirmation of their progress and a valid document for future employment.

Culture exchange module

Culture exchanges are a logical step forward in learners’ studies as they get an excellent opportunity to establish relationships with members of the community of the target culture, practice the language and learn the rules of verbal and non-verbal behavior in different situations and subsystems of everyday culture, to make the effective use of strategies for solving their communicative tasks and adapt to the target culture psychologically. Cultural exchanges include winter and summer camps in China and reciprocate visits between partner schools.

China studies program

According to the Confucius Institute Scholarship program successful students of Confucius Classroom are eligible to be enrolled in degree and non-degree programs for overseas students in over a hundred universities throughout China. There are the following full-time courses:

- One-semester and one-year Chinese language learning program;
- Master of teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages (MTCSOL) program.

Scholarship holders are exempt from registration fees, tuition, accommodation fees on campus and are provided with monthly allowance.

This capstone period in China is viewed upon as a core component of the cycle of learning. Firstly, the students can “polish” the language. But in addition to language proficiency, they get a first-hand experience of cross-cultural communication in different subsystems of everyday culture, “ways of organizing one’s life and social interactions, including Chinese behavioral norms, political processes, administrative procedures, instructional practices, and perspectives on world events” [4, p.152]. The experience is crucial for the individual’s social, personal and professional independence, as it is considered to be a certain “internship”, giving the student a realistic and practical view on their potential social and professional situation, the psychological readiness to navigate in and within the profession, that is to the degree of their professional mobility.

Lately Hanban has diversified the China studies program, giving more opportunities to young professionals in different spheres to complete a scientific research in collaboration with Chinese scholars, get a degree in China, participate in conferences and publish papers.

So we have presented a number of activities worked out and implemented at the center for supplementary education within the frame of “Confucius Classroom” international project. We can state that the described range of modules within the curriculum of the center constitutes a technological cycle of education by means of which a set of goals is achieved: readiness for cross-cultural com-

munication, acquisition of metalinguistic strategies of learning, systematization of linguistic and cultural knowledge, the increase in professional mobility.

From the very start of the project we have been analyzing the changes in the structure of motivational incentives [1] at the beginning and the end of the technological cycle of education and can definitely conclude that learners' professional mobility is increased. It can also be confirmed by the records of subsequent employment of learners.

The technological cycle of education which has been designed and put into practice in the course of work over "Confucius Classroom" international project makes the center a unique type of educational institution with an emphasis on innovation, flexibility and international cooperation. The methodology and practical results of the work can contribute to the development of educational system of Russia.

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