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THE ROLE OF INFORMATION COMPETENCE IN THE PROCESS
OF A FUTURE ENGLISH TEACHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

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The article deals with the notion of information competence and its role in the professional education and professional development of a future teacher of English; it highlights the main stages a teacher needs to pass in order to use modern technologies fluently.

The development of the modern world as well as the use of technologies practically in all areas of human life has lead to the fact that the society has formulated new requirements to the person who wants to become a part of it. On the one hand, such an individual should be able to deal with an endless stream of information which is to be sorted out, structured, classified, operated, stored, processed and productively used within a short period of time. On the other hand, in terms of globalization, such an individual should be able to fluently communicate in a foreign language, preferably English, which has already become the worldwide language of communication due to the spread of the World Wide Web. As a result of the changes mentioned above, we should reconsider the issue of professional education at high school, especially education of a new generation of technologically advanced English language teachers.

The problem of information competence of a future teacher has been studied by V. Davis, B. Oscarsson, D, Munk, W. Hutmacher, N. Peachey, R. Hurevich, M. Kademiia and many others, but the problem of information competence of a teacher of English in the process of professional education still needs further consideration and research.

The aim of the article is to highlight the importance of informational competence for the future teacher of the English language.

Professional education of a future English teacher includes several aspects, such as the following: linguistic competence (the knowledge of the language, its stylistic, lexical, phonetic, syntactical peculiarities), communicative competence (ability to communicate in a foreign language taking into consideration background knowledge of the speaker), social and cultural competence (knowledge of history, geography, population, culture and everyday aspects of the native speaker's life) together will different aspects of pedagogics and methodology. All the above mentioned competences can be formed under the condition of the access to the authentic materials and sources. Since it is practically impossible to have a native speaker at every lesson of the English language at university as well as at school, the possibilities of the World Wide Web are considered to be the most efficient way to create the language environment for successful education. Therefore the problem of a future teacher's information competence formation is crucial.

According to «Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education» information competence is a set of skills to find the necessary information, to manage efficient and productive approach to it as well as to critically evaluate its sources, and to use it in an appropriate way [1].

In the frameworks of a future teacher of English it means that a teacher with a good level of information competence will be able to get access to bottomless source of authentic material, such as:

− online encyclopedias, e-books, blogs, websites, video, audio and reference sources, that can provide a teacher with authentic factual material on the language issues such as the history of the language, its cultural and social cultural aspects;

− online dictionaries, vocabularies and different corresponding software programmes that give a teacher an unlimited access to transcriptions, translations, definitions in a far quicker way compared to the use of paper materials;

− video resources, available at the open access platforms such as Youtube, Vimeo and others can provide a teacher with the authentic visual materials, which can be used to create the natural language environment;

− e-books, youth magazines and scientific journals which can be used as a source of authentic materials for the development of the reading skills;

− e-learning materials, such as English on-line courses, banks of handouts and worksheets, separate lexical and grammatical exercises on different topics and so on;

− e-platforms that allow a teacher to create his or her own tasks using the online tools which can be helpful as a way of differentiation and personalization of the process of education;

− m-learning sources, such as mobile device applications and games aimed at the development of lexical, grammatical and writing competence of a students;

– on-line quizzes which are topic-based and can be easily created by teachers themselves;

– tools for creating visual aids such as presentations, short movies and animations, which help to increase students' motivation and interest in the subject;

– social networks and blogs, that help teachers not only to organize their materials for students, but also to share their experience with colleagues, attend different webinars and take part in forums and discussions;

– on-line communicators, which can be used by a teacher to manage the communication of students with representatives of the English or American culture, including videochats and conferences, that will make students use their English in the true-to-life realistic situations and so on.

All in all this is not a complete set of the possibilities a high level of information competence of a future English teacher suggests. Still the process of the information competence is rather complicated due to both subjective and objective reasons.

Objectively, most of the modern universities that provide their students with the professional education do not have enough computers at computer labs, good and steady access to the Internet.

Subjectively, the Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow research, covering classroom technology use in targeted classrooms from 1985 through 1995, indicates that the future teachers as well as the current teachers learn in stages and that integration does not enter into the picture until later in the process [2]. The authors of the report differentiated five main stages a future teacher passes while working on their information competence, in particular: a) entry — learning the basics of a technology, such as how to set up the equipment and to operate it; b) adoption — using the technology in management areas, such as computer-generated quizzes or worksheets, or grade books; c) adaptation — using software and websites to support instruction, such as commercially produced content area programs or productivity tools (word processor, database); d) appropriation — focusing on collaborative, project-based technology use, and technology becomes one of several instructional tools; e) invention — developing different uses for technology, such as creating projects that combine two or more technologies. These stages are to be considered in the process of the future teachers' professional education in order for the technology integration to be achieved.

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