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### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING BUSINESS ENGLISH AT SPECIALIZED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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*The application of information technology in English teaching has become the hotspot in English education. This paper mainly expounds the technologies used in language teaching and gives advantages of their application.*

As the Republic of Belarus broadens its foreign economic relations to know a foreign language is absolutely necessary nowadays for every educated specialist. That is why a Business English course has been introduced in many specialized secondary schools. It is a three-semester course for second and third year students of economic specialities. The main aims of the course are:

- to develop students' verbal skills and written language skills that allow them communicate, conduct business talks and read business correspondence in English;
- to develop reading and translation skills necessary for reading business and economic literature;
- to develop better understanding of oral economic information [1].

As the demand for knowing English is increasing, the application of modern information technologies in English Language teaching can help students to master the language better and faster. The classical way of teaching the English language with the help of books, pictures, cassettes, videos, etc. seems obsolete and uninteresting for both teachers and students as it doesn't possess as many opportunities as the modern means of teaching with the help of information technologies. This paper mainly expounds the technologies used in language teaching and gives advantages of their application.

The technological resources currently used in language teaching can be outlined as follows.

**Audio devices.** The most popular and most widely used devices appropriated by modern language teachers remain the CD player and the audiocassette recorder. More recently, the Web has served as an additional source for authentic listening materials thanks to the possibility of fast downloads using MP3 software.

**Video.** The use of moving images linked to sound provides learners with exposure to all important elements of spoken communication: gestures, pronunciation, intonation, all embedded in natural, cultural contexts. And devices like DVD players, videocassettes, web sources, the laserdisc and video cameras readily supply these. Thanks to modern technology, scenes can be located, isolated and replayed at random and there is an abundance of literature suggesting how to exploit video sequences meaningfully. Different forms of visual support can now be offered (e.g. optional sub-titles in the mother tongue or target language to assist understanding and facilitate access to the language).

**Television and radio broadcasts.** Both satellite and terrestrial radio and television programmes offer cheap access to contemporary, authentic, and potentially culturally rich programmes for the language learner. The immediacy of current affairs programmes ensures that learners' exposure to the language is up-to-date and embedded in the real world of native speakers. Linked to modern recording equipment, broadcast radio and television also offer the advantages of the audio and video devices mentioned above.

**Telephone.** ISDN has gone a long way to overcome the problem of the relatively poor quality of analogue transmissions, which has so far prevented this medium from being widely used for language teaching. Audio exchanges via the Internet now also provide possibilities for real time synchronous oral communication. The principal uses of the telephone then have been limited to supplementary tutoring for those engaged in distance education. However, with the advent of digital quality and lower connection costs, there is now considerable potential for its extended use – including the possibility of conference calls.

**Computers.** With the introduction of the multimedia computer, the learner and teacher have at their disposal an instrument, which can combine all the advantages of the above-mentioned media in a compact and easily accessible form. The computer may be used as a local machine or within a network. Computer Assisted Language Learning software, CD-ROMs, and office software applications have become commonplace in many teaching environments [2].

In professional life and in business world the new technologies have taken central stage and allow fast and efficient communication and collaboration, information generation, exchange, and management. The professional world today would in most cases be impossible without information technology. This places a challenge on teachers who need to prepare their students for professional life. As students' needs and authentic tasks are paramount in business English, it can be of great use for teachers to integrate information technologies into their courses and use word processor and email, the internet as a source for authentic material and place for authentic communication, virtual conferencing platforms, simulation software, or, in recent years, mobile technologies.

Several advantages of using information technologies in teaching English can be outlined:

1. They provide interaction and communicative activities representative of specific professional or academic environments.
2. They foster understanding of the socio-cultural aspects of the language as practiced in various fields and professions.
3. They provide comprehensible field-specific input and facilitate student production.
4. They provide sheltering strategies for language development and content-specific understanding (modelling, bridging to students' background experiences, contextualising, metacognitive activities, etc.).
5. Uses task-based and inquiry-based strategies reflective of tasks in discipline specific settings and situations.
6. They use authentic materials from specific disciplines and occupations.
7. They supply authentic audiences, including outside experts in specific fields.
8. They support cognitive abilities and critical thinking skills required in the disciplines.
9. They use collaborative learning.
10. They facilitate focused practice for the development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills across the curriculum and disciplines.

11. They are student-centered and address specific needs of students.
12. They use multiple modalities to support different learning styles.
13. They meet affective needs of students: motivation, self-esteem, and autonomy.
14. They provide appropriate feedback and assessment of content knowledge and English skills [3].

The role of English in the fields of economy and business is ever increasing. Consequently, so are the demands on teachers and students to serve the needs of students and professionals in these fields to conduct their studies, research and business in English on an international scale. Modern information technology can not only show the teaching content vividly, enlarge students' horizons, broaden students' views through the combination of audio and sound, appropriate forms of expression but also activate classroom atmosphere greatly, enrich the teaching content, stimulate students' interest and thirst for knowledge, strengthen students' ability of autonomous learning and understanding. Therefore the application of information technology in English teaching has become the hotspot in English education.

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### INTERNATIONALISATION OF EDUCATION AND STAFF POSTGRADUATE TRAINING AT POLOTSK STATE UNIVERSITY

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*In this paper the issues of internationalisation of education at Polotsk State University are considered with the view of capacity building of staff through their postgraduate studies which have been updated according to the requirements and principles of the Bologna Process in Europe tackled by the international EU-funded projects. The paper contains an example of a joint European project of the Tempus programme financed by the European Commission and shows how the staff at Polotsk State University are effected with sustainable impact.*

Internationalisation strategy has been for a number of years one of the leading policies at Polotsk State University and considered such practices and guidelines as inter-University exchange, training overseas students at PSU, employing international staff at its faculties, and implementation of international bi- and multilateral projects. Tempus programme financed by the European Commission has been the lead donor in the foreign investments into the academic development of the University. The advancements were undertaken in such areas of modernisation as University management, curriculum development, and enhancing University-enterprise cooperation.

In 2013 the University started to implement a Tempus project 543724-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-LT-TEMPUS-JPCR “New Model of the Third Cycle in Engineering Education due to Bologna Process in BY, RU, UA” (acronym – NETCENG). It is still an ongoing project aimed widely at ensuring development and exploitation of pilot Doctoral Programmes in Engineering in line with the Bologna Process, according to the ten basic principles of Salzburg and Bucharest Forum. The specific project objectives include: development, implementation, and accreditation of core and transferable curricula based on the modular principles of education and application of ECTS credits as basic indicators of postgraduate students’ work load. The upgraded structure of the doctoral study programmes in engineering will meet the requirements of the regional and national labour market

Postgraduate training of engineering staff at Polotsk State University started more than forty years ago. The building of petrochemical industrial enterprises and the need in research professionals at a newly established polytechnic institute determined the necessity of teaching staff postgraduate training. As a result, well-known scientists, researchers and engineers from the Soviet Union research centres, universities, and industry were invited to work, arrange postgraduate training, and establish research schools.