

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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EDUCATIONAL INQUIRING ACTIVITY AS MEANS OF FORMATION OF EDUCATIONAL AND INFORMATIVE COMPETENCE OF YOUNGER TEENAGE AGE AT THE LESSONS OF ENGLISH

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Abstract. Now in the conditions of informatization of society more and more attention is given to the process of education and training. Modern teenagers have considerable shifts in processes of perception and thinking, motivational and emotional-volitional spheres, valuable reference points, space of activity and emotional stress. The most effective way of improvement of the quality of teaching and educational motivation of younger teenagers is the organization of educational inquiring activity at lessons as implementation of educational inquiry helps to teach school students to be independent, to create informative motives and research abilities, to initiate, plan, competently realize and estimate results of any activity. The article gives the definition of educational inquiring activity and describes the way it can be applied in the process of education at school as it trains to ask correct questions while planning that will allow being successful at any activity. Training of educational inquiring activity can be correlated to training of independence of school students, too. The organization of inquiring activity contributes to the formation of educational and cognitive competence of younger teenagers as it develops stronger motivation, a high level of concentration of attention, and critical thinking; helps to focus on the acquisition of knowledge, positive attitudes to the assessment of the teacher and classmates, as well as self-assessment. Training of educational inquiring activity can help students “to learn to study” during all life; and the gained knowledge and skills become means of formation of students as active and creative persons, responsible for their choice.

Key words: information society; younger teenage age; educational inquiring activity; independence; personal development of students; motivation; “to teach to study”.

Introduction

Now in the conditions of informatization of society more and more attention is given to the process of education and training. It is connected with several aspects, first of all with changes in living conditions, the social and economic environment, in the system of the public relations in which there lives a modern person, also the person has changed, and respectively, the

modern school student is different from the one who was 10-20 years ago. In addition, there were shifts in development of modern children.

Now school students live in a century of globalization and broad availability of information. Feature of the modern world is removal of barriers (cultural and psychological) between the countries and the people, openness of the world to the person and the person to the world, a possibility of existence in new unusual space created by a person. Information plays one of the major roles in life of society as the new environment, new forms and conditions of receiving and assignment of knowledge is formed that leads to change of information communications, knowledge and cognition [1].

Modern teenagers have considerable shifts in processes of perception and thinking, motivational and emotional-volitional spheres, valuable reference points, space of activity and emotional stress. Social development of teenagers depends on age changes and new growths which are “submitted” and regulated by society. In spite of the fact that adults estimate teenagers only as “subjects of influence”, children are full-fledged members of society as they acquire norms and forms of the organization of society, look for possible ways of the solution of objectives. Teenagers form their own position in relation to the reality surrounding them, lose continuous contact with adults and treat them as to the intermediaries opening the world of the future. Modern children develop in high gear therefore it is important to pay attention to their orientation, dynamics and intensity of transition to new regularities [Ibid.].

Different authors consider a periodization of teenage age differently: 1) as indivisible stage of development (10-15 years old); 2) as the age period divided into two stages: younger teenage (10-12 years old) and actually teenage (12-14 years old); 3) they allocate the adolescence period which includes younger teenage (10-11 years old), average teenage (11-12 years old) and the beginning of the advanced teenage age (12-14 years old).

Within the research the school students of 10-12 years studying in 5 and 6 forms are of interest; they are in the transition adaptation period after the end of training at primary school and the beginning of the educational activity at secondary school. School students can have certain difficulties connected with change of a head teacher of the form and accustoming to new subject teachers with new more difficult programmes of training, establishment of contact with schoolmates of this age. Position of school students within business and interpersonal relationship changes: studies take more time that reduces time for rest and hobbies, peers and adults (teachers and parents) pay more attention to mental abilities of teenagers, the style of communication changes.

Psychological changes of modern younger teenagers

Now teenagers are brought up and develop not so much in the conditions of family, a class, or friends, but in wider social space where they are influ-

enced by a huge flow of information from television and the Internet, which blocks knowledge imparted by parents and teachers. In the world of quickly changing relevant information adults (both parents, and teachers) stop being an authoritative source of information; and teenagers are guided by more available information which is of interest to them, corresponding to their ideas and opinion, arriving often from unchecked sources. New information has unsystematic character and often lies outside the educational sphere, but changes the structure of thinking, consciousness and outlook. It occurs during the change of the relations between adults and children; in particular, adults do not draw of a close attention to the children who have reached a certain level of social development and understanding, excepting them from a field of activity of society. At the same time the relations between teenagers change, the consciousness simplification, growth of aggression, cruelty are noted that is externally shown through childishness, egoism or uncertainty.

The opinion is often expressed that modern teenagers grow as “consumers”, do not appreciate what they have, do not know cultural traditions of the country and own history. Besides, they have unequal access to educational resources in the cities and the countryside. It leads to emotional discomfort and decrease in desire to work actively. Restriction in communication with peers, growth of the phenomena of loneliness, communicative incompetence have negative impact on teenagers. Children of teenage age have regressive changes in brain ensuring cognitive activity. The activity of subcortical structures leads to deterioration in mechanisms of any regulation, the volume of working memory decreases, the ability of selective attention worsens. Mechanisms of brain ensuring cognitive processes do not correspond to the level of consciousness of the teenager, awareness of the maturity and independence by it [1].

Modern teenagers are interested in search of meaning of life, understanding of the I more, and focus attention on the identity, show criticality in relation to surrounding and to themselves. Their valuable orientations change: the most valuable aspects are education, resoluteness, the high level of achievements, health and appearance are of great importance, but ability to empathize, tolerance and keenness are appreciated least of all.

The listed above changes directly affect primary activity of younger teenagers - study, at school they spend the most part of the time. Here one of significant aspects is relationship between a teacher and a student. If earlier a teacher was an authority for school students as the main sources of educational information were a teacher and subject educational package, then now, with development of new technologies and unlimited access to any information, subject knowledge of a teacher has no such value. The authoritative style of teaching also prevents establishment of comfortable, favorable working atmosphere and trusting relationship at lessons. Unfortunately, nowadays there is information on incompetence of teachers, about moral,

psychological, and sometimes and physical abuse, is frequent from teachers in media in increasing frequency. But also teachers have become more vulnerable in modern school: they are overloaded with paper work, in connection with the shortage of colleagues many of them have big hour loading, apart the need to prepare to pass State Examinations, to participate in conferences and subject Academic Competitions [2].

In this regard, it is necessary to look for ways of an exit from current situation, to make process of training and educational comfortable and effective for all participants of educational process. For this purpose it is necessary to pay attention to the following aspects:

- to reveal features of the modern sociocultural environment, to reveal factors of the external environment, having greatest impact on teenagers;
- to analyse real changes which have happened to modern children (compliance of age parameters, split growth, change in psychophysiological and social maturing, etc.);
- to analyse development of consciousness and self-consciousness of teenagers, to reveal features of perception, thinking and memory;
- to define reference points, the directions of personal development of students, to pay special attention to spiritual growth, to define mechanisms of formation of teenage values, moral installations and orientations;
- to reveal character and features of processes of assimilation and assignment of knowledge by students, their systematization and width at different grade levels. It is necessary to open a possibility of optimization intellectual and speech (oral and written) activity, to establish possibilities of development and purposeful formation of informative processes in the world of a huge flow of information.

Methodology and Results

For improvement of quality of teaching and educational motivation of teenagers teachers should form information culture, find ways and opportunities (forms and means) of usage of television and the Internet in the educational purposes, to train in the ways of selection and filtration of information, to treat it crucially, to use for the good, but not to the detriment. Besides, according to requirements of Federal State Educational Standard of compulsory education modern teachers bring up not just an intelligent person, but the personality capable to be guided in modern conditions, to define the purpose and tasks promoting its achievement, the one who is capable to think and be unconventionally ready to adoption of the considered decision motivated and ready to training and self-development throughout the life.

The most effective type of educational activity in this case is research activity, and for younger teenagers - educational inquiring activity. Educational inquiring activity is specially organized, cognitive creative activity of stu-

dents which structure corresponds to scientific research, with its characteristic features – purposefulness, activity, concreteness (objectification), motivation and consciousness. Implementation of an educational inquiry helps to create informative motives and research abilities.

Educational inquiring activity can change a way of perception of information and thinking of school students, trains to ask the correct questions that will allow being successful at any activity as educational, and out of school. In the traditional system of training the main attention is paid to subject contents (what to learn?) and to formation of skills (how to carry out activity?), at the same time students often do not understand in what life situations they can apply the received knowledge and skills (why it is the nobility to us?). We are of the opinion that planning of training with a support on internal personal motives will be the most effective:

- 1) it is necessary to begin training with the question “what do I need it for?” which will help to show the importance and applicability of a training material and modality of action in life situations;

- 2) to achieve the goal, it is necessary to understand “how should I act?”, it will help to define the most effective modalities of action;

- 3) the gained knowledge will be a mean and result training (what?) [3].

Training of educational inquiring activity can be correlated to training of independence of school students as at the initial stage a pupil together with a teacher sets the purpose and tasks, plans, chooses necessary methods and modalities of action, and conducts an inquiry (it corresponds to a reproductive imitative type of independent activity). The second stage assumes big independence of a pupil at goal-setting, planning, implementation and the analysis of results of educational inquiry, and a teacher plays a role of a consultant-tutor (reproductive and imitative independence). At the last stage students can initiate and carry out inquiring activity within educational process (creative independence) [4].

For the effective organization of educational inquiring activity in 5-6 forms it is necessary to consider a number of psychological and pedagogical features which correspond to this age: readiness and ability to expand the knowledge, ability to define personal and significant educational tasks and to find ways of their decision, adequacy at estimation of the results, the aspiration of students to plan the individual educational path, development of educational and informative activity in the course of educational activity, need of communication with peers and interest in their assessment (at this age it is important to focus attention not only on a self-assessment, but also on mutual estimation), formation of theoretical and critical thinking, purposeful perception and ability to concentrate attention.

The methodology of organizing educational inquiry includes the needs of society and the individual students, which determine the purpose of the methodology, principles of organization and training of educational inquiry,

organizational and psychological and pedagogical conditions for effective student activity ensuring the achievement of the goal, and a diagnostic component. The methodology is characterized by the integrity of interrelated components and adaptability to various manifestations of external conditions [5].

In order to ensure functionality, efficiency, and appropriateness of conducting inquiry in the educational process, the methodology has been developed that describes methods and methods of teaching and conducting educational inquiry at lessons of English, and methodological recommendations for teachers on work and assessment. Formation of educational and cognitive competence of students through educational inquiry is possible with strict adherence to organizational and pedagogical conditions that have organizational and content character.

The organizational component involves the phase-gate organization of activities of all participants in the educational process, the development of a procedure for teaching inquiring activities, a procedure for communicating to students and their parents informing on the order of inquiring activities, a methodological guide that contributes to more effective organization of educational inquiry at the lessons of English.

The content-related component involves determination of the approximate content of educational inquiry, development assignments that make it is easier to work on educational inquiry at different stages, implementation of the process of internal and external moderation, organization of a situation of success and a psychologically comfortable environment for students that requires appropriate teacher behaviour, and availability of a reflexive component of students' assessment activities at different stages of educational inquiry.

The efficiency of the content and the organizational basis of the organization of educational inquiring activity of younger teenagers in 5-6 forms was tested in the course of experimental training, which took place in three stages and can be estimated, having carried out the complex psychological and pedagogical analysis in the following parameters:

- level of motivation of students;
- orientation on acquisition of knowledge;
- relation of students to a self-assessment, mutual assessment and teacher's assessment;
- level of concentration of attention;
- degree of formation of theoretical and critical thinking.

As a result of observations and conversations with the participants of the educational process, aimed at identifying the effectiveness of teaching methods of inquiry, we can talk about the positive impact on the formation of the educational and cognitive competence of students and the need to apply it in the school educational process.

The data show that at the initial stage of experiential teaching, the indicators of the control group mainly exceeded those of the experimental group. At the second and third stages, these indicators increase. Summary diagrams of linear distributions demonstrate an increase in values from the first stage to the last in the experimental group. The above describes a positive influence on the organization of inquiring activities at the lessons of English.

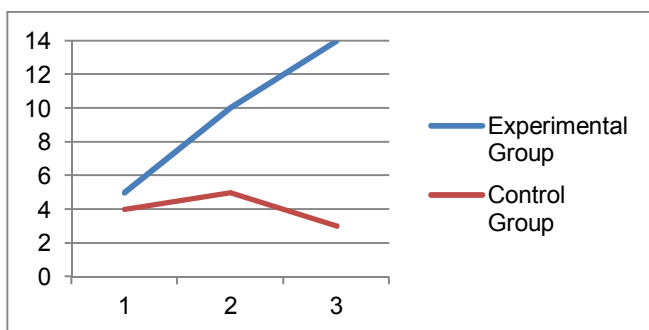


Fig. 1. Level of motivation of students

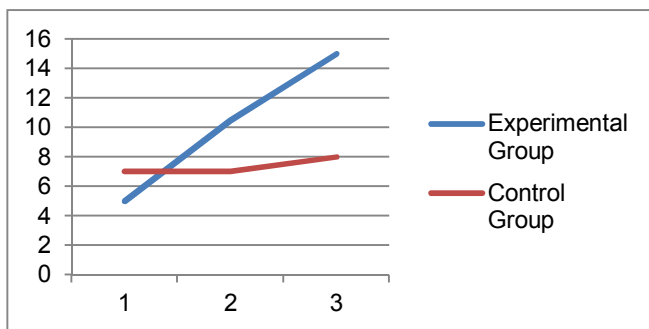


Fig. 2. Orientation on acquisition of knowledge

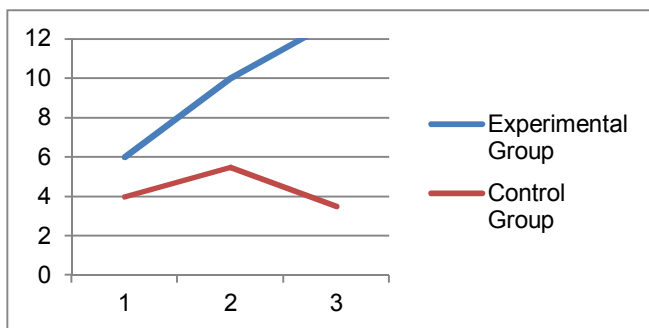


Fig. 3. Relation of students to a self-assessment, mutual assessment and teacher's assessment

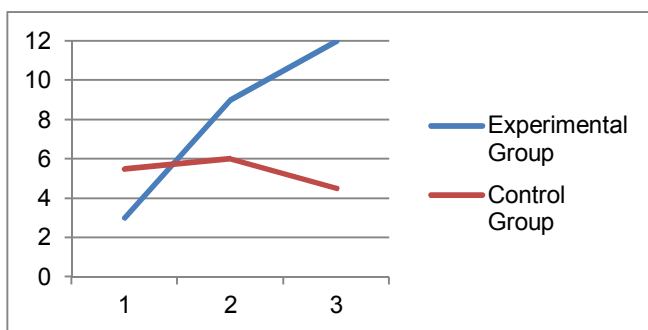


Fig. 4. Level of concentration of attention

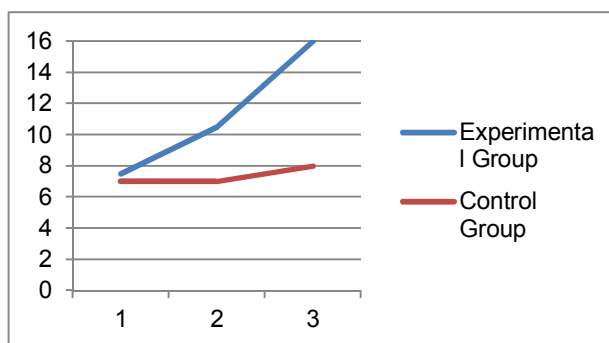


Fig. 5. Degree of formation of theoretical and critical thinking

It can be concluded that the organization of inquiring activity contributes to the formation of educational and cognitive competence of younger teenagers that is shown available stronger motivation than peers who are not trained by this methodology, a high level of concentration of attention, the development of critical thinking, the focus on the acquisition of knowledge, positive attitudes to the assessment of the teacher and classmates, as well as self-assessment.

Conclusion

Recently, the interest in the possibility of introducing and using inquiring activities in the learning process has increased. It is connected with the changes of the society and the process of education and training itself. In the conditions of information and communication society relationships and interaction between students and teachers is different compared to the XX century. Emergence of different approaches to training promoted establishment of the reasonable pedagogical concept of a competence-based approach and student-centered developmental training. It has defined current trends in de-

velopment of the process of training which cornerstone competence-based approach and cross-disciplinary character is.

Training of educational inquiring activity can help students “to learn to study” not only at school, but also during all life, to initiate, plan, to realize and estimate results of any activity competently that conforms to modern requirements of society to graduates of schools. Thus, the gained knowledge, skills (which traditionally were considered as the training purpose) become means of formation of students as persons, active and creative, capable to make decisions, to be responsible for the choice and to carry out a reflection of the activity.

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