

The role of multimedia presentations in teaching foreign languages

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New information technologies have a huge range of opportunities for improving the educational process and the education system as a whole. One of the didactic tools with significant developmental potential is multimedia. In a way all the educational technologies are informational, since the educational process is always accompanied by the exchange of information between the teacher and the student. But in the modern understanding educational information technology is a pedagogical technology that uses special techniques, software and hardware (movies, audio, video, computers, telecommunications facilities) to deal with information.

The use of graphic illustrations in educational computer systems enables a new level of transmitting information to the student and also helps to improve its understanding. Educational software using graphics contributes to the development of such important qualities as intuition and creative thinking.

The interactivity of computer presentations can effectively tailor the training material to the peculiarities of students. Increased interactivity leads to a more intense participation in the learning process of the student, thereby increasing the efficiency of perception and memorization of educational material. Thus it is crucial to define the role of multimedia presentations at English lessons in improving cognitive activity of students.

Multimedia not only provides multiple channels for the flow of information, but also creates conditions where different mediums complement each other. Students can apply their creative skills using each individual medium which has a language of its own. Some of these languages like text and graphics are spatially-oriented, while others are time-oriented, for instance sound, animation and video. Potential functions of multimedia that can be implemented in the educational process include explaining, systematizing, informational, motivating, heuristic and developing aspects.

Furthermore, there are certain conditions for effective use of multimedia in the learning process. First of all, the lesson must be prepared according to didactic multimedia capabilities. It is also very important to carry out optimum selection of educational multimedia software in accordance with lesson objectives, the level of students and the features of the educational material to be studied. Moreover, the teacher must comply with general scientific and didactic rules of applying multimedia.

As a didactic tool multimedia contributes to the student's mastering of learning activities and affects the development of the main areas of the student's personality. The stimulating phase of the learning activities mastering model involves an impact on the motivational area, while the goal-setting stage influences the area dealing with volition. The learning phase embraces intellectual and practical areas of the student's individuality. Analytical and reflective phase affects the area of self-control, and the stage of self-realization implies a formative influence on the emotional area of the student's individuality.

Most teachers and psychologists note that modern information technologies including multimedia give students access to unconventional sources of information and allow them to implement fundamentally new forms and methods of learning with the use of tools of conceptual and mathematical modeling of the phenomena and processes that can improve the efficiency of learning.

Currently foreign language teachers are supposed to develop a person who will be able to take part in cross-cultural communication. It is important to form communicative competence, including both linguistic and socio-cultural competence. The knowledge of the socio-cultural background is very significant, as its lack will disable the development of communicative competence even to a limited extent. Therefore, one must have a notion about the socio-cultural peculiarities of the country of the language studied. The study of language and culture embraces not only educational ideas, but also ensures personal development and supports the motivation of students. It is positive motivation that teachers should form, which must be linked to the cognitive interests of students and their need to master new knowledge and skills.

Studying a foreign language pursues the fulfillment of practical, educational and developmental tasks. Practical or communicative task "aims" at the formation of students' communicative competence, that is their speech activity. General objectives intend to provide the basis for the philological education of students, as well as to improve the culture of learning, which is manifested in specific communicative skills, namely the ability to start and hold a conversation displaying lively interest and also to end it properly. The educational value of studying a foreign language is associated with the development of estimative and emotional attitude to the world, a positive attitude to a foreign language and to the culture of the people speaking the language. Developmental tasks indicate the way of formation and development of motivational and emotional areas of students' personalities, their values and readiness to further study a foreign language on their own.

Computer technologies are widely used in the process of teaching a foreign language. The specific character of the computer as a learning tool is closely

associated with such features as all-inclusiveness, flexibility and interactivity. Interactive learning based on multimedia software enables to more fully the whole complex of methodical, didactic, pedagogical and psychological principles; it makes the learning process more interesting and creative.

The possibility to take into account the students' level of proficiency in a foreign language is the basis for implementing the principles of individualization and differentiated approach in teaching. At the same time, this approach complies with the principle of accessibility and takes into account the individual pace of each student. An important aspect of using interactive computer technologies in the classroom of a foreign language is a project-oriented activity. Multimedia presentations are actively included in the learning process.

One of the possibilities of using multimedia technologies in the classroom is to prepare and conduct integrated lessons. One can give language classes in a computer lab having prepared multimedia presentation with bright visuals such as illustrations, video clips, sound, etc. Such presentation can be prepared by the teacher or the students may be instructed to create it. This presentation can be used during the lessons of various forms or as a multimedia guide for independent work of students as part of their preparation for the lesson.

A more effective way to work with a computer refers to the use of multimedia presentations prepared considering the specific requirements as they are utilized in the classroom with a screen-board, projector and a computer for demonstration. This allows to focus the attention of the entire group of students as well as to carry out repetition of the displayed material.

The implementation of presentations is a necessary condition for successful learning process, because the creative activity of students is impossible without imagination and emotions, without them being interested in replenishing the missing knowledge.

Multimedia presentation contributes to the development of general learning skills such as selection of basic information and reveals the interdisciplinary connections, so the whole learning process is perceived by the students as a whole, rather than a set of separate disciplines. In this respect, a foreign language is a means of obtaining profound knowledge for the acquired profession.

Thus, the introduction of computer technologies creates the conditions necessary for an intensification of the educational process. They ensure practical implementation of psychological and educational development granting the transition from mechanical assimilation of knowledge to mastering the skill of acquiring new knowledge independently. Computer technologies contribute to the disclosure, the preservation and development of personal qualities of students.

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