

Interactive teaching methods in contemporary higher education

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Abstract

The main strategy of modern education should focus on the student's independent activity, the organization of self-learning environments and experimental and practical training, where students have a choice of actions and can use initiative—as well as flexible training programs where students can work in a comfortable rhythm. Today, we should talk about the use of interactive methods of training, which encourage interest in the profession; promote the efficient acquisition of training material; form patterns of conduct; provide high motivation, strength, knowledge, team spirit and freedom of expression; and most importantly, contribute to the complex competences of future specialists. We will give an overview of the modern teaching methods that are most widespread in the scientific and methodological literature and have the potential to form the competences of future professionals. The training, case study, behavioural modelling, peer feedback, play project, metaphor game, storytelling, basket and action learning methods—and their potential in professional training—are briefly described.

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Introduction

Competence-based approach in the system of higher is intended to increase attention to the effective and technological formation of professional competences. Professional competence we understand as a personal education that determines the productivity of professional tasks and includes knowledge, skills and professionally significant personal qualities, experiences

and value orientations. In this case, competence differs from such traditional concepts as “knowledge”, “ability”, “skills” and “experience” by its integrative nature, determined by personal traits, such as practice-oriented focus, the ability to work in a wide variety of contexts, self-regulation and self-esteem.

Such a definition of professional competence requires significant changes in the pedagogical support of the university curriculum, filling it with teaching methods which could provide the training of future specialists with the required comprehensive result. The traditional methods of the university educational process (lecture, explanation, exercise, etc.) are certainly important for professional development. However, their limitations are felt even more acutely at present

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when a complex phenomenon such as competence is formed. Therefore, we believe that modern education should focus on the student's independent activity, the organization of self-learning environments and experimental and practical training, where students have a choice of actions and can use initiative—as well as flexible training programs where students can work in a comfortable rhythm.

Today, we should talk about the use of interactive methods of training, which encourage interest in the profession; promote the efficient acquisition of training materials; form patterns of conduct; provide high motivation, strength, knowledge, team spirit and freedom of expression; and most importantly, contribute to the complex competences of future specialists.

Hence, we will give an overview of those modern teaching methods which are most widespread in the scientific and methodological literature [1–5]—and have the potential to form the competences of future professionals.

Interactive teaching methods: description and role

Training

Training is a teaching method that aims at developing skills and knowledge in any field by performing sequential tasks, activities or games. This method allows the teacher to give the participants missing information and allows students to form skills of professional and appropriate behaviour in the performance of professional tasks. The advantage of training is that it ensures the active involvement of all students in the process of training.

Training can provide preparation for professional communication and collaboration, execution of organizational or supervisory functions, etc. Training is usually done in several stages.

Introduction

This stage sets the tone for future work, creating a relaxed, democratic atmosphere. It is held in any form or by any means. The teacher informs the students of his/her expectations and hopes regarding the upcoming activity.

Discover

This step is a necessary procedure for the first class of any training. It activates the group for engaging in interaction and developing communication skills. It should be done even if the students know each other already. Through games such as “interview”, “Know

Me” and “exchange of business cards”, participants can see a new side of and feel concern for each other.

Expectations of the participants

Participants' expectations are clarified—for example, “in a circle”—with the help of the training issues that they meet at the time. Addressing the needs of the student not only directs their interest but is also an important benchmark for the activities of the teacher.

Determination of the order of the training

When all of the participants talk or write about their expectations, the teacher always tells them the training procedure, regardless of how long it lasts.

Adoption of the rules of the group (the “agreement”)

For the participants to feel responsible for their training from the very beginning it is recommended that they accept the rules of the training or make an “agreement”. The articles of the agreement are usually recorded: e.g., we do not come late, speak out of turn, listen to off-topic conversation, etc. Each article is discussed, approved by majority vote and displayed in an accessible place. It will help create an appropriate working atmosphere, mutual respect and trust. It also needs to improve the learning of the material. Every student is responsible for the execution of the “agreement”.

Assessment of group information level is one of the tasks for the teacher

A questionnaire or checklist with the questions on the training theme are usually used for this purpose. Polling results show the level of students' readiness and help the teacher correct the content and balance of the topics, adapt the training and make the exercises easy to understand. A questionnaire repeated after the training is over is very effective. Comparing the results, the teacher will be able to assess how students increased their readiness, which is an important measure of training efficiency.

Actualization of the problem

To develop the motivation for modifying professional behaviour and activity, the participants should be encouraged to discuss the training theme to arouse interest and make this issue relevant to everyone. The teacher can do a role play in the end.

Education

Direct interaction between teacher and students is to implement the key goal of the training at this stage.

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