

Tetyana Skibitska. Mini-lessons as an effective means of English teachers-to-be professional training //Studia Scientifica Facultatis Paedagogicae. Ruzomberok. Словаччина.

Mini-lessons as an effective means of English teachers-to-be professional training

Анотація

У статті розглядаються можливості та перспективи застосування міні-уроків на заняттях з практичного курсу англійської мови для підготовки майбутніх вчителів до педагогічної практики та подальшої практичної діяльності в школі.

Ключові слова: міні-урок, майбутній вчитель, моделювання професійної діяльності.

Abstract

The article considers possibilities and prospects of using mini-lessons in class to train English teachers-to-be for their teaching practice and future practical activities at school.

Key words: mini-lesson, a teacher-to-be, professional career modeling.

Modern integration processes taking place in all spheres of social life predetermine the development of student-centered teaching methods and strategies for emphasizing critical thinking skills in the learning process. Faculties of foreign languages are striving to achieve an optimum balance between professional coaching, language teaching, and teacher training of senior students.

Students' professional coaching in higher educational institutions is impossible without applying situation modeling of their future professional career. Modern stage of higher education reconstruction connected with joining European educational community makes it urgent to integrate professional career modeling into the learning process.

Theoretical basis for the problematic of English students professional training

In higher educational institutions the development of professional skills indispensable to students' teaching career in future is successful only if the very essence of the learning process is as close as possible to the practical activity conditions of teachers-to-be. Consequently, the learning process in higher educational institutions abides by the modeling rule according to which all the actions taken in higher educational institutions

should be professionally oriented and carried out in situations bearing as much resemblance to the reality as possible, that is conditions under which students may work after graduating from the university (Kurland, 2005 – *here and further translated by the author*).

Wide spread of modeling in pedagogical research is due to the variety of its epistemological functions. This predetermines studying phenomena and processes in pedagogy using some special model as a link between the teacher and the object of research that is some particular properties and relations between the elements of the learning process (Mikheev, 2006).

There are three main methods of teachers-to-be professional coaching:

1. Modeling educational communication (role-playing games).
2. Micro-teaching, when each teaching skill is mastered with the help of mini-lessons with their further analysis.
3. Learning by other teachers' professional experience (Kutishenko, 2005).

By the beginning of their fourth year of studying students have acquired not only theoretical knowledge but also some professional skills and abilities. They are able, for example, to divide their attention in the process of speech comprehension between its content and form; to notice, register, classify and correct pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar mistakes; to use the class blackboard appropriately; to speak and read clearly, loudly, distinctly.

Teaching language to the fourth year students should involve a number of more complicated forms of pedagogical activity with the aim of synthesizing the skills and abilities students already have. Among such activities a most useful and effective is the practice of students preparing and teaching lesson episodes or so-called mini-lessons in class.

It is reasonable to start on mini-lessons in the first term of the fourth year. At this time students start studying methods of teaching foreign languages at school, get ready for the exam in methods and their teaching practice. It is the time of students being highly motivated which contributes to their positive and serious attitude to mini-lessons preparation and teaching.

Students can prepare mini-lessons of various types under the teacher's guidance relying on their text-book language and speech material, professional skills and abilities acquired earlier alongside with their theoretical and practical knowledge gained from lectures and seminars on methods of teaching foreign languages.

Methods of teaching foreign languages at higher educational institutions are undoubtedly different from those at a comprehensive school.

However, the students should teach their mini-lessons as close to school methods as possible.

Before teaching the mini-lesson the student should prepare detailed notes made to meet all the methodical requirements. Their group mates act as pupils doing all the teacher's tasks. Thus the level of difficulty should correspond to the students' level of knowledge with the methods approaching school demands.

Mini-lessons can be taught in every or every other class, no more than one at a time. Their further analysis and discussion are to follow. The mini-lesson itself will take about 20-25 minutes and its analysis – about 5-7 minutes.

The following points should be analyzed:

1. Following the lesson procedure.
2. The learning effect of the mini-lesson: tasks corresponding to the topic and the aim set; whether the tasks are clearly set; quality and number of the tasks, their diversity and sequence; audio-visual aids application.
3. The tempo of the mini-lesson: being aware and proper usage of time during the mini-lesson in general and while doing separate exercises.
4. Teacher's behaviour:
 - Their speech (careful, clear, fluent, etc.);
 - All pupils being equally involved in tasks and activities;
 - Using the blackboard and audio-visual aids;
 - Error detection, explanation and correction.

It is also important to emphasize that the analysis is done not for the sake of criticism but as useful hints both for the student teaching the mini-lesson and for the whole group thus encouraging fair and constructive judgments.

For a better teaching effect self-analysis can be used instead of group discussion. Then the students determine positive sides and drawbacks of their mini-lesson on their own. To help them analyze the teacher may ask the following questions:

1. What was the strongest point of the mini-lesson?
2. What was its weakest point?
3. What would you change or improve if you were to teach the same lesson next time?

Thus, mini-lessons can become an effective tool of combining professional coaching, language teaching, and teacher training of senior students preparing them for their future teaching career.

Bibliography:

- KURLAND Z. N. ed., 2005 Higher School Pedagogy, Kyiv: Педагогіка вищої школи/ За ред. З. Н. Курлянд, 399 с. [online resource]. – Access:
http://pidruchniki.ws/12980108/pedagogika/osoblivosti_pedagogich_nogo_protsestu_vischomu_navchalnomu_zakladi
- KUTISHENKO V. P., 2005. Psychology of Ageing and Teaching (lecture course), Kyiv: Кутішенко В. П. Вікова та педагогічна психологія (курс лекцій), 128 с. [online resource]. – Access:
http://pidruchniki.ws/16070314/psihologiya/psihologiya_pedagogic_hnoyi_diyalnosti_osobistosti_vchitelya#390
- МІКНЕЕВ В. І., 2006. Modeling and Theoretical Measuring Methods in Pedagogy, Moscow: Михеев В. И. Моделирование и методы теории измерений в педагогике, 200 с. [online resource]. – Access:
<http://urss.ru/cgi-bin/db.pl?lang=Ru&blang=ru&page=Book&id=107425>