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THE ROLE OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN THE FORMATION OF STUDENTS' READINESS TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

World processes of globalization, which have covered all aspects of modern society, require rethinking long-term objectives of vocational education. Future specialists' communicative culture in the process of interaction with foreign colleagues in the framework of international cooperation is particularly important in developing a peaceful world. Modern skilled person must be ready to cooperate and communicate with representatives of other countries to exchange of professionally relevant information and experience, to be an active participant of intercultural communication. Obviously, the essential tool to establish and maintain such contacts is a foreign language.

However, learning a foreign language is a rather complicated process that requires the concentration of considerable time and effort. This is primarily due to the fact that language knowledge is not transmitted directly from teacher/lecturer to student, as previously thought, but is obtained through the process of personality-relevant activities [1, p. 5]. Certainly, only knowledge, without certain skills and competence of their usage, does not solve the problem of future specialists' training for the real situations of intercultural communication.

Thus, summing up the above-mentioned facts, we can come to the conclusion that students must definitely obtain experience of creativity, cooperation and teamwork in the learning process. The new paradigm of vocational education requires changes of the accents from teacher activities to student activities that can be implemented by means of cooperative learning. The problems of cooperative learning as a technology are represented by many researchers (E. Aronson, D. W. Johnson, R. T. Johnson, S. Kagan, R. Slavin).

According to D.W. Johnson and R.T. Johnson, we can define the concept "cooperative learning" as a learning technology in small groups, in which

students' group is directly responsible for their own learning and the learning of all group members [3, p. 18]. Generally, students, in the process of cooperative learning, work in pairs or in small groups (four or five people), this activity is focused on accomplishing tasks, achieving goals through cooperation and assistance to each other [5, p. 267]. Moreover, each student in the group has an obligation; students depend on one another as they work to complete their task. This process provides the formation of students' readiness to their future professional activities, as they obtain possibilities to cooperate, communicate and interact with teammates.

It is important to underline such advantage of cooperative learning technologies as the opportunity for a short period of time to solve the problem of intensive formation and development of certain professional skills. Furthermore, applying cooperative learning for preparing students to intercultural communication using a foreign language during the fulfillment of the common task can help to create realistic situations of business interaction.

The effectiveness of accomplishment of the offered tasks, assigned to students' group, is possible under condition that five required components (basic elements) will be observed: positive interdependence, mutual support among teammates, individual responsibility, students' ability to work together effectively, group's results processing. Scientists have put forward the idea of the group integrity, thus, each student feels empowered and responsible for group's final result [3, p. 19].

It is necessary to analyze each of the above-mentioned components.

Thus, the basic requirement of cooperative learning is the effective interaction among students, their interdependence, it is most successful when students depend on one another, participate in face-to-face interaction. Certainly, there is no positive students' interdependence without effective cooperation in the group. So, it is a fact that the verbal interactions should be carried out in a "face-to-face" setting when group members are in close proximity to each other "but still have space to work on materials without getting in each other's way"

[6, c. 69]. In this context, the constructive, tolerant dialogue promotes success. The individual responsibility of each group's member can be accomplished through individual group members' evaluations of others on team. The individual responsibility can be controlled with help of individual tests, presentation of researched information; students also can share/ represent information and experience with other students. We should emphasize that group work allows students to form leadership skills, to impart skills of solving conflict situations [4, c. 87-89]. Thus, we can say that students have possibilities to put theory into practice and gain experience of team working. Teachers should control group activities and must interpose when necessary to provide suggestions, encourage the sharing of a task, praise examples of cooperation and teamwork [6, c. 69].

However, it should be noted that it is not enough simply to allocate students into groups and set them to work. P. Westwood stresses that all group members should be trained to work together (listen to the opinions of others, exchange ideas, offer assistance to partners in the group (team)) [6, p. 69].

While planning cooperative learning tasks, the teacher should consider the following: "the source of the message(s) to be exchanged; the appropriate target language vocabulary and grammar required to complete the activity; the product that results from the activity and how it will be shared or evaluated; how the language will be guided, controlled; how partners or group members will take turns; how students will find out whether they have been successful; how the teacher will follow up on the activity in a communicative way; how the activity can be extended for groups that finish early; the plan for a student who does not have a partner" [5, p. 133].

We should highlight that cooperative learning promotes: getting skills of group (team) work; understanding principle of effective democratic group interaction; gaining practical experience of solving problematic issues [2, p. 49]. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize that future specialists in the course of

such training acquire not only knowledge and skills, but the ability to coordinate actions, to build a productive communication among partners.

Consequently, the role of cooperative learning in the formation of students' readiness to intercultural communication consists in development of social skills and students' motivation to learning material and the use of language in general; to create a favourable atmosphere of foreign communication, the real situation of cooperation and support. However, the effectiveness of the usage of cooperative learning technologies increases with the development tasks for each individual member of the group.

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