Pedagogical Features of the Organization of Competence-Oriented Work and Interaction of Students with the Use of Google.Doc Tools

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ABSTRACT

Today's colleges and institutions of higher education are in a completely new environment, different from that of the past generation. Globalization in the high-tech economy has increased the need for highly qualified and competent employees. The level of knowledge and competencies of graduates must correspond to the qualification needs required in the workplace, which is why attention has increased to the quality of the education offered, as well as to the abilities of a young specialist to perceive and master a large flow of information, the ability to adapt to the constantly changing conditions of modern reality. The article is devoted to the problem of organizing educational and independent work of students using the Google Docs platform. The main factors for choosing this service are availability for all users, user-friendliness of the interface and functionality. It is also important that Google allows you to use this software for free. The text describes in detail the functions of Google Docs, which are useful for organizing classes in a foreign language, both classroom and distance form, and examples of some tasks are also given.

Keywords: Information and communication technologies, distance learning, organization of independent work, collective and individual assignments, web-based software, cloud technologies.

1. Introduction

There has also been a growing awareness that in today's economy, people must work together, regardless of time and geography. Global projects in construction, research, transport, etc. require the involvement of various technologies that one separate country cannot possess. And improved and increasingly used means of telecommunications and information flows not only contribute to the globalization of the economy, they are changing the way education is provided.

Therefore, today technology is another important element of the education sector. Outdated technologies in education are not able to educate a modern specialist capable of quick and accurate decision-making in the context of rapidly developing science and technology.

Technical innovation in education is driven in part by the expectations of a new generation of learners who can proficiently use modern technology and extract information from it that needs to be processed instantly. They should participate in joint interactive projects online, meet with their teachers during virtual communication. Be aware of the modern life of related educational institutions both in your home country and abroad.
There is a need for lecturers to use, along with traditional teaching methods in regular classrooms, a mixed approach, which includes the use of new technologies for organizing independent work and interaction with students, which will support mobility, which is a fundamentally important component for modern students, the role of which will only play will increase. Should be considered:

1. Different levels of initial (secondary, secondary vocational) training. Thanks to the remote submission of documents, and thus the possibility of enrolling in several universities at the same time, students from different regions of the country, and even from abroad, gather in the study group. At the same time, the level of training of trainees can be different.

2. Different temperaments of students, and the speed of assimilation of educational material. Some people need more time on one topic, but less time on another, and vice versa.

3. Collective and individual tasks. There are students who are not able to work in a team and perceive information individually, while others find it easier to work in a group and help each other in assimilating the educational material.

4. Various specialties and areas of study. Students in the humanities are easier to perceive theory, and in technical-practice. Accordingly, the formation of tasks must be taken into account in some with the use of theory for understanding, while in others it is more necessary to include training tasks of the sametype.

Using a variety of more fun learning activities, organizing independent work, attracting students to cooperate in joint interactive projects and through social learning, will help to improve academic performance and increase their competence.

Based on the requirements of the federal state educational standard of secondary vocational and higher education and the competence-based approach to training, a graduate student must have the following competencies:

1. Be aware of the need for information;
2. Design strategies for information discovery;
3. Search and get access to information;
4. Compare information from different sources;
5. Apply and communicate information in a variety of ways;
6. Synthesize information, creating new knowledge;
7. Be able to interact in the information space;
8. Separate information flows into more and less useful ones, necessary for solving a specific problem and not so much;
9. Identify ways to fill information gaps.

Methodology

There are various tools to help you realize these competencies. One of which you can consider is Google Docs - a free online office that includes the basic tools necessary for the implementation of the assigned educational tasks, such as a word processor, spreadsheets and a service for creating presentations. What’s more, it integrates an internet-based file-sharing cloud storage service developed by Google.

It is web-based software, that is, a program that runs within a web browser without being installed on the user’s computer. That allows you to use it on various devices and does not require large equipment resources. Documents and tables created by the user are saved on a special Google server, or can be exported to a file. This is one of the key advantages of the program, since the entered data can be accessed from any computer connected to the Internet (and access is password protected).

Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides can be collaboratively edited in real time while discussing changes in the built-in chat. Multiple users working on file content at the same time allows users on any device to simultaneously make changes to a Google document, spreadsheet, presentation, form, or drawing. For example, while working on a word document in a file, you can see how your colleague makes adjustments to the text. You will know who is making the change because the user’s name is shown next to the colleague’s cursor. Changes made by other contributors are displayed in real time only when those contributors are working on the file while connected to the Internet.

Loginova A. V. in her article “Advantages of using the Google Docs application in teaching a foreign language” rightly notes [1] that foreign languages in most cases are rather difficult for beginners to learn them. Language teachers are constantly trying to find innovative and effective teaching methods, which is why the use of modern cloud technologies is becoming an inevitable trend, as they create an environment that allows students to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of the target language more than any traditional classroom learning environment. Google Docs and other similar wiki-based programs make it easier to collaborate on projects and can serve as a common working platform for a group of people. They are accessible over the Internet and thus can be used regardless of the location of the user or device.
Students quickly learn to use the programs, primarily because of their similarities to Microsoft Office. Google Docs is essentially Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, but available online for free. While Microsoft Office stores documents on your computer’s hard drive, Google Docs stores them on one of Google’s servers and can be accessed via an Internet connection using a regular browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, etc.). Documents can be shared with others and are available anytime for anyone who has permission to co-edit or view. However, Google Docs is not designed to work as collaborative, publicly accessible websites like most wikis. Rather, they are aimed at office suite users who want an easier way to exchange data and collaboratively write reports, spreadsheets and presentations. Each document is automatically assigned a unique web address that can be used to access that specific document.

In turn, Kuimova M. V. and Polyushko D. A. in their work “On the use of PowerPoint presentations in teaching a foreign language” consider the reasons for the emergence of teachers’ interest in this resource. In their opinion, there are several reasons for this [2]:
1. recognizability: working with services is intuitive, students will recognize the interface, format and functions, since they are similar in design to Microsoft Office;
2. simplicity: despite the similarity of the interface, Google Docs has fewer functions than Microsoft Word, thus it is easier to use for basic word processing, nevertheless, the basic functions necessary for work and study are present;
3. accessibility: Students can always access Google Docs, no matter what device they are using or where they are. The only condition is that the device must have Internet access. Google also provides all of its above services free of charge;
4. interactivity: cloud technologies for storing and processing information make it possible to organize interaction between all participants involved in a specific educational process, as well as create links with other processes, if necessary;
5. complementarity: cloud technologies can be applied in all areas of the educational process and be used both in classroom classes in a foreign language and in extracurricular types of foreign language training, such as the organization of guided independent work and independent control work;
6. visibility: it is thanks to the Google Docs service that both learners and lecturers have access to common documents and thus receive an instant result of both joint and individual work;
7. no borders: cloud technologies for their functionality do not require constantly working computers, mobile devices, etc.; joint work on projects, distance learning, setting and completing assignments - all this becomes possible even if the students are outside the classroom - at home, in the country or in another city and do not have special equipment with preinstalled software. All that is needed to access cloud technologies is a computer or a mobile device and internet access [5] - all this allows you to instantly involve both individual trainees and a group in the educational process, wherever they are.

Thus, it is safe to say that Google Docs is a worthy alternative to Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, and also facilitates online collaboration and organizing web information in the form of an online notebook or folder. Co-writing projects can be easily accomplished from a distance (for example, as a homework assignment, project, etc.); users can also track revision history to track the stages of changes in the original document over time.

Krasnova T.I. in the article “Prospects for the use of blended learning in teaching a foreign language” [3] holds the idea that, by providing a common working and individual learning environment, Google Docs effectively combines opposite approaches to learning. This is especially useful for educators interested in differentiating their assignments. For example, thanks to the dualism offered by Google Docs, students focused on excellence in group work can achieve their desired outcome by sharing their workspace.

Plus, the flexibility that Google Docs offers to students makes it a good tool for personal study space or e-portfolio. Similar to a wiki, learners can use Google Docs to write and share what they learn. However, on Google Docs, this can be done in real time. Thus, students have the opportunity to transcend time and space.

Cloud technologies can reach both local and global audiences, as they make it possible to work from anywhere in the world. The advantages of using Google Docs for mastering a foreign language and learning, mainly, lie in the broad and flexible epistemological opportunities that this service provides for students, namely the possibility of a combined individual and joint process of acquiring knowledge. As they work towards improving the accuracy, consistency, scope, and general understanding of a foreign language, students using Google Docs begin to have a keen sensitivity to other people’s ideas.

Proponents of this methodology argue that knowledge is created as a result of the interaction between experience and ideas. In practice, however, such pedagogy tends to rely on the knowledge that the student already has. It is assumed that many students learn more from others than from direct manipulation of objects.

Through interaction with others, they explore fundamental questions of reflective research:
• How did I come to this idea?
• Will it work?
• What are the alternatives?
How can I explain my idea to others?

Trainers should strive to develop the habit of asking themselves these questions in learners, and in doing so learners should have a clear perspective of getting answers to them.

The use of Google Docs in an effort to improve the results of teaching activities in teaching foreign languages should be analyzed in more detail. Mechanisms for their use should be developed. Cloud computing has many useful characteristics for educational purposes.

Experience with Google Docs allows you to demonstrate how this service can be used to learn foreign languages:

1) Joint writing: students can individually or jointly create texts and submit them to the teacher for review. Just like a wiki, Google Docs lets you track who added what and how much work was done in a shared document. Students may not be in the same room and in the same time space; each of them can perform editing work both simultaneously with someone and at another convenient time for him. Personal additional documents used to carry out the work can be made public or not, thus, as a result, the general student work is published on the network.

2) Shared online workspace: Since students and teachers can collaboratively edit a document, Google Docs can serve as a common working learning platform for creating projects. Teachers can make corrections to the text together with students, and at the same time be geographically located in different places. During educational work using this service, it is possible to highlight errors, meaningful information of the document in different colors in accordance with their type. Thus, Google Docs actually becomes an online whiteboard, but at the same time it has the structure and appearance of a Word document.

Tyasto A. A. and Kuimova M. V. in their work "On the issue of using educational Internet resources in teaching a foreign language" [4] correctly note that the flexibility of the Google Docs service makes it a good tool for both personal learning space and electronic portfolio, which is characterized by the following useful characteristics:

1. Spell Checker: Google Docs has various built-in dictionaries, which allows for multilingual spell check. This allows students to correct their spelling in the target language. [6]

2. "Brainstorming": Google Docs is great for organizing a joint "brainstorming" - every thought goes to the common "piggy bank". There is an opportunity to communicate with other participants online in real time. Various issues are discussed and summarized, general ideas are developed.

3. Storage location: Instead of saving the files received during collaboration on media or sending them by e-mail, students can work on the document on the Google platform and have access to it both from school, from home, or elsewhere. They will always have access to the training material, and there will be no reason to tell the teacher, "I forgot it at home" or "I have another program at home." Access to the document is provided around the clock.

4. Shared folder: there is no need to print reading assignments, poems, or essays on paper for all students in the group. You can create a shared folder and place documents (doc or pdf) in a view-only shared folder. At the same time, everyone is provided with educational material for a specific lesson and homework.

5. Self-assessment. There are many other ways to use the Google Docs service, and one of them is filling out forms that are integrated into the electronic classroom so that each student can evaluate their work after completing it. For example, students are encouraged to fill out a short questionnaire after each presentation they make in the classroom. Most questions can be answered by rating yourself from 1 to 10 or by selecting items from the drop-down menu.

Students in most cases respond positively to the opportunity to assess themselves and the opportunity to reflect on their own performance. Many people rate themselves lower according to the results of their first performances and, as a result, in subsequent performances, they prepare more carefully. Work out more educational material. It should also be said that self-esteem has a positive effect on the desire to self-educate.

Results

As one of the examples of effective organization of independent work in a group of students in English using Google Docs technologies, the following algorithm can be proposed:

It is necessary that the teacher has previously formed a list of students’ email addresses;

In a training lesson, the lecturer offers students to independently divide into groups of 3 - 4 people for the joint implementation of the training project; each group chooses a topic from the list suggested by the lecturer. The terms of the project are set (for example, 7 days), the assessment criteria and other working points are announced;

The lecturer creates, using the Google Docs service, presentation templates for a specific topic and provides general access to editing the document for students. At the same time, invitations are automatically sent to them containing a link to the created presentation at the provided email addresses;

The trainees, together with other members of the group, search and process the necessary information from specific (or any) sources, discuss the necessary issues and thus fill the project with content. At the same time, they communicate with each other through various means of communication, such as social networks, e-mail, etc.
The lecturer periodically monitors the process of creating a project, commenting or asking questions about the content and answering students’ questions, makes adjustments, asks questions, formulates problems, thus providing feedback to students.

After the deadline for completing the assignment, the teacher, having access to the students’ documents, checks the results of the work performed, makes comments and evaluates the students’ educational projects according to the criteria. The obtained grades (points) are recorded in the table of grades created using the same Google Docs.

As another example of the effective organization of group independent (home) work of students in English using Google Docs services, we can offer the following:

In the classroom, the lecturer invites students to independently divide into groups of about 3 people to jointly complete the study assignment on the topic “History of the English language” to determine the origin of words (etymology) belonging to significant parts of speech: nouns, adjectives, verbs.

The lecturer suggests filling in the corresponding columns of the table with words from this text, depending on their origin, using online resources.

The lecturer creates template tables using Google Docs. Provides editing access to learners. At the same time, they are automatically sent invitations containing a link to the created table and tasks.

Students together with other members of the group fill out the tables. At the same time, they communicate with each other through social networks and by e-mail;

The lecturer periodically monitors the process of creating a project, commenting or asking questions about the content, thus providing feedback to the students;

After the expiration of the term, the teacher assesses the correctness of the assignment by the students and records the results in the grades table;

Conclusions

These are just a few examples of how Google Docs is currently being used in language teaching. Through these examples, we hope educators will find many more potential uses for Google Docs within their own courses and disciplines. Observations and comparative analysis of learning outcomes in groups where cloud technologies are applied systematically have shown that students demonstrate a higher degree of involvement in the learning process, motivation and cognitive activity. The use of communication services helps to increase the efficiency of mastering a foreign language. This organization of work is a means of improving performance. The lecturer manages to get students to reproduce information not on a reproductive, but on a meaningful and creative level. In these conditions, the growing needs of students requires a revision of pedagogical approaches, relationships between participants in the educational process. Combining traditional education, classroom system, communication applications and distance learning technologies is a new pedagogical challenge. This is a new approach to diversified development, acquiring not only new knowledge, but also mastering new experience.

All this allows you to effectively organize independent homework group work of students in English, which provides teacher feedback with students increases their learning motivation and contributes to maintaining student mobility as a fundamentally important component of learning - to complete the task anywhere at any time.

References