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Application of the Web Quest Technology in the Organization of the Independent Work of Students in the Process of Studying Disciplines

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Abstract

One of the forms of project activity on the basis of modern Internet technologies is web-based technology which is based on not very complicated but problematic tasks. Web-Quest is a web-task which is a scenario of organization of students' project activity on any topic using Internet resources. It involves working with a large amount of material, research activities and critical understanding of information. The project activity in the context of the socio-cultural information space includes modern second-generation Internet technologies (Web 2.0) that allow users not only to find and download information but also work together and post new information on the network, create an open, interactive educational information environment in which information accessible to the learner becomes a means of developing their personality. When studying linguistic disciplines web-quest is used as a kind of independent creative work of students, a project assignment with elements of a role-playing game in the performance of which information resources of the Internet are used. We use different types of tasks in the independent work with students using the technology of web-quests: assignments to find a source from the Internet on a particular topic of a specific academic discipline and its retelling task (this kind of independent work can be considered conditionally creative since the format and form of the students' reports at the seminar sessions with the use of electronic presentations consists not only in presenting the original materials from a particular website or Internet portal but also in selecting, organizing and processing the information found); presentation on the basis of this material (with the compilation version of the web-quest [compilation task] students analyze educational portals and Internet sites on a certain topic, select the most significant, from their point of view, and systematize, rework and reformat the content of the relevant portals and sites); drawing conclusions on the work done. The use of web-quest technology allows to solve the problem of providing continuous intensive teaching communications to students in the information and communication space both in classroom and extracurricular independent work.

Keywords: *web-quest technology, students, independent work, linguistic discipline, project activity;*

1. Introduction

One of the leading trends in the development of the system of higher education in Russia is the strengthening of the practice oriented study of disciplines. This applies not only to the increase of the share of active and interactive methods in teaching, strengthening attention to organizing and conducting practices [2; 5; 6] but also changing approaches to organizing independent work of bachelor students. Taking into account the significant increase in the level of information and communication competence of future graduates of higher educational institutions it is important to use information and communication technologies as an organizational and substantive basis for work at home.

Such an approach to the organization of work involves the development of assignments using Internet technologies which depending on the type of assignment can be performed on-line or off-line. Forms of delivering results can also vary: text documents (with hyperlinks), multimedia presentations, databases, web pages, web quests, etc. Particular attention, in our view, should be turned to educational web quests.

The purpose of this article is to identify the pedagogical potential of Internet technologies among which an important place is given to the technology of the web-quest in the process of organizing work with the aim of forming educational and cognitive interest of students of higher educational institutions.

2. Web-quest as a new educational technology

Web Quest is a web-task which is a scenario for organizing students' project activity on any topic using Internet resources and involving work with a large volume of material, research activities and critical understanding of information.

In B. Dodge's work "Some Thoughts on WebQuest" it is defined as a reference activity in which necessary information is borrowed by the learners from the Internet by interacting in a collaborative process through video conferencing [1]. He considers two levels of WebQuest: short-term and long-term prospects (from one week to a month).

The project activity in the context of the socio-cultural information space includes modern second-generation Internet technologies (Web 2.0) that allow users not only to find and download information but also work together and post new information on the network, create an open, interactive educational information environment in which the information available to the learner becomes a means of developing personality [7; 8; 9].

As a form of organization of independent work, the web-based quest has a number of advantages: the increased motivation of students; activation of individual or group activities; more rational use of time allocated for independent work of students; the ability not only to integrate different types of assignments and forms of delivering results but also to vary the level of complexity of the task for independent work, the duration of implementation, the number of performers.

Web-Quest promotes development of such structural components of thinking as analysis, comparison, classification, induction, abstraction, designation further perspectives. It is aimed at the formation of a whole range of general cultural and general professional competences: ability to self-organization and self-education; ability to work in a team, to solve standard tasks of professional activity using modern information and communication technologies taking into account the basic information security requirements, to search and process scientific information, to work with databases and information systems [6].

According to T. March's ideas, a web-quest should have an intriguing introduction, a correctly formulated task that provokes higher-order thinking, the dispersal of roles that provides different points of view on the dilemma; sound introduction of Internet sources [4].

It should be remembered that the best web quests show a connection to real life [8].

The topic of web quests is determined by the content of the subject area and is highly variable. It can be offered both by teachers of specific academic disciplines and by the students themselves depending on the educational goals.

3. The results of empirical research

We apply different types of tasks in the independent work with students using web-quest technology (retelling task, compilation task, persuasion task, analytical task, consensus building tasks and self-knowledge tasks).

We pay special attention to scientific web-quests (scientific tasks). Typically students use the option of doing work on this technology as a project. For example, "Functions of a style and its varieties". In this case students present different positions in the solution of the problem, they use both Russian and English portals and Internet sites in different areas in a specific discipline (*Pedagogical rhetoric, Methods of education*):

http://www.russianforeveryone.com/, http://www.dist-learn.ru/, http://texts.cie.ru.

As an example of the element of the web-quest on the topic "Russian phraseology" let's describe a business card of the web-quest:

1. The subject is *Russian*.
2. The age category of students is *university students*.
3. The central task is *the formation of students' skills of independent work with the proposed material, work with sites and portals on the Internet, drawing up a short summary for the effective study of a new topic.*
4. The number of roles is *4.*
5. Names of roles (for microgroups of students): *"Contemplators", "Memory Keepers", "Fantasiers", "Thinkers".*
6. Anticipated result. *Using websites and portals of the Internet allotted* ***we should study*** *some general topics;* ***draw up*** *a thesaurus and a brief summary of these topics;* ***perform*** *a practical part;* ***make*** *project assignments in the form of web quests.*

The result of the work of each microgroup of students or an individual version of it should be a report on a specific topic or a presentation at a seminar.

At the end of 2017-2018 academic year we conducted a survey of students of Nizhny Novgorod State University named after N.I. Lobachevsky and Kuban State University (Krasnodar). 265 people took part in the survey.

Using questionnaires, we posed some questions:

1. Do you need knowledge about the use of Web technology and the skills associated with its use in professional activities?
2. Do you have any difficulty in completing the tasks of the web-quests?
3. In your opinion, is this technology effective? If so, why?

These questions were given to the students before and after the cycle of classes using the technology of the Web Quest.

Table 1. Results of the questionnaire

№	**yes**		**no**		**difficult to answer**	
	Before the experiment	After the experiment	Before the experiment	After the experiment	Before the experiment	After the experiment
1	73%	95%	9%	1%	18%	4%
2	89%	26%	2%	74%	9%	-
3	52%	96%	3%	–	45%	4%

The answer to the third question was answered by the students participating in the survey as follows: Web-Quest technology promotes the formation of specialized competences: mastering the culture of thinking, ability to generalize, analyze, perceive information, set goals and choose ways to achieve it; ability to work with information in global computer networks.

The analysis of the questionnaire shows the importance and expediency of using information communication technologies: they make it possible to make the learning process more active, to give it the character of research.

4. Conclusions

The use of web-quest technology in the independent work of students in various areas of training at the university in the study of linguistic disciplines can be considered as one of the criteria for implementing the personality-activity approach to learning.

It can be noted that when using web quest technology in the independent activity of students in the process of studying linguistic disciplines the interrelation of classroom and extracurricular educational and cognitive activities is realized, new opportunities of the personality-activity approach to teaching and monitoring students work are given; new competencies are formed and continue to develop; new means of web-technologies are used; the ability to reflect an educational and cognitive activity when assessing the work of other students is developed.

Using the web-quest technology, future bachelors learn to highlight necessary, relevant information on the specific educational humanitarian discipline from a large amount of information on the Internet, to apply it to solve the tasks set by the teacher; to receive a specific product of independent creative activity; to defend their position during the seminar, to prove its importance for life in the information society and future professional activity [3; 9].

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