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## **EDUCATIONAL GAMES AS MEANS OF DEVELOPING THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

In the period of important transformations in Ukraine taking place in all spheres of public life, one of the most important is the reform of education. The project under the title of the New Ukrainian School presupposes a radical and systematic transformation of general secondary education in Ukraine.

As far as teaching foreign languages is concerned, one of the most popular issues is the question how to teach and organize the learning process enhancing schoolchildren's interest in learning and intensifying their activities during the lesson [6].

**The goal of the article** is the analysis of the role of educational games in the process of developing students' foreign language communicative competence distinguishing types of games, their components and main functions. Our intention is to share our experience in using games at the lessons of English demonstrating their potential in enhancing students' communicative competence.

We strongly believe that the usage of games is an effective tool and form of teaching English at school. Games are the key to the organization of learning process of a foreign language in the classroom. We support V. Artemov's opinion that while playing, children have the opportunity to assign roles, to observe each other's activities, and to help others. Participating in the educational game they play a variety of social and interpersonal roles while implementing gestures, postures, facial expressions, eye contact etc. [1, p. 64].

Various forms of games that enrich and enhance the learning process can be conducted at any lesson depending on the topic and purpose. Role plays include enacting situations concerning shopping, restaurant visits and table reservations, as well as menu items, discussions on holiday arrangements and travel. The teacher can diversify the conversation plot, the roles of the participants, or the form of the lesson, based on the topic of the lesson. It is more like a series of questions and answers, which will be relevant for any topic of the lesson and will help improve the communication skills of children [4, p. 22].

The central role in teaching a foreign language through games belongs to the teacher who clearly understands the purpose and the result of the game, its details and the structure, taking into account the following components: motivational goal, content, procedure, control, evaluation and summary.

To make students' learning during the game effective, the teacher should explain the game in a thorough and concise manner, defining the situation and the tasks to each player beforehand to prevent his/her own intervention during the game which will make children act independently in cooperation with other participants.

The potential of introducing games in the classroom consists in the fact that the participants of the game have the opportunity to show their creative approach to the task or to show acting skills at the highest level. The role play has an interactive character because of the expression of the spontaneous behavior of the learner, and his reaction to the behavior of other people involved in the hypothetical situation [2, p. 53].

D. Byrne defines the role play as a technique when the student is free to improvise within the given situation, acting as one of its participants. The scholar claims that participation in the role play helps activate the foreign language activity of students, developing in them the ability to express their thoughts independently, forming their sense of confidence and responsibility [3, p. 108].

Let's proceed with some examples of role plays specially selected for students of middle secondary school. In our experience, while explaining the situation, we practice the use of role cards describing the role, illustrations of the situation played by the students, information about the person, his life experience, habits and hobbies.

### **Role Play 1 “Sowing the Seeds for Survival”**

Students join in two groups.

*The students of **Group 1** are participants of the symposium (a conference or meeting to discuss a particular subject), the purpose of which is to attract attention of the public to the growing problem of endangered species of plants. They are assigned the roles of botanists and environmentalists who are specially qualified in different issues of the flora on the planet who are here today to discuss the problem of safeguarding the threatened species of plants.*

*The students of **Group 2** are the journalists who are interested in the discussion because they would like to find the materials for the series of articles about the dangers facing the flora of the planet Earth.*

#### **Task for the students of Group 1:**

**Student A** *You are the host of the symposium. At the beginning of the talk announce the special theme of the conference and its purpose. Introduce the participant of the talk. Your guest speaker today is Patricia Bennett – the botanist and environmentalist dealing with flora the rainforests of the Amazon. Welcome the guest and thank her for joining the symposium.*

*At the end of the talk thank your guest for coming in. Conclude the talk saying that everybody present has learned a lot about endangered plants. Wish your guest good luck in her continuing struggle to save endangered species of plants.*

**Student B** *You are Patricia Bennett – the environmentalist and botanist dealing with the issues of the influence of industrialization on the flora of the planet Earth.*

#### **Task for the students of Group 2:**

*Ask questions about the dangers facing the flora of the planet Earth.*

<b>Speaker 1</b> <i>You are Sandra Welchek. As far as endangered species are concerned, you want to know which of them run a risk to become extinct to a greater extent: animals or plants.</i>
<b>Speaker 2</b> <i>You are Jenny Dooley. You've never heard before that plants are so much in danger of becoming extinct. You would like to know what the major threat to the survival of plants is.</i>
<b>Speaker 3</b> <i>You are Barbara Wolf. Hearing the previous questions and the replies of the botanists you may conclude that the situation is rather severe. You want to know if there is any optimistic prognosis about the future perspectives for safeguarding the flora of our planet [5, с. 78].</i>

The experience gained while introducing role plays into the learning process in the English language classroom has given us the opportunity to prove the efficiency of games as an effective means of teaching a foreign language as far as it ensures a natural, easy and, above all, interesting way to develop the students' foreign language communicative competence.

In conclusion, being an integral component in the system of teaching a foreign language learning games play an essential role in developing of students' foreign language communicative skills, enhancing their communication, the acquisition of new knowledge, developing their perception, memory and imagination.

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### **THE GROUP WORK AS A FORM OF ENFORCING COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

The demands of the State Standard of the Basic Secondary Education to the formation of general communicative skills include “to be able to effectively express ideas, feelings, explain and discuss facts, phenomena, events according to the situation, justify learners’ views and beliefs orally and in writing in different personal and social contexts (domestic, educational, social, etc.), based on language and speech experience, language norms in communication, socio-cultural realities and features of intercultural communication” [1, p. 3]. One of the forms of work at the lesson is group work, which is explained in the works of native (Bundarnyi O., Tarantij V., Matiukha G.V., Pashchenko Y., Shevchuk L. Sushko O.V., Yaroshenko O.G. and others) and foreign scholars (Bennet N., Brown D., Cohen E.G., Gröning I., Jaques D., Kitaygorodskaya G.A., Knight P., Miles M. B., Button L., and many others).

The role of group work in the current Ukrainian curriculum of Foreign Languages is seen as a way to reach the goals that students are to achieve in fluent and natural communication [1, p. 3]. When looking at learning through Vygotskij’s sociocultural view, the act of communication and interaction between students becomes important. Group work leads to many interactions both between students and the teacher, but also – and most importantly – between students.

As group work becomes more and more important within many occupations, being able to cooperate with others also becomes more important. More businesses, trades and companies demand team-work skilled developed in their employees. Thus, these skills should be developed in schools and an appropriated teachers’ attention is needed in mastering these abilities and skills to make the young generation effective in the job market.

Having analyzed scientific materials we have come to the conclusion that there are several definitions what a group work is. E.G. Cohen defines group work as “students working together in a group small enough so that everyone can participate on a task that has been clearly assigned” [3, p. 54].

E.I. Passov, G.A. Kitaygorodskaya, D. Brown, D. Harmer identify group work in a foreign lesson language as a form of organization of educational and cognitive activities, involving the temporary involvement of 2 or more students for performing a learning task based on the principles of cooperation and encouraging the use of a foreign language on their own initiative [2, p. 270; 5, p. 224; 5; 6, p. 7]. It follows that the purpose of group work is not limited to the ultimate result of the task, the goal is also to develop the skill to follow the principles of communication and cooperation.