

## Designing of Individual Educational Routes of University Students in the Process Self-Directed Language Learning

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### Abstract

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In terms of integration of Russian education into the world educational space the problem of development of self-educational activity of university students has become especially relevant nowadays. Designing of individual educational route promotes students to use appropriate techniques and forms of self-educational activity in the process of foreign language learning. The purpose of our research is to study the effectiveness of designing of individual educational routes of university students in the process of self-directed language learning. The author defines the nature and content of individual educational route, proves the competence-based approach in designing of individual educational route and presents four stages of its designing (diagnostic, design, technological and productive). To make the process of students' self-directed language learning more effective the author developed special guidelines on self-education activities. Materials of this article can be useful for tutors and lecturers of higher educational institutions, teachers of foreign languages and also for a wide range of scientific and pedagogical community, interested in the problems of foreign language teaching and designing of individual educational routes of university students.

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**Keywords:** Self-education, individual educational route, self-directed foreign language learning, stages of designing individual educational route.

### 1. Introduction

The practice of self-directed learning in Russian higher education has become widespread in recent years, with the country's adoption of a new educational paradigm aimed at the development of competent specialists with highly organized individual styles of self-education. A shift from teacher-centered education to student-centered learning actualizes the necessity to develop students' ability to learn and self-educate. Learner-centered education is directly related to the concept of self-directed learning which means that teachers meet the needs and aspirations of students at all levels, from



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elementary to post-graduate and throughout their lives, in developing their cognition, emotions, behaviors, life skills, and citizenship qualities (Serdyukov, & Hill, 2013).

The success of a person in an information society depends on their ability to produce and acquire new knowledge, make choices, study, and self-educate over the course of a lifetime. The American scientist Alvin Toffler noted that people who have to live in a super-industrial society need to have abilities in three key areas: learning, communicating, and choosing. Therefore, in schools of the future students must learn not only the sum of knowledge, but also the ability to apply it. Students have to learn how to learn (Toffler, 2002).

Modernization of Russian education, trends in international educational integration, deep structural changes in the economy, the internationalization of the different spheres of life significantly affected the role and importance of foreign language as a subject. Today we need not only to motivate our students in foreign languages learning but also foster their self-education in foreign languages learning. We need to provide educational services to students that can give them the opportunity to choose educational programs in foreign languages learning, develop their own "sense" of the studied material, choose the pace of progress in their own education, design independently their own individual educational route and plan an appropriate level of training (A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, 2005).

We are keen to talk to students about the importance of becoming autonomous learners. But just telling students that autonomy is in some way a good thing will have little effect unless it is a part of wider course design – and unless we find ways of helping students to become more independent (Harmer, 2007). And one of the ways, to provide the conscious approach in students' self-directed language learning and to create an effective motivation for it, from our point of view, is to design the individual educational routes. Design of an individual educational route promotes student to learn techniques and forms of self-educational activity in foreign language learning: the student acquires the ability to design the educational activities in a foreign language learning, to properly allocate time, to work productively with the learning material, to monitor the results of the work (Sagitova, 2016).

## **2. Methodological Framework**

### *2.1. Literature review*

The problems of competence-based approach in professional education in modern psychological and pedagogical literature are considered in the works of Baydenko (2004), Bolotov (2003), Gilmeeva (2009), Hoffman (1999), Mukhametzyanova (2008), Raven (1996), Zeer (2005), Zimnya (2006) and others.

The works of Brockett & Hiemstra (1991), Candy (1991), Hayes (1998), Knowles (1975), Long (1992), Moore (1984), Tough (1989) and others are dedicated to the problem of self-education, independent learning.

The phenomenon of lifelong learning has become the subject of study of many Russian and foreign researchers as Mukhametzyanova (2008), Oleynikova (2009), Toffler (2002), Tregubova (2013), Jarvis (2001), Field (2000), Dewey (1916), Yeaxlee (1929) and others.

To the question of designing of individual educational routes the works of Labunskaya (1999), Lorentz (2001), Mukhametzyanova (2008), Tryapitsyna (1989) and others are devoted.

## *2.2. Objective of research*

The purpose of our research is to study the effectiveness of designing of individual educational routes of university students in the process of self-directed language learning.

## *2.3. Theoretical and methodological basis of the research*

The leading approach in designing of individual educational routes of university students in the process of foreign language learning is competence-based approach. The General concept of the competence-based approach can be formulated as follows: competence-oriented education is directed to the complex development of knowledge and methods of social and professional activities, providing successful functioning of the person in key areas of activity for the benefit of himself or herself, society and the state in general.

We based our study on the following research methods: 1) theoretical – content analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature; study and generalization of innovative pedagogical experience; the comparative analysis of domestic and foreign researches; the analysis of Russian educational standards of higher professional education of the third generation, educational programs in a foreign language teaching; 2) empirical – monitoring, questionnaires, interviews, tests; analysis of the results of educational and extra-curricular activities of students; method of self-evaluation; description, generalization.

## **3. Results**

### *3.1. The nature of the individual educational route and stages of its designing*

The individual educational path is defined by scientists as a purposefully projected differentiated educational program that provides a student with a position of his own subject selection, then developed and implemented in educational programs as well as implemented by teachers to foster students' self-determination and self-realization (Mkrtychian, 2012). We consider the individual educational route as purposefully projected individual educational program providing to the student a position of the subject of educational professional activity promoting formation of its self-educational activity on the basis of psychological and pedagogical support of its choice in self-realization (Sagitova, 2016).

The individual educational route in foreign language learning specifically designed for a particular student as an individual educational program. The design and implementation of individual educational route allows student to design their own foreign language learning, including mastering of different levels of educational material, the choice of forms of educational work and self-educational activities, techniques and methods of evaluation and presentation of materials. The individual educational route

of the student is realized by consecutive passing of diagnostic, design, technological and productive stages. Let us consider each step in detail.

At the diagnostic stage of the individual educational route design the students' level of foreign language proficiency at a particular stage of learning is defined, diagnostics of abilities and the academic opportunities of students is carried out. This stage includes language testing of students and determines their level of proficiency in language according to the Common European Framework of Reference – CEF. Foreign language proficiency is measured on a six level scale from A1, for beginners, up to C2, for those who master the language. The framework and its six level scale of progression is a widely accepted a standard not only in Europe but also increasingly worldwide (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2003). Students are tested in four linguistic skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing and distributed by levels of language proficiency.

At a design stage of an individual educational route drafting students get acquainted with the training program on a foreign language and the prospectus of whole course. Having studied and analyzed the content of the program, students together with the teacher single out the main subjects of the studied discipline, plan the final educational products and forms of their representation, choose the form of individual learning strategies, make the plan of work, choose means and ways of activity, define the forms of control and evaluation of the activity. The teacher gives recommendations to students in accordance with their individual characteristics on studying of a training course in the classroom and independently. At this stage the kinds of activity preferred by students, forms and methods of occupations and the organization of the self-educational activity are defined. Students establish the learning curve of their educational program; define their path of learning the starting point of which is their level of proficiency in foreign language according to their test results (according to the Common European Framework of Reference). Each student indicates the desirable level of proficiency in foreign language which he/she seeks to achieve during training, relying on the Common European Framework of Reference. This level has to be not below the basic level provided by the program. At this stage together with their lecturer (tutor) students develop "Individual technological map of a discipline" which reflects individual educational route designed for study of the discipline. Student prescribes the mandatory topics of language acquisition according to the program of discipline which he has to master; optional modules on the discipline which he/she chooses for more profound studying are defined; forms and methods of language acquisition, learning tools are determined; deadlines for course material are noted; hours and days of consultations with the teacher are set; the form of control of the studied material is defined.

At the technological stage of the individual educational route the realization of the planned program in foreign language learning is carried out, consistent advance of students on individual educational routes is enabled. Students choose learning materials, types and forms of work, technical means for implementation of an educational task. All sequence and logic of the implementation of these or those types of works are analyzed together with the teacher. The teacher helps students with the organization of their activity, with selection of textbooks, tools, techniques and methods of work, provides individual consultations to resolve the problems, corrects and amends the planned route. The teacher

acts as the consultant and the assistant to students throughout realization of individual educational routes. At this stage the role of a lecture (tutor) is particularly important. He/she helps students to organize their activities, choose appropriate literature, techniques and methods of work, and also promotes the development of their ability to self-analysis and self-esteem.

It should be noted that at this stage of designing individual educational route students master their strategies and skills of independent educational activity. Therefore, we consider that it is necessary to provide students with guidelines for organization of independent educational activity. These recommendations include the following sections: 1) recommendations for the rational organization of educational and self-educational work; 2) guidelines for working with educational information; 3) guidelines for working with records; 4) recommendations on the organization of self-educational activity of students in foreign language learning. Basic purpose of these recommendations is to develop students' self-education in foreign language learning.

The productive stage of designing individual educational route includes summarizing of students' work on the studied discipline (foreign language learning). At this stage students together with their lecturer (tutor) analyze and evaluate their work, identify typical mistakes, errors and omissions. Results of the performed works (tests, projects, control sheets of self-monitoring and self-assessment, etc.) clearly demonstrate the amount of efforts, understanding of students' role, level of the acquired knowledge in a foreign language, formation of skills of language self-education of students and self-educational competence in general. At this stage, indicators of individual educational route which has been designed at the beginning of foreign language learning are mapped with the actual indicators obtained by students at the end of the course.

#### **4. Discussions**

Certainly, our research analysis of the problem of designing students' individual educational routes in the process of self-directed language learning doesn't claim to be complete and scale solution. The above discussion has allowed us to identify only some of the initial findings of the research problems of designing of individual educational routes of university students in the process of foreign language learning. At the same time, it opens perspectives for further research on such issues as training and methodological support of designing students' individual educational routes, the use of new information technologies in this process, etc.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Designing students' individual educational routes in the process of students' self-directed language learning allows students to properly organize their own self-education in language learning, which includes various levels of development of the educational module, the choice of forms of educational work and self-education activities, techniques and methods of evaluation and presentation of materials.

We believe that individual educational route in terms of international educational integration is one of the forms of students' self-education development which will help them properly organize their lifelong learning. Thus, we consider that designing of individual educational route in the process of foreign language learning helps the students not only to plan the language educational activities, to

support and improve their knowledge and skills in foreign language learning, to develop educational skills and abilities, but also to be competitive in increasingly globalized labor market

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**Appendix. Individual Technological Map of a Discipline**

Student’s name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Department \_\_\_\_\_  
 Course \_\_\_\_\_  
 Group № \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Course (Discipline) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Level of Education (Bachelor, Master) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of credits \_\_\_\_\_

Compulsory modules	Forms of work	Dates of studying a module	Independent work	Control / Self-control
Module 1 “Theme” Theme 1 “Title” Theme 2 “Title” Theme 3 “Title”	Group work/Team work (project) Report presentation development Press review Compilation of test questions Individual homework Written work (classroom) Testing			
Individual consultation time: Lecturer’s e-mail:				
Additional modules	Forms of work	Dates of studying a module	Independent work	Control / Self-control

Module 1	Group work (project)			
Theme 1 "Title"	Report presentation development			
Theme 2 "Title"	Press review			
Theme 3 "Title"	Compilation of test questions			
	Individual homework			
	Written work (classroom)			
	Testing			
Individual consultation time:				
Lecturer's e-mail:				

Conclusion about the effectiveness of student development of individual educational route:

Progress \_\_\_\_\_

Failures and problems \_\_\_\_\_

Causes of problems \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendations for adjustments of individual educational route: \_\_\_\_\_

Lecturer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved at the department meeting // date// month//year //

Department chair \_\_\_\_\_