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**MODERN ONLINE TEACHING METHODS AT RUSSIAN
UNIVERSITIES**

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Abstract

The article discusses the principles of organizing online testing in foreign language classes in higher educational institutions. We consider some educational aspects that can be reorganized through online testing, such as current control and final control, training tasks, ranking students and study groups, maintaining discipline, etc. The paper also describes the general structure of online testing platforms, which allows organizing various types of online exercises and tests. 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 Outdated technologies in education are not able to educate a modern specialist capable of quick and accurate decision-making in the context of rapidly developing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, and be aware of the modern life of related educational institutions both in their home country and abroad.

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Keywords: Distance learning, electronic testing, online exercises, practice tests, test platform structure, training group ratings



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1. Introduction

Online learning and distance technologies are becoming a daily routine in our lives. Today, due to unfavorable epidemiological conditions, online education has covered a vast majority of educational institutions both in our country and around the world. The transition to distance learning is accompanied by both technical difficulties (the way and speed of connection to the online platform, the quantitative load on the servers, etc.), and the compilation of the tasks themselves and the way of their application in the educational process.

Researchers of the test methodology applied to reading foreign language texts have proven that tests are not only an effective control tool, but also adaptation one (Denisova, 2000). One should not take this phenomenon as temporary, as well as rely on the difficulties of presenting educational material online and imperfect technologies. Remote technologies need to be developed not only for their use in extreme situations. E-learning is a universal tool that provides a unique opportunity to receive education for a large number of talented people who simply do not have the means or the physical ability to support themselves while studying outside the home. Internet distribution technologies are developing rapidly. Therefore, the technical side of this problem can be solved either right now or in the nearest future.

2. Problem Statement

In Russian science, the need to use distance learning forms was highlighted in the works of Polat et al. (2008). Shchukin (2008) highlighted the main feature of distance teaching, the mediated nature of the educational interaction between the lecturer and students, which requires the most complete methodological support of the educational activities of the latter. Regarding teaching foreign languages, Titova (2009) summarized the general conditions that ensure the successful inclusion of distance learning based on the use of information and communication technologies in the educational process and the requirements for the creation of electronic teaching aids.

3. Research Questions

Tests for determining the characters encountered in the text by their actions and deeds are effective, and control of the understanding of the text containing direct speech is best done by identifying the characters in order to understand the text itself and its details (Rosenkrantz, 1999).

Online platforms for organizing online learning already have quite large opportunities. They allow you to create high-quality educational content that allows you to comprehensively integrate it into the educational process not only using distance technologies, but directly in the classroom. It is necessary to strive for better quality learning using electronic resources, improving the methodology of their use, and sometimes adjusting to the existing realities of life, to make the learning process more effective.

Using online exercises and tests for learning a foreign language is a modern, popular and rather effective method of conducting classes, both in distance learning and in the classroom. Since there is no time spent on writing text in a notebook (although this should not be neglected and writing is an integral part of the language learning process), you can work out a fairly large amount of educational material for the same, effectively optimize the lesson and, accordingly, achieve better results.

4. Purpose of the Study

Due to the current events in the world, online exercises and tests are becoming more and more popular. Their use is increasing rapidly every day. There are many online platforms that provide free and paid services for creating online courses, exercises and tests. The choice of a platform should be approached quite carefully, since the use of a universal base for creating an electronic test, as it turned out, is not an easy task, and transferring a task from one online platform to another is often simply impossible. So:

1. If your university has implemented a paid service for organizing online education in training, and you can create good, high-quality electronic exercises and tests in it, then this does not mean that it will be possible to transfer them to another educational institution where another platform of distance learning is used. education. So, for example, the Blackboard Learn format does not imply the transfer of "own" tests to other platforms, although it does provide the ability to save a copy of the test on the local disk of a personal computer. Accordingly, when changing an online service, you should do tests and exercises in it from the very beginning. Even if the organization of online education takes place within the framework of one educational institution, you should not rely on the stable use of this electronic service. The administration can refuse it and offer to introduce another one.

2. If your institution has foreign students who study using distance technology, you should take into account the political and technical characteristics of the country from which they are joining the classes. For example, students from the People's Republic of China have difficulty connecting to Google services due to the political ban on its use. Accordingly, a seemingly universal free and popular online platform like Google Class can be useless in teaching Chinese students, they simply cannot use it.

3. It is necessary to consider the technical side for the use of e-learning tools. Either we provide equipment for each student (for example, the organization of a computer class with a local network and with Internet access), which bears quite large financial costs - the groups of students are now quite large and division into subgroups occurs quite rarely due to the optimization of universities, or we offer such an online service that works on all devices available to students, such as smartphones and tablets on Android, iOS and Windows. As it turned out, the most versatile are online platforms that use Internet browsers, i.e. without installing special programs on devices. The online resources themselves should have a sufficiently flexible and universal interface both for using it on a mobile device and on a personal computer.

5. Research Methods

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. This will support mobility, which is a fundamentally important component for modern students, the role of which will only 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 same type.

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.

6. Findings

Based on the experience of working in a variety of online services for organizing training, we concluded that most of their use when building a course suggests linking to external resources. Accordingly, by choosing a suitable third-party electronic platform for yourself and creating exercises and tests on its basis, you can connect them to various online courses, without creating each time inside the course itself.

By introducing online testing into the educational process, we can solve and optimize the following aspects in the organization of training:

1. quick check of the assimilation of the learned material;
2. training of skills of applying knowledge of the current studied educational material;
3. an overview of shortcomings in the study of the topic of classes;
4. systematization of the results obtained and accounting for progress;
5. maintaining discipline during the course;
6. conducting the final certification of the subject.

Checking paper versions of tests and exercises by a teacher is a time-consuming process, with a delay in obtaining results. Of course, in the modern world of electronics, you should not neglect it, but it is no longer relevant to use it as the main method of testing knowledge. Explanation of the theoretical material, with practical inserts in the form of electronic tests and exercises, makes the educational process more varied and entertaining, and shifts the student's attention from one type of activity to another, which eliminates the monotony and routine of the educational process. The instant results of the electronic knowledge test show whether it is worthwhile to dwell on the study of a particular section in more detail, or if you can move on. What needs to be changed in the manner of the explanation itself is to slow down the pace, reduce the number of terms used, make sentences simple. The final work can show that students fully understand the topic of the lesson. In addition, the assignments should be feasible for the students. Rapoport (2005) rightly emphasizes that: "The volume of the test base should be such that students can retain what they have read in their memory; the text must be a complete passage in content; questions should contain studied lexical and grammatical material; each test task should be autonomous" (p. 81).

Regular e-testing at the beginning of classes is a universal systematic organization of a section of knowledge on the topics covered, which does not carry a lot of time (except for the preparation of the test itself, but it can be used repeatedly in your work).

First, we get a complete picture of learned and residual knowledge. We systematize all the results of the course and draw up ratings that stimulate students to take the course better, showing its strengths and weaknesses.

Secondly, we build an explanation of the new material based on the results obtained, which helps to make it more accessible. We suppose, if the results are excellent, then you can explain new material based on the studied topics, without going into their detailed description. If the general picture of the cross section of knowledge as a whole is not critical, there are some gaps that can be filled in when explaining new material, then we build its explanation taking into account the repetition of the previous topics, and give more detailed links. In case of poor results, it is necessary to explain the new material in as much detail as possible, with a more thorough and detailed presentation of the previous topics. This makes the narration very difficult to understand, otherwise the topic being presented will simply not be understood either. Perhaps, at this stage it is generally worthwhile to abandon the study of further topics and return to the previous ones.

Thirdly, holding such events increases the responsibility of students, encourages them to achieve high results and maintain enough rating of training.

Explaining theoretical material, one should consider not only its content, but also the style and language of its presentation. This is especially true if the group includes foreign students along with Russian students. Sometimes it is enough to simplify the statement, and not burden it with special terms, if, of course, this is permissible. It is possible that foreign students need to additionally explain Russian realities, such as Russian cases, this is not the same thing as English, but the structure of the English and Russian sentences depends on different grammatical phenomena of languages. Accordingly, intermediate online testing with instant results will help to understand whether students are assimilating the current lecture or not. Answers to five to ten questions on the topic will take a few minutes, but at the same time we get a full detailed picture of what is happening in the classroom, namely, whether all students are present at the lecture, whether they listen to you carefully, whether your presentation of the educational material is available to them.

Independent work of students is a planned work carried out according to the assignment and with the methodological guidance of the lecturer, but without his direct participation. Its role in cognitive activity is extremely great. Independent work at the university is an important factor in the theoretical and practical training of a future specialist for his future professional activity (Semenova, 2014).

Moreover, if the results are generally low, this means that the presentation of the material is not clear to the majority and the teacher himself needs to change the style of narration. It should also be noted that switching attention from one type of activity to another makes the lesson more varied, interrupts monotony, gives the opportunity to rest the consciousness, which has a beneficial effect on the learning process.

Electronic tests can carry not only a control function. By doing a series of tests of the same type that go one after another, we can achieve good results in learning. Let us say we studied a certain educational material in class, but the test results are low. It is necessary to make an overview of the mistakes made, re-

drawing on the theory and supporting it with specific examples from the test. Next, we give one more online test, also re-analyze the errors. And in this way, we achieve the perfect result. Variant of the lesson: "theory - test - theory - test" is a rather powerful tool for quick assimilation of educational material and achieving good results. Moreover, there is a possibility of variability in the explanation, for example, to suggest correcting the mistakes of one student to another, or to give the task to find mistakes in someone else's work, which can also be an additional training task or exercise.

Small tests carried out regularly throughout the entire course of study in the subject, help to build graphs of progress, ratings that clearly show the achievements of students in the academic group, on the course or in the educational institution. In addition to achievements, you can see gaps in the passage of certain topics and take timely measures to eliminate arrears, thus not leading to more serious problems in training.

According to our observations in various educational institutions, students for the most part perceive the ratings positively, compare their achievements with similar ratings in other educational groups of the course and universities. Basically, in relation to ratings all students are divided into two groups:

1) students who want to achieve their goals as early as possible, i.e. complete all tests before the end of the semester, and,

2) students who complete the course at least on time. (There is a small number of students who do not have time to complete all control activities on time. But such students are present in almost every academic group, and our task is to reduce their number to a minimum.)

The first group includes students who would like to quickly relieve themselves of the burden of completing assignments. Therefore, this does not at all mean their desire to get great results. There are those for whom the rating "good" or even "satisfactory" is enough, so long as "the debt does not hang".

The organization of regular testing for this group of students shows their attitude to the educational process. It may make sense to slow down the pace of assignments, give an assignment for a more thorough study of the topic being studied.

In principle, all students would like to finish their studies ahead of time, but only a few are achieving this. Therefore, there is no need to talk about "letting the whole group go on vacation" in the middle of the semester. For these students, the performance rating is a powerful incentive to complete academic work, and the teacher's role is to maintain this commitment, while ensuring that the quality of work is not compromised.

The second group includes students for whom the deadline for completing the task is important. There are mostly students who "do everything at the last moment". Therefore, the organization of regular testing encourages them to distribute work evenly throughout the course, otherwise they receive low test scores and thus a lower rating.

Thus, we conclude that regular electronic testing streamlines the educational process, distributes more evenly the load on both the student and the teacher, and is a positive incentive to achieve positive results.

Regular organization of e-testing and hands-on work helps to maintain discipline. The issue of discipline in the university is not very acute. Most students are conscientious about their studies. Moreover, there are far more powerful incentives for students to avoid disciplinary action. Nevertheless, some

organization of "student concentration" and more education of a responsible attitude to the course can be achieved through regular testing. This aspect is relevant both in traditional classroom teaching and in the use of distance technologies.

So, along with the main tasks that the organization of testing in the subject performs, we can try to solve, or at least level the problem with lateness and attendance. By conducting a short e-test at the beginning of the class, we encourage students to come to the classroom (or connect to the distance learning platform) on time. By limiting the testing time, late students will not be able to pass it, thereby their rating will decrease, respectively, the final grade will be lower.

Conducting several tests of the same type can show the level of knowledge on the topic being studied, so the teacher in any case can get the result of the quality of the student's knowledge, and missing some tests and being late may affect the final result (although all this is at the discretion of the teacher). This practice can help with attendance in general. A few minutes of practical work, even during lectures, will not significantly reduce the time given to explain the training material, but the percentage of visits will be higher.

With the use of distance learning technologies, we have identified a tendency that students, having connected to an online lesson, are absent from it. This, of course, occurs when the instructor does not require the webcam to be turned on. Since webcams consume a large amount of Internet traffic and significantly slow down the operation of distance learning systems, they are mostly always turned off, which is what unscrupulous students use.

Of course, this problem can be solved by periodic roll calls, or by addressing questions about the material being studied. This time is wasted, only to identify the cases described above.

If by organizing testing at the beginning of the class we can reduce the number of late arrivals, we can also keep the students' attention by doing "spontaneous testing" during the lecture. For example, in the topic Modal Verbs, we explain:

A. General provisions on modal verbs. And we give a few key test questions:

- a) do modal verbs have tense forms? (yes, no, they are limited);
- b) can a modal verb be an independent predicate? (yes, no, it can only be combined with another verb);
- c) the verb that follows the modal is used in what form? (infinitive, gerund, participle);

B. The modal verb can. And again, test questions for 2-3 minutes.

- a) may the form can be used in relation to the future tense? (yes, no, it can be limited);
- b) how is the particle not spelled with the modal verb can? (together, separately, may have an abbreviated form);
- c) what is the equivalent of the modal verb can? (be allowed to, to have to, to be able to).

Thus, we have the results of the quality of assimilation of the explained material, also solve the issue of attendance.

In addition, as noted above, maintaining a group's student ratings helps to stimulate a more conscientious attitude towards learning in general.

7. Conclusion

Conducting final certification by testing is a controversial issue. This method of assessing knowledge cannot be neglected. But you should not absolutely rely on its results either. The final control of knowledge, in our opinion, should be combined in general with the quality of the student's attitude to learning. Completion of all current work on the subject. However, the final test should be designed to fully cover the entire course material learned.

Modern online test platforms allow a rather flexible approach to the organization of testing. So, for example, to conduct the final (and current) testing in a foreign language, you can choose the following forms of test questions:

- a) single choice (from the proposed answers);
- b) multiple choice (from the proposed answers);
- c) text input;
- d) a free-form answer (checked by the lecturer, the mark is not given automatically);
- e) establishing a sequence;
- f) establishment of correspondences;
- g) filling in the blanks (in the text, sentence);
- h) interactive dictation;
- i) slider (for example, yes - no);
- j) uploading a file (for example, a photograph of a written work done in a notebook);
- k) words from letters;
- l) phrases from words (build a sentence from the proposed words);
- m) search in the text (for example, equivalents of words and phrases, terms, etc.)

If we add here the ability to download audio and video information, in principle, as we can see, most questions of knowledge testing are solved by the organization of electronic testing. Therefore, by completing the exam with a short interview with the student, we can assess the quality of his knowledge.

Summing up, we come to the conclusion that the organization of electronic testing and practical work online facilitates the teacher's work, reduces the monotonous process of checking written works, increases the frequency of control, which thereby stimulates the student's work by compiling ratings.

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