

# Some Issues of the Organization of Elective Training in the Light of Modernization of the Russian Educational System

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## Abstract

The relevance of the research is determined by the importance of modernization of Russian education in high school which provides specialized education and is designated as a means of differentiation and individualization of learning. The aim of the article is to study changes in the structure, content and organization of educational process. Elective courses (electives) play an important role in the system of Special Education. Unlike optional courses, currently existing at school, elective courses are obligatory. The main approaches used in this research are analysis and systematization. According to the concept of Special Education at the senior level of general education approved by the Russian Ministry of Education differentiation of learning content in high school is based on various combinations of three types of courses: basic, core, elective. Each of these types of courses contributes to the objectives of Special Education. However, you can select the range of tasks, prior for each type of course. The main results of the study allow taking more fully into account the interests, aptitudes and abilities of students, creating conditions for their training according to their professional interests and intentions with regard to continuing education. The materials of the study may be used by educational administrative staff while settling the schedule of a studying course.

**Keywords:** high school, intensification of the educational process, elective course, communicative competence

## 1. Introduction

Modern realities of Russian education require the search of ways to increase interest in learning a foreign language and the ways of intensification of the educational process. Elective courses is one of the most important engines of personal training and, as a consequence, help in sharing learning profiles (The concept of profile training at the senior step of the general education). After all, every student is unique, he has his own preferences.

The level of cognitive interests of senior students often goes beyond the traditional school\_subjects (Letter from the organization...). This determines the appearance of elective courses. It is in this age when a conscious understanding of the educational material comes, positive attitude to knowledge valuable to the student's own is increased, horizons broaden, the interests of the students take shape and develop (Ermakov, 2007). This age is characterized by the depth of thought and imagination. The students\_seek to apply their skills on the basis of interests, exercise their choice, determine the way of life, their future profession (Ministry of Education, 2003)

Pre- training represents a system of pedagogical, psychological, informational and organizational support to primary school students, promoting their self-determination upon completion of general education (Blagodarskaya, 2005).

## 2. Methodological Framework

The main methodological approaches in elective training:

1. The system approach. Essence: relatively independent components are treated as a set of interrelated components: the purpose of education, the subjects of the educational process - the teacher and the student, educational content, methods, forms, means of the pedagogical process. The task of the teacher is to account interconnection components.
2. The personal approach recognizes the person as a product of social and historical development of culture and

media, and does not allow the reduction of the individual to nature. Personality is treated as the aim, the subject, the result and the main criteria of efficiency of pedagogical process. The task of the teacher is the creation of conditions for self-development of the disposition and the creative potential of the individual.

3. The activity approach. Linguistic activity is the basis, the means and condition for the development of language competence. The task of the teacher is to select and organize the student's activity from the view point of the subject of work and communication. It includes awareness, goal setting, planning activities, its organization, evaluation and introspection (reflection).

4. Poly subjective (dialogic) approach. The essence of a man is wider than his work. Personality is the product and the result of communicating with people and characteristic relations, i.e. it is not only the substantive result of the activity which is important but also relational. The fact of "dialogic" content of the inner world of a man was hardly taken into account in the Theory of teaching, though it has found its reflection in proverbs ("Tell me who your friends are ...", "who leads ..."). The task of the educator is to watch the relationship, to promote humane treatment, to establish the psychological climate in the team. Dialogic approach in unity with the personal and activity ones is the essence of the methodology of humanistic pedagogy.

5. Cultural approach. The justification of the approach is axiology - the doctrine of values and value structure of the world. It is driven by the objective connection of a man with culture as a system of values.

### 3. Results

Elective courses are compulsory for the students to be attended. They are a part of the profile of education in upper school. Elective courses are realized at the expense of school component of the curriculum and perform two functions: (1) some of them can "support" the study of basic core subjects on a given standard level; (2) others serve to intra profile specialization training and for the construction of individual educational lines.

The general structure of all courses in high school is:

1. Basic general educational courses, which are the mandatory part of education; they are aimed at the completion of general education of students.
2. Specialized courses focused on in-depth study of particular subjects and preparing of graduates for subsequent vocational education.
3. Elective courses aimed primarily at meeting the individual educational interests, needs and aptitudes of each student. It is on them creation of individual education programs are based as a student chooses a course himself, depending on his/her interests, abilities and life plans.

Organization of elective courses is the newest mechanism of updating and personalization of the learning process. With a well-developed system of elective courses each student can get an education with certain desired bias in a particular area of expertise.

There are the following types of elective courses:

1. The courses are "add-in" core courses providing increased level of study of a subject for the most able students.
2. Courses that provide interdisciplinary communication and giving the opportunity to study academic subjects related to the profile level.
3. Elective courses, which help students to get enrolled in core classes, where one of the subjects studied at a basic level, to prepare for the delivery of the exam on the subject at a higher level.
4. The type of elective courses, focused on the acquisition of students' educational outcomes for the successful promotion of the labor market.

Elective courses must perform the following tasks:

- to increase the motivation of students,
- to acquaint them with the leading activities
- to activate the cognitive activity,
- to improve the communicative competence of students
- to generate skills and ways of working to solve practical problems,
- to prepare students for the class chosen profile
- to assist in the assessment of its potential in terms of educational and professional prospects

- to ensure the continuity of vocational guidance,
- to assist in the realization of opportunities and ways to implement the chosen way of life,
- to provide a higher level of development of basic academic subjects,
- to meet the educational interests, to help solve vital problems
- to provide students with skills for successful advancement in the labor market.

Motivation in choosing elective course may be different, such as the desire to:

- prepare for the exam;
- improve their knowledge, increase understanding, to get deeper into the subjects chosen;
- gain experience for future solutions to life problems;
- define his career, and others.

The teacher should:

1. Highlight the differences of an elective course and the basic course.
2. Identify the material and forms of work with students, thus helping them to find their way in the selection profile.
3. Decide what activities he to use in working with students (work in pairs, in a group, individual assignments).
4. Identify the object of study and share the independence of students.
5. Develop evaluation criteria, tests and methods of analysis.
6. Prepare the logical conclusion of the course, and various forms of reporting (final tests, interviews, creative task).

In drawing up the elective course program the following structural parts should be considered:

1. Theme, which should reflect the incentive nature of the study and be appreciated by the students;
2. Explanatory Note, identifying designation, type course, relevance, purpose, objectives, forms and methods of training;
3. Educational-methodical plan;
4. Contents, specifying each topic;
5. Guidelines;
6. Evaluation Criteria (cognitive, creative activity, diligence, the object of labor);
7. References;
8. Appendix (notes, scripts).

Requirements for the program of an elective course:

- 1) conformity to the concept of profile school;
- 2) practical orientation;
- 3) the logic of construction and supply of educational material;
- 4) the structure and content of the connection;
- 5) realistic investment of time and resources;
- 6) the use of active learning methods, which give students the opportunity to consciously and objectively choose to continue their education and careers;
- 7) novelty;
- 8) generalized content, allowing us to develop learning and subject skills.

#### **4. Discussion**

Elective courses as the most differentiated and various part of education will require new solutions in their organization. According to Gubarev T. organizing electives make it possible to bring up a communicative-creative personality (Gubarev, 2006). While other courses may bring up competitiveness (Mitina, 2003). A wide range of diverse electives can put a separate school in a difficult position, determined by the

shortage of teaching staff, the lack of training and methodological support. In these cases network forms of interaction between educational institutions acquire a special role. Network configurations provide association, cooperative educational potential of several educational institutions, including primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational and further education. Experience of a number of regions participating in the experiment providing specialized education shows that in advanced training institutes and teacher training colleges definite courses are created. Many of them are interesting and deserve support. In this regard we can recommend the regional and municipal education authorities to create databases for elective courses, organize informational support and exchange of experience of introducing elective courses.

## 5. Conclusion

Elective courses help students to achieve their goals and interests, and have an impact on the qualitative improvement of the level of language proficiency.

The role of English as the language of international communication does not require advertising.

Certainly, knowledge, vocabulary and speech training should begin in high school. This is important not only for the pre-professional training of students, but also to prepare for their future independent life in society.

However, in accordance with the requirements of the federal standard the English language is taught in high school mainly as a means of communication (General English) and as a means of learning (Academic English), which does not allow to develop students' communication skills sufficiently and enable students to master necessary knowledge. The contradiction between the needs of students, future profession requirements and training content laid in the federal standard is due to the relevance of any of the elective English course.

Various elective courses do not only improve the general and language education, general and special knowledge and skills, but also encourage students to use the acquired knowledge of communication in specific situations, which is an effective incentive verbal communication.

As a result of the course high school students:

- master the vocabulary according to topics and areas of communication;
- learn to hold talks on the phone for business purposes in English;
- learn to find solutions and ways out of situations that can arise in real life independently.

Thus, we see a real practical value of elective courses for students. These courses enhance students' motivation, stimulate their cognitive activity, and most importantly - make them more communicative.

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