

BUSINESS GAME AS A KEY ELEMENT IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

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The world is in a state of constant flux, developing cutting-edge technologies, introducing innovative management methods and creating new professions, thereby challenging humanity to rise to the occasion and live up to the highest standards of professional and personal excellence.

Against the backdrop of innovations in Ukraine's education sector, foreign language learning is becoming one of the key means of developing professional competence, which will ensure effective performance, the ability to utilise up-to-date information effectively, and the personal development of future professionals.

Game-based methods, particularly business games, are an important means of helping students develop the relevant professional skills and competencies, as well as motivating them for their future careers. A game is a specially organised activity that requires the exertion of emotional and mental energy. A game always involves decision-making: how to act, what to say, how to win? The desire to resolve these issues sharpens the players' mental activity. It is an effective way of acquiring knowledge and skills, The game allows participants to master various behavioural models in specific situations. It is also known that business games intensify the learning process, give students the opportunity to gain preliminary experience of future activities, become active participants in resolving problematic situations, and expand the boundaries of their communicative competence [1].

Foreign language communicative competence has been the subject of research by many authors, such as A.M. Zulkivska, O.O. Pasichnyk, T.V. Kolbina,

O.V. Ovcharuk, N.M. Bibik and others, and is now regarded as both the aim and the expected outcome of language learning. A number of studies conducted within the framework of professionally-oriented foreign language teaching in higher education institutions emphasise the need to teach future specialists professional communication in a foreign language. Business games, according to many researchers, are one of the key elements that intensify this process.

It is well known that business games (role-playing, contextual, simulation games, etc.) are an important element of the learning process, and some of their key features include their functionality, situational relevance, novelty and group interaction. Higher education institutions also use various modifications of business games: simulation, operational, role-playing games, Business Theater, psycho- and sociogram [2].

The modelling process, which is an integral part of all business games, enables us to create a simulation of professional communication activities in the classroom by combining a situation of professional communication in a foreign language with the professional content of that situation (lexical models) In the process of modelling the holistic content of future professional activity in learning through modelling or simulation, psychological and pedagogical conditions are created for the formation and development of both cognitive and professional motivations; the subject of study, as the primary goal and motivation of the student's learning activity, is woven, so to speak, into the subject of professional activity, presented in the form of a game. Through play, students' latent potential is activated, which is consistent with the principles of intensive learning. It is characterised by emotional engagement, creativity, competition and the presence of explicit or implicit rules. It is a multifunctional activity combining several interrelated types of activity, such as: analysis and problem-solving, learning, development, research, counselling, and the formation of collective activity. A business game combines two different principles of learning: the principle of modelling future professional activity and the principle of problem-based learning.

In a business game, the process of solving a task is exploratory and investigative [4].

Like any educational activity, a business game has its own distinctive features and stages of development: a business game involves simulation, which makes it possible to recreate a real foreign-language environment; the game simulates a particular aspect of specific human activity; it creates situations of professional and communicative interaction, based on the game scenario and clear rules; the game participants are assigned specific roles, which in turn enables the teaching of a foreign language to students within the context of their future professional activities; it achieves the game's objectives by drawing on interdisciplinary connections whilst solving interrelated communicative tasks; it encourages a creative approach to achieving effective results [3].

The creation of a business game involves clear and sequential stages, which include: preparing the game, namely defining the scenario; developing a methodology for conducting the game; ensuring that the chosen game methodology and scenario align with the learning objectives and the participants' level of preparation; ensuring that the course of the game is recorded (audio and video); determining the means of analysing the game (comments and recommendations from the game leader, reviewing the most important episodes and roles, comparing the players' own experiences with the observers' assessments, using a system of criteria or rating scales); structuring the game over time; determining the forms of evaluative communication with players; appropriate use of technical teaching aids, particularly during the analysis of players' behavior and the drawing of conclusions.

Our focus should always be on the teacher's role as the role-play facilitator: it is the teacher who selects the participants, familiarises them with the conditions and rules of the game, and sets the guidelines; during the game, the leader monitors its progress, directs the game, ensures ethical standards are upheld, and conducts a debriefing, during which issues such as the achievement of objectives, the

resolution of tasks, or the alignment of results with previously established criteria are discussed.

In our view, one of the most common business games used in business language courses is the brainstorm game. The idea is that participants must come up with as many ideas as possible within a short period of time, discuss them, and select the most effective ones. This type of business game is used to develop students' creative abilities or to solve complex problems in a short time

Running this game involves clear organisational stages, namely: clearly defining the problem to be solved; establishing guidelines for finding and discussing solutions; forming groups of 3–5 students; we set up an expert panel responsible for developing criteria, evaluating and selecting the best ideas; we hold a preparatory or training session aimed at helping students with varying levels of foreign language proficiency to overcome the psychological barrier; the main stage is the brainstorming session itself, when all groups begin to generate ideas; the stage of evaluating and selecting the best ideas; reporting the results of the brainstorming session.

It can therefore be concluded that business simulation games are one of the key teaching methods and an effective tool for developing students' competencies relevant to their future professional careers; they facilitate the acquisition of both specialist and general knowledge, stimulate students' creativity, and prepare them for potential real-life situations, thereby motivating them to learn, develops the ability to work in a team, defend one's point of view, and seek compromises, and helps to overcome the psychological barrier to communicating in a foreign language.

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