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Advanced Training of Teachers in Innovative Pedagogical Activity

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Abstract

Problem relevance. The education system faces new challenges in re-evaluating goals, functions and content related to social changes. It is worth noting that the modern labor market requires highly qualified mobile specialists, having a high level of educational cognitive motivation and professionally significant personality qualities, able to quickly and effectively respond to critical situations and produce high results. **Study goal.** The paper highlights the criteria for innovative forms of advanced training of teachers, the stages of their application, a comparative analysis of traditional and innovative approaches to advanced training, as well as current requirements for innovative forms of advanced training organization. It requires a qualitatively different training of teachers, which allows combining the fundamental nature of professional basic knowledge with innovative thinking and a practice-oriented research approach to solving specific educational problems. **Materials and methods.** The main methods used in the study of the problem are: cognitive-synthesizing (the study of psychological and pedagogical literature on the research problem); theoretical (comparative method, method of design during curricula planning); empirical (surveying, testing, statistical processing of data and results). **Practical relevance.** The practical relevance of the study lies in the fact that a model of advanced training of teachers has been developed in the context of professional pedagogical activity changes. It can be used by institutions of further professional education as one of the components in the educational process, as well as in development of new ways of organizing advanced training. **Results and discussion.** The study was conducted among 46 university teachers. The results presented in the paper prove that the advanced training course developed by the authors contributes to a change in attitudes toward professional activity, an understanding of the need for self-development, for the introduction of innovations and the use of new teaching technologies, insufficient or zero experience in applying technological tools. In general, we can conclude that the use of innovative teaching technologies should be systematic, focused and closely associated with the needs of modern teachers.

Keywords: advanced training, distance learning, information technology, lifelong learning, professional experience, web technologies, webinar, virtual learning environment, self-education.

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Introduction

Nowadays requirements for periodic certification and re-certification of teaching staff urge institutional support for lifelong learning and advanced training. An important goal of the advanced training modern system is training of full-fledged professional teaching staff capable of meeting modern life challenges and training highly qualified specialists. Actions of teachers reflect their attitudes and abilities, and teachers are role models which students can follow in their future use of the language (Kucirkova et al., 2017). A qualitative change in pedagogical activity in the educational process should be the final result and criterion of the teacher's professional activity. Advanced training implies raising the level of theoretical and practical knowledge, improving the professional skills of the teacher constantly required for professional activities (Vlasenko, 2014).

The existing forms of teaching experience dissemination are often derived from an "obsolete" model based on an educational one-sided subject-oriented character. Individual active teaching methods used in this model neither improve training quality nor develop professional skills. The systems of traditional advanced training, as a rule, lack philosophical, psychological and pedagogical foundations of training. The main criteria are training and acquiring a certain amount of knowledge. As a result of the training, the teacher is only a training agent who has received some advanced pedagogical experience. Modern studies prove that the technology of training specialists is constantly changing; the modern challenges of the educational environment require updating in the content of education. The study process in advanced training courses should be oriented towards the consumer of educational services, i.e. the trainee (Kostyko, 2008).

Participants of the advanced training program "Organizational and methodological support for the preparation and implementation of inter-university competitive events for students", offered at the Department of Russian and Foreign Languages (Russian State Timiryazev Agrarian University) took part in the survey. The survey results have shown that all the trainees consider the introduction of innovative technologies in independent pedagogical activity and the application of acquired knowledge in interactive forms of learning important and relevant. On the other hand, many interviewees admit a lack of awareness about the possibilities of using innovative technologies in pedagogical activity. Difficulties in the use of innovative technologies arise from the lack of knowledge and skills. The survey showed that only 25% of teachers implement innovative technologies, 57% implement only 20% of innovative technologies in practice, 15% of teachers partly use innovative educational technologies. Implementing few innovative educational technologies requires introducing this topic in advanced training courses. Social, political, economic changes make training and retraining of the teaching staff the most important task in the pedagogical science development (Kungurova, 2010).

New goals, content, methods and technologies of education make particular demands on teachers. Today, they are not only tutors and instructors, but also researchers who are to be able to combine traditional forms of education with creative search and use information and communication technologies. For a teacher to be a creative and self-developing researcher, a different system of professional education and new forms of scientific and methodological work should be established. New forms of the advanced training system must be found with emphasis on specialized staff development follow-up. A search is underway for the most effective ways to further develop the system of advanced training of teaching staff. One of the main structures in the development of the innovative activity of a teacher is methodological training, which has independent functions and a professionally significant role in the advanced training system. Distinctive features of the innovative activity of the teacher are the novelty in setting goals and objectives, development of new concepts and pedagogical technologies, ability for conscious self-development. The current interest in innovative pedagogical technologies can be explained by the following reasons: the need for a systematic-activity approach in pedagogy, the need to implement an individualized study process, and the desire to exclude ineffective verbal methods of knowledge transfer (Belyavskaya, 2008).

All this leads to the fact that at present pedagogical activity should be innovative in nature, which is one of the essential factors for successful educational activity. It is innovative activity that provides for professional and creative growth of teaching staff (Osmolovskaya, 2010).

Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to identify educational opportunities of innovative technologies in teaching a foreign language, as well as the analysis and optimization of the advanced training programs for teachers implemented on distance learning platforms.

Literature review

Russian and foreign researchers' works form theoretical basis for this study (Kitaygorodskaya, 2009; Krupchenko, 2014; Zakharova, 2005; Zeer, 2005, 2010). The problems of professional development, skills development strategies, innovative activity were examined by researchers from different points of view: the psychology of professional development, psychological aspects of innovative pedagogical activity, personal development of a teacher, methodological aspects of using innovative technologies (Zeer, 2005). The authors have analyzed the innovative searches of modern pedagogy at different levels of education paying much attention to innovative processes. Socialization and the consistent mastery of professional competence, adequate to the modern content of education, are the object of scientific works of many

domestic and foreign experts. The problem of self-realization is also the object of psychological and pedagogical works of domestic and foreign famous scientists.

When analyzing various aspects of the professional competence formation of a foreign language teacher, special attention should be paid to the development of reflective thinking and its role in forming the psychological readiness of a teacher to solve professional problems. In addition, researchers speculate on the relationship between reflection, design and research activities of a foreign language teacher, emphasizing the importance of using innovative approaches to teaching (Zeer, 2010).

A teacher engaged in the search for effective ways of professional training should study the main characteristics and advantages of innovative technologies, determine their place in teaching foreign language communication and understand their role as one of the factors affecting the teacher's methodological mastery (Kitaygorodskaya, 2009).

While a lot of changes in approaches to understanding the quality of education in the context of active digitalization of all activity areas are taking place, the advanced training purpose is the comprehensive self-development of the individual and the improvement of professional competencies. The constant development of the educational system and new social demands put forward the requirements for the lifelong professional development of teachers (Smetanina, 2010). Therefore, teachers must develop their own qualities requested by the society. The emphasis is on the prospects of online platforms and forms of educational and professional interaction implemented on their basis in synchronous (webinars) and asynchronous (video lectures, presentations, panel discussion, etc.) mode.

Methodology

Research methods: cognitive-synthesizing (the study of domestic and foreign psychological, pedagogical and methodological literature on the problem of using innovative technologies in teaching a foreign language); theoretical (analysis and synthesis of scientific literature, comparative method of design when developing an advanced training program); empirical (surveying, testing, compilation of best practices, methods of statistical processing of data and results).

The experimental site of the study: Russian Timiryazev State Agrarian University, Department of Russian and Foreign Languages.

The experiment stages:

1. Analysis and synthesis of materials in order to provide theoretical grounds for the research problem.

2. Practical – development and pilot testing of the advanced training program “Organizational and methodological support for the preparation and implementation of inter-university competitive events for students”.
3. Generalizing – analysis, systematization and generalizing of research results, formulation of conclusions.

Results

The federal system of professional development of teaching staff put forward a task of training new type of specialists capable of using innovative forms and teaching methods. A modern teacher should own modern innovative educational technologies and use them in the study process, taking into account the professional interests of future specialists, individual and personal characteristics of students. Therefore, in training specialists, the use of innovative forms and methods must be organically combined with a pragmatic understanding of the goals and objectives of education and training. The methodological basis of the study includes a system-activity approach, which provides readiness for self-development and lifelong learning, the organization of active cognitive activity (Polat, 2010).

The effectiveness of the teacher's innovative activity depends on various factors. The availability of material basis and technical means plays a significant role in the development of innovative orientation of teachers. On the other hand, teachers themselves must be prepared for innovation, generate new ideas and put them into practice. Researchers note the insufficient level of application of information technologies in education, referring to the creation and maintenance of information educational environments, open and distance learning, the development of new technologies for elaborating study materials. At the same time, it is obvious that innovative processes in education are impossible without the use of information technologies. Information technologies are an important aspect of preparing teachers for innovation activity; it is the basis of the transition to new models of lifelong learning (Zakharova, 2005).

Ever-changing social and economic conditions require certain personal qualities of teachers, namely, teachers must be competent and constantly update knowledge and skills. In the face of changing activities, first of all, the psychological attitudes of the personality change. Realizing the need for self-actualization requires abandoning established habits and behavior, analyzing pedagogical experience and introducing a new pedagogical methodology. Teachers who are ready for innovative activity have high intellectual and creative power, as well as a critical attitude to reality, the desire for its reflection and the search for alternative ways of performing the professional activity (Pechatnova, 2009).

The professional development of teachers is carried out both by teachers themselves and by society, which provides the conditions and opportunities for this case. The regulation of this process takes place through regulatory documents, such as Federal State Educational Standards, the Law “On Education in the Russian Federation”, etc. The development of modern society in the context of informatization is associated with the introduction of information and communication technologies in all spheres of human life.

Modern technologies of teaching foreign languages are traditionally divided into social and information ones. Social personality-oriented technologies include the project method, distance learning, intensive teaching methods, case technology, discussion, group and interactive technologies, etc. Information technologies involve the use of technical means, computer and audiovisual technologies, and multimedia presentations (Kitaygorodskaya, 2009).

Choosing forms of training organization in the advanced training system is a complex process: new pedagogical technologies and options for programs and training courses are developed. The educational environment using modern technologies is characterized by the following factors (Krupchenko, 2014):

- the ability to independently choose a learning strategy;
- many ways to acquire knowledge;
- corporate collaboration;
- research training based on finding answers to questions;
- critical choice and meaningful decision making;
- independent mode of drawing conclusions.

Pedagogical technologies are associated with the widespread use of new information technologies, which make it possible to fully disclose the didactic functions and related methods, techniques and teaching aids, and to use their implicit educational opportunities. According to the results of the survey, the most frequently used innovative forms of advanced training were identified. The largest number of course participants (57%) is constantly taking part in online forums, webinars. Distance learning is used by 17%, 33% have become participants in video conferences, 42% are developing an individual educational route, 4% are developing innovative design courses, 3% are working at new formats presenting ideas.

Current trends in the development of Russian system of education actualize the attention to the development of distance education, which is based on the need for lifelong and rapid acquiring of new knowledge. One of these tools that have become widespread in educational practice is webinars. A webinar is not only an online seminar and online lectures organized using web technologies in real time. Various platforms for conducting webinars present the possibility of using modules such as chat(s), questioning, demonstration of content, collaboration, etc., which provides a solution to a variety of didactic tasks. Webinars are an opportunity to acquire new knowledge for all comers. In addition, webinars have several advantages: accessibility, responsiveness, interactivity, information content, mobility, i.e. with the help of webinars, you can learn almost without interruption from work. Webinar technology involves training in short sessions, from 2 to 4 hours. For those who are engaged in self-education and advanced training, we can recommend the platforms of the publishers “Prosveshcheniye”, “Legion”, “Relod”, “Goethe Institut”, ELS “Lan”. The introduction of webinars in the system of further professional education helps to increase the professional competence of teachers who are adequate to the current sociocultural situation and the social service of the education system (Sergeeva, 2019).

However, the experience shows that the organization of online webinars by various publishers or methodological associations has a number of serious drawbacks, namely:

- webinars are often held during working hours, many teachers do not always have the opportunity to take an active part in them, and even in case of a subsequent viewing of the recorded lecture, communication in synchronous mode with the speaker and colleagues is usually impossible;
- for many teachers, participation in the webinar is passive, since obtaining a certificate does not often imply the performance of any task or passing any test;
- there is no clearly developed system of documentation for confirming participation in the webinar, as well as educational and program documentation of the webinar itself (program, report text, links to primary sources and additional literature, etc.).

The aim of advanced training system is creating for all participants equal opportunities to receive quality education that meets modern requirements. To do this, it is necessary to solve the following tasks: to ensure the availability of high-quality educational resources, to involve all means of informatization in the study process, to develop motivation to acquire knowledge and continuous self-education through modern information and communication technologies (Sergeeva, 2019).

Assessment of useful experience by colleagues encourages the search for new creative forms of pedagogical activity and contributes to their practical implementation. Lifelong learning helps teachers to maintain and improve the professional level, to master various competencies throughout the entire educational activity (Smetanina, 2009).

The Department of Russian and Foreign Languages (Russian State Timiryazev Agrarian University) has enough experience in participating in various seminars, forums and webinars for sharing teaching skills, as well as in developing and supervising their own short-term advanced training programs (16 hours) in the traditional lecture and seminar form. Based on existing experience, it can be assumed that such a practice can be most effectively implemented on educational portals such as Moodle, where distance learning courses of various disciplines have been implemented for several years, including foreign language courses.

We offer to consider the scenario for a 16-hour advanced training course on the topic: “Organizational and methodological support for the preparation and implementation of inter-university competitive events for students”.

The thematic parts of the course are divided into three interconnected modules:

1. Constructive-design module (designing pragmatically significant content of training and technologies for its implementation, taking into account the principles of LSP teaching; developing skills in the field of goal-setting and determining methods for diagnosing and evaluating goals);
2. Organizational and methodological module (preparation, organization and implementation of various forms of competitive events; development of ability to reflection, self-criticism, as well as creative self-realization);
3. Communicative module (building didactically sound and pedagogically expedient relationships with partner departments and participants of competitive events based on empathy, responsibility and pedagogical tact).

The curriculum of the course is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The curriculum of the course

Program Modules	Contents
Constructive-design module (6 hours)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General didactic principles and approaches to the design of methodological support for independent work of students. 2. The main forms of inter-university competitive events for students and their characteristic features (scientific and journalistic essays, translations, presentations, videos (digital story telling / video narration, etc.). 3. Developing of design, research and information-analytical skills of students in independent work while preparing for extracurricular activities.
Organizational and methodological module (4 hours)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizational support for the preparation and implementation of various types of competitive events (formation of an organizing committee, development of a regulation, information coverage of an event, attraction of participants, organization of receipt of competitive materials and announcement of results). 2. Methodological support for the preparation and implementation of various types of competitive events (selection of materials, preparation of competitive tasks, ensuring effective evaluation).
Communicative module (4 hours)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organization of optimal interaction with partner departments and participants, methods of preventing and resolving conflicts. 2. Ways to further develop partnerships and diversify cooperation.
The discussion of the results (2 hours)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation and discussion of individual projects.

Table 2 presents the scenario of the advanced training course on the topic: “Organizational and methodological support for the preparation and implementation of inter-university competitive events for students”.

Table 2. The scenario of the advanced training course

Training materials	Training activities	Distance learning platform services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts (for example): “Features of intercultural communication in the modern world” etc. 	Viewing (listening to) the content, taking notes, preparing questions to the course developers and colleagues, presenting their own experience,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture • Webinar

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video lecture • Links to external resources 	performing a test on understanding the theoretical part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library • Test
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual tasks for understanding and systematization of theoretical information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding answers to problematic questions • Developing schemes, algorithms, filling-in tables • Group work over a report to be published on a forum or a wiki document (instructions for preparing and making a presentation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task • Wiki-document • Forum • Compiling a glossary on the course
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussion of problematic issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample questions to discuss: “Ways to motivate students to creative activity”; “Development of tasks for the interuniversity translation contest (the contest of essays, videos, etc.); “Quality assurance issues – the problems of choosing quality criteria” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum • Chat
Practical part		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systematization of experience 2. Developing an algorithm for organizing and implementation of inter-university competitive events 3. Preparing a presentation of the experience and the developed algorithm, as well as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) its dubbing and recording, presentation on the network on the training portal and discussion on the forum; b) making an online presentation at a webinar (round table) and its subsequent group discussion 		
Discussion of the outcome		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General discussion of the quality of the course and its outcome 2. Individual review (feedback) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum • Surveying

The problems of optimizing advanced training programs for teachers offered at the departments having innovative experience and implemented on distance learning platforms are to minimize the shortcomings of both the traditional lecture and seminar form and modern webinars.

Comparing the results of traditional advanced training and those of innovative one, the following advantages of the latter can be noted. The priority areas of innovative advanced training include the development of teachers and provide the conditions for their continuous self-development, mastering new activities (Kostyko, 2008).

During the course, the readiness of advanced training participants for innovative activities was studied. The results are presented in Figure 1.

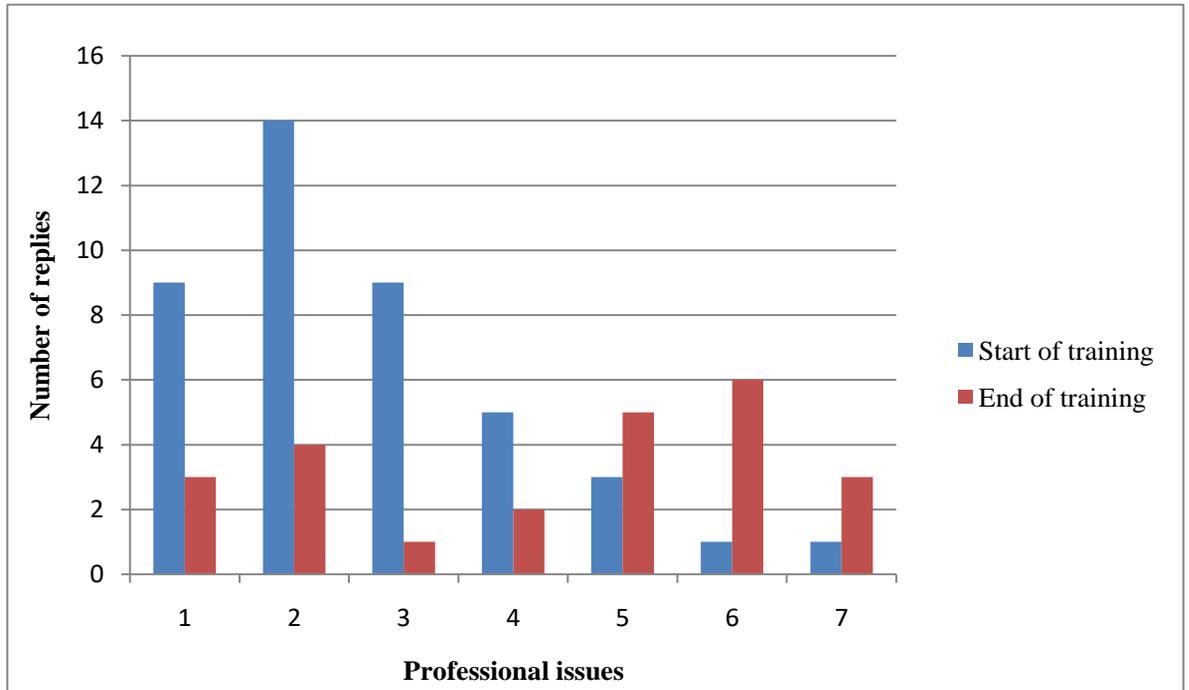


Figure 1. The readiness of advanced training participants for innovative activities

Specification for professional issues:

1. I do not use innovations in my activity
2. Not enough time, heavy workload
3. Lack of educational and methodological literature
4. Insufficient work experience
5. Insufficient experience in application of technological tools
6. I do not engage in self-development
7. The lack of technological tool system for the subject

Discussions

At the end of the course, the attitude to professional activity changed. The participants assessed the necessity of self-development, insufficient experience in the application of technological tools, the lack of a technological tool system for the subject, the introduction of innovations and the use of new teaching technologies.

After the training, the need for lifelong professional development increased to 100%; this fact is explained by the interest in raising the status of a teacher and the need to increase professional competence. The need to change the content of training increased by 35%, the need to master new technologies amounted to 93%. The dynamics in the needs of course participants is given in Figure 2.

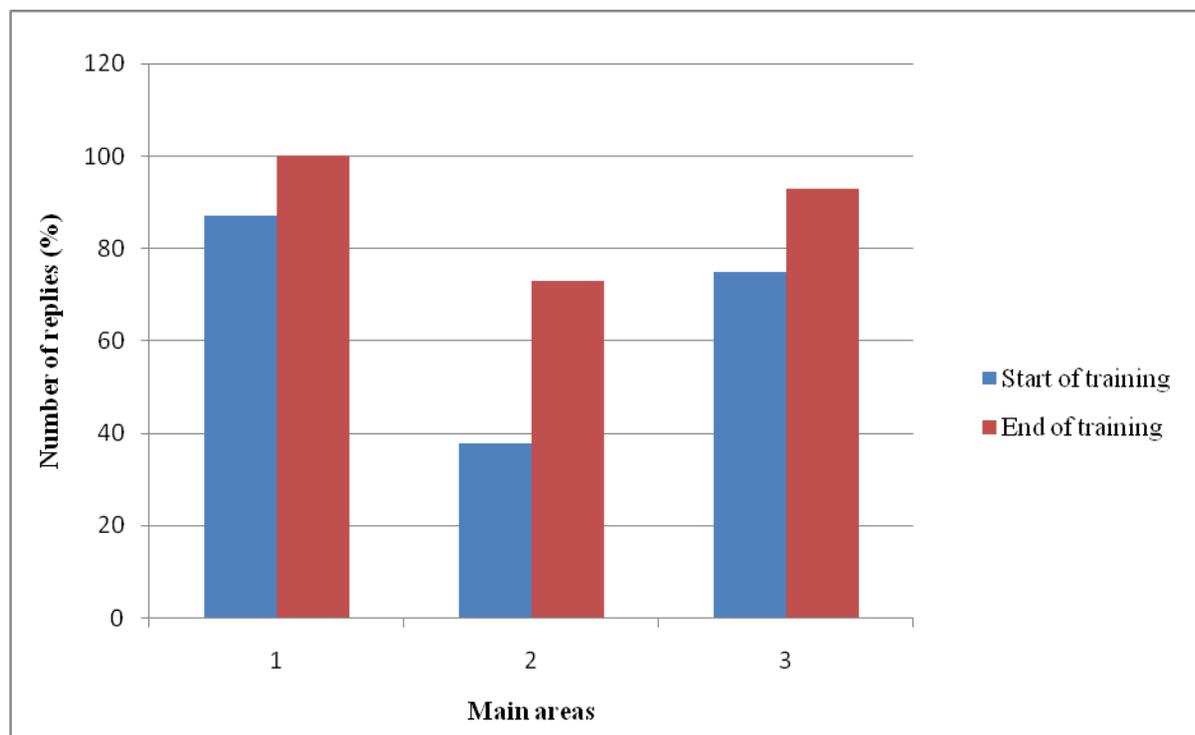


Figure 2. The dynamics in the needs

Specification for main areas:

1. The need for lifelong professional development
2. The need to change the content of training
3. The need to master new technologies

After completing the course, the following questionnaire was offered to the participants. Table 3 presents its results.

At the same time, the accumulated rich experience of empirical and theoretical research does not provide sufficient grounds for determining the system of training teachers to use innovative teaching technologies in the advanced training system, since there is no comprehensive approach to solving this problem. The

issues of improving the training of foreign language teachers for the use of innovative technologies and teaching methods in the advanced training system require further multi-aspect research.

Table 3. Questionnaire for assessing the course “Organizational and methodological support for the preparation and implementation of inter-university competitive events for students”

Discussed Issues	Assessment parameters
1. Rate your satisfaction with the course results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New knowledge, active forms of training. • New knowledge, traditional forms of training. • Partially new knowledge, traditional forms of training. • Knowledge has not been updated, passive forms of training.
2. What organizational problems make it difficult to upgrade skills?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs of training. • Lack of possibility to choose a training period. • Poor material basis and technical means.
3. What forms of professional development contribute to advanced training?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of experience in innovation. • Results of professional contests. • Conducting a workshop. • Publications in specialized journals.
4. What changes in the system of professional development of teachers are of the highest priority?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New technologies (modular, distance, Internet technologies, virtual design). • Personal development, research competencies, psychological knowledge. • Strengthening the methodological focus.

Conclusion

A survey of participants of the course has shown their interest in participating, as well as in the development and implementation of online advanced training courses, in accordance with their professional abilities and interests. The issues of building an individual educational trajectory, a personality-oriented approach to learning and the availability of lifelong learning are becoming increasingly relevant. Nowadays, the advanced training system should include: a clear concept, an advanced training plan; the modular principle of learning content; continuity of forms, methods and means of advanced training; use of modern information technologies; individualization of training; the availability of necessary resources, material basis and technical means.

According to the latest data provided on the Internet, the largest universities in Russia make the most of innovative technologies in the study process and periodically hold seminars and conferences on the introduction of innovative technologies. The use of innovative educational technologies provides tremendous opportunities to increase the effectiveness of the study process.

The modern system of advanced training reveals the significant prospects of using innovative technologies for self-development and self-realization. The paper shows how various online technologies are used in the advanced training system, providing a wide selection of information sources for cognitive activity. In this regard, it is important to make a conclusion that the use of innovative teaching technologies should be systematic, focused closely associated with the needs of modern teachers. The introduction of modern educational technologies does not mean that they will completely replace the traditional teaching methods; instead they will constitute their integral part. Neither computer nor information technologies are capable of forming the intellectual and ethical qualities of graduates. They are only auxiliary means of solving the tasks, which can be solved only with the help of competent and creative teachers.

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