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EXTRA-CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES AS BENEFICIAL FORMS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

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It has been proved that most students are unlikely to learn everything they need to succeed in a class that meets for only a limited number of hours weekly. To fulfill all the requirements listed in National Curriculum for Universities and to ensure that the students can do well in learning English we focus on extra-curriculum activities or work that is of prime interest for the lecturers nowadays.

Extra-curriculum activity or work is a dynamic and creative process which deals with setting and solving methodological task of educational and pedagogical value. They may be realized through different forms of extra-curriculum activity organized for English learners and their content always exceeds the curriculum. For this purpose lecturer-student interaction is needed.

The issue of lecturer-student interaction in the foreign language classroom is paid much attention to in the numerous investigations of the Ukrainian and foreign methodologists. But of special interest is this interaction from the point of view of

extra-curriculum activities. Not long ago the lecturer used to be the only “leader” to be listened to and whose instructions were to be followed. Today we witness the revolutionary changes in the teaching process - the shift to a student-oriented approach from a lecturer-directed one. Learners are gradually becoming more active in their learning process, assume responsibility for their learning and participate in decisions which affect it. The autonomy component can be regarded as a complex cyclic process that directs one’s own learning entirely and involves setting goals, thinking, planning, making decisions, reflecting and reviewing [1].

It is necessary to point out that extra-curriculum activities are closely connected with the classroom ones. For instance such an extra-curriculum event as self-assessment project – presentation is widely used by methodologists and practitioners in the last two decades [2]. Projects and especially their presentations help students become aware of the communicative strategy and competences. Any extra-curriculum activity starts in the classroom. See Fig.1

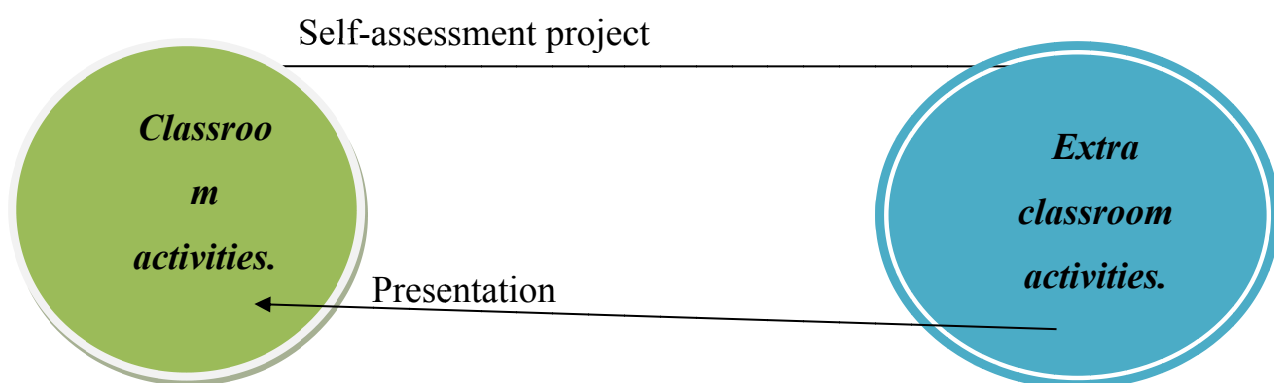


Fig.1. Interrelation of classroom and extra-classroom activities in students’ project – presentation event.

Such interrelation can be communicated through a very common in our classroom practice: students draw up contracts with the lecturer to work independently on different language-enhancing activities (project – presentation in this case) outside of class and complete it to the end of semester. The type of activity undertaken as well as the amount of time to be expended on the activity is specified

in the contract that is kept by the lecturer until the end of the contract period. The guidelines we provide to the students have proved effective in helping them clarify what they want to do and what they can realistically complete within the time limits imposed. In fact, all of the projects prepared by our students involve several skills. Projects do not have to be done by individual students, some pairs or groups of students may complete them. The range of possible projects is quite broad, and many of the student-developed topics are unique. We suggest different project topics to the students, organized by language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking).

Involving students in preparing self-directed projects – presentations as extra-curriculum activity we provide more opportunities for using and interacting in English and help them gain confidence and become independent language learners. In such a way students are engaged in the process of continued learning that even develops better brains. So we suggest brain-compatible teaching via self-directed projects as a kind of extra-curriculum activity. Projects have to become one of the main components in learning languages.

Other examples of extra-curriculum events and activities which become traditional for our first year students are: conference “Alma Mater - NTUU“KPI”, Olympiad-dictation and phonetic competition. The students of the third, fourth and fifth year actively participate in the annual scientific conferences “Actual Problems of Linguistics” and “Actual Problems of Translation” to present their course and diploma papers. Very popular among the students of our University is International Students Conference “Innovations in Science and Technology”. Much attention is paid to the Olympiad in general English as well as to the translation competitions. Many students take part in the regular excursions to the different art galleries and places of interest of our city, etc.

There is no argument over the fact that current language teaching methodology views communicative competence as the primary language learning objective[1]. Thus, in order to develop their communicative competence students are actively involved into extra-curriculum work that stimulates their thinking skills, employs their reading of authentic materials, creates students’ community and unity

with communication in a foreign language with the spirit of tolerance and collaboration, students' active role in their education. Any extra-curriculum activity is by all means some general human activity, and it reflects the relations that exist in real life. Depending on the character of this work we can offer to distinguish between such classified groups as informational, entertaining and complex activities.

Character/type of extra-curriculum activities can be subdivided into:

1. **Informational** (in the form of various informational on-line computer events, conferences, round tables, work-shops, lectures, disputes, discussions, excursions or study visits, etc.)
2. **Entertaining** (in the form of various entertaining on-line computer events, parties, Olympiads-contests, clubs, language weeks/months, etc.)
3. **Complex** (in the form of various on-line computer events, parties, Olympiads-contests, clubs, language weeks/months, etc.)

This framework for students' extra-curriculum activities is widely and successfully used in the process of teaching foreign languages at the linguistic faculty of the NTUU "KPI" for several years already.

We suppose that getting our students used to such a framework and gradually making them familiar with it we give them a great chance for the future successes in their career development after graduating from the university.

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