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Approaches to organizing students' independent work
in extracurricular English classes

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Abstract

Background. Due to the trend of the development of the information world, the latest tools for obtaining both educational and any other information are becoming increasingly popular. Therefore, additional education teachers are increasingly encouraging students to use authentic and publicly available materials in their classes. This approach allows students to learn a foreign language (hereinafter referred to as FL) more effectively and gain a deeper understanding of it. Interactive methods allow teachers to engage students in the learning process and help motivate students and boost their readiness to learn new things. One of the main advantages of interactive teaching methods is that they prepare students to work both independently and in a team, which helps them develop their creativity, logical thinking, and ability to take responsibility for their choices. Research by domestic and international scholars also confirms that independent study allows for the assessment of not only the student's knowledge but also the teacher's competence, since the teacher is responsible for the material provided for study (relevance of sources, quality of audio material, content of lectures).

Purpose. The purpose of this scientific study is to examine the possibilities of additional education in organizing independent work for students studying English.

Materials and methods. The article uses a combination of different methods, including theoretical, empirical and statistical ones.

Results. The effectiveness of a learning tool, such as independent work, depends largely on the timely analysis and control of the work that has been completed. The verification of completed work should serve educational purposes, allowing students to correct mistakes and prevent their recurrence. It is important to carefully organize in-

dependent work and diversify its forms in foreign language classes, creating a sense of novelty that enhances interest and motivation. It is crucial for a foreign language teacher to not only reinforce and evaluate students' knowledge, but also to influence the development of key skills necessary for both language learning and professional development.

Keywords: educational environment; teaching tools; teaching methods; independent work; information systems; students; foreign languages

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Возможности дополнительного образования по организации самостоятельной работы студентов на занятиях по английскому языку

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Аннотация

Обоснование. В связи с тенденцией развития информационного мира, новейшие инструменты для получения как учебной, так и любой другой информации становятся всё более востребованными. Поэтому педагоги дополнительного образования всё чаще призывают учащихся использовать аутентичные и общедоступные материалы на своих занятиях. Такой подход позволяет учащимся более эффективно изучать иностранный язык (далее – ИЯ) и глубже понимать его. Интерактивные методы позволяют преподавателям вовлекать учащихся в процесс обучения и способствуют мотивации учащихся и их стремлению к познанию нового. Одним из главных преимуществ интерактивных методов обучения является то, что они учат учащихся работать как самостоятельно, так и в команде, что способствует развитию их творческих способностей, логического мышления и умения брать на себя ответственность за свой выбор. Исследования отечественных и зарубежных учёных также подтверждают, что самостоятельное обучение позволяет оценить не только уровень знаний студента, но и компетентность преподавателя. Это обусловлено тем, что преподаватель несёт ответственность за предоставляемый учебный материал (актуальность источников, качество аудиоматериалов, содержание лекций).

Целью данного научного исследования является изучение возможностей дополнительного образования в организации самостоятельной работы студентов, изучающих английский язык.

Материалы и методы. В статье используется комплекс различных методов, включая теоретические, эмпирические и статистические.

Результаты. Эффективность такого метода обучения, как самостоятельная работа, во многом зависит от своевременного анализа и контроля выполненной работы. Проверка выполненной работы должна служить образовательным целям, позволяя учащимся исправлять ошибки и предотвращать их повторение. Важно тщательно организовывать самостоятельную работу и разнообразить ее формы на занятиях по иностранному языку, создавая ощущение новизны, повышающее интерес и мотивацию. Для преподавателя иностранного языка крайне важно не только закреплять и оценивать знания студентов, но и влиять на развитие ключевых навыков, необходимых как для изучения языка, так и для профессионального роста.

Ключевые слова: образовательная среда; обучающие инструменты; методика обучения; самостоятельная работа; информационные системы; студенты; иностранный языки

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Introduction

The educational process is an integral part of any person's life, which includes studying world culture, current social and economic issues, and examining political trends. First of all, the main goal of the Additional Foreign Language Education (AFLE) as an educational institution is to teach students to analyze current problems, which allows them to develop their logical abilities and prepares them for adult life. Therefore, the educational process should be primarily aimed at developing those skills and competencies of students that will be in demand in the labor market in the future.

Today, the following competencies, presented in Fig. 1, are essential requirements that provide advantages when applying for a job.

This study aims to explore how supplementary (or extracurricular) education can support and structure independent work among students learning English.

The relevance of this research stems from the growing demand for additional language instruction in an increasingly globalized world. A central challenge in this context is the scarcity of classroom time, which places greater emphasis on well-organized, effective independent study to ensure

tangible learning outcomes. This issue is especially critical in supplementary education settings, where formal oversight is typically absent and sustaining student motivation becomes a significant concern.

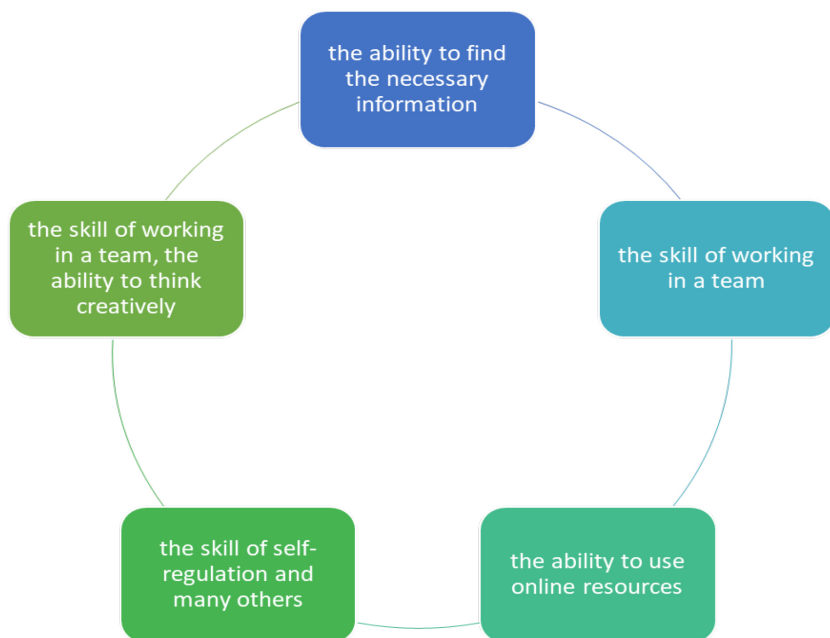


Fig. 1. Competencies required for an employee

Consequently, identifying strategies that can transform independent work from a perfunctory obligation into an engaging, self-directed, and manageable learning process addresses a pressing need in contemporary educational practice.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to solve the following tasks:

- analyze the need and identify methods for strengthening the role of oral language practice within English language classes, especially in the context of autonomous learning.
- systematize and characterize modern educational technologies aimed at developing basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

- identify and describe the key components and didactic properties of the modern information and educational environment for learning foreign languages [19, p. 4].

The scientific novelty of the work lies in the consideration and justification of a comprehensive model for organizing independent work, which is specifically adapted for students in the context of additional education in English. The research work proposes an integrative approach that combines the principles of personalization, technological solutions, and a system of motivational support, allowing for the traditional gap between teacher-led classes and independent learning to be bridged.

The practical significance of the study is confirmed by the proposal of educational methods and recommendations that are ready to be implemented in the educational process of language courses for students and additional education centers.

Materials and methods

This scientific study was conducted using various methods and approaches that helped to look at the problem of additional education in the context of current events. The methods used and their key essence are presented in Fig. 2.

Since the effectiveness of any method depends on the correct choice of teaching principles and the amount of information provided to students, we can identify the following set of principles used in AFLE by analyzing the literature of our contemporaries. These principles and their descriptions are presented in Fig. 3.

These principles serve as the basis for the formation of an educational environment that stimulates the development of competencies necessary for a successful career and personal growth of students in a dynamically changing world.

The teaching methodology for students is based on several key elements: optional computer science classes, systematic instruction, personal responsibility, active learning, performance assessment, comprehensive coverage of subjects, small groups (6 to 8 students), and a personalized approach to learning. The educational process at AFLE differs from the linear model and

utilizes concentric learning, which involves repeated coverage of the same topics and subtopics at each stage of learning.

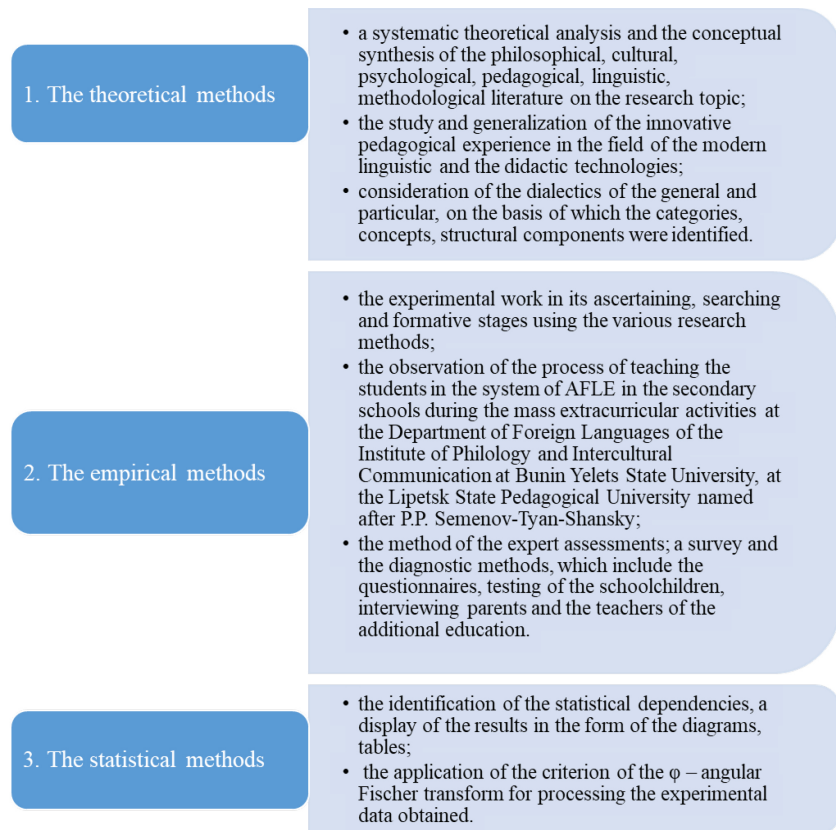


Fig. 2. Materials and research methods [21]

In our opinion, it is also necessary to include in the educational process classes that will include acting out scenes dedicated to various life situations (going to the store, talking to a passerby or visiting a doctor), which will allow children to practice in a spoken foreign language, as well as develop their communication skills and make English a part of their lives.

As practice shows, it is through acting out roles that a child experiences a situation, and this allows him to learn to quickly translate the speech

of the interlocutor and formulate answers to his questions. This practice develops the skill of clearly constructing one's own speech, which should fully convey the essence and meaning of each sentence and be understandable to the interlocutor.

The principle of the cultural orientation of the content of teaching a foreign language to the schoolchildren

• This principle allows for the selection of educational language material filled with diverse cultural, historical, and regional parallels and contexts to create stories, educational, and speech situations in which students engage in communicative interaction.

The principle of the developing value of the learning content of a FL.

• Taking into account the mentioned principle, the cultural studies material is selected for the educational purposes, the textbooks or teaching the materials are being developed, and socio-cultural enrichment of the worldview of the schoolchildren is planned or implemented.

The principle of the novelty of the language information discussed by the schoolchildren ensures the emerging interest of the students in the educational process.

• The implementation of this principle is embodied in the novelty of the topics discussed in the language, the content of the authentic texts, the various forms of the foreign language activities in the educational process, as well as the types of the language exercises.

The principle of using the authentic educational materials (artistic, journalistic texts, songs, poems, advertisements, radio broadcasts, films, etc.)

• This principle promotes the activation of thought processes that expand students' understanding of the surrounding reality, allows students to actively master the basic methods of transmitting information, become familiar with the functioning of the language being studied, which develops the mechanisms of cognitive cognition of schoolchildren.

Fig. 3. Several principles used in teaching English to students

Discussion

Since education is an integral part of everyone's life, new opportunities for obtaining it are emerging every year. Since the transition to digitalization 4.0 has taken place, there are many digital assistants and online tutors for advanced study of subjects, including foreign languages.

Recently, special attention has been paid to learning English through independent work. After all, it is in the process of independent work that the student immerses themselves in the task, shows interest in the intensity of learning a foreign language and learns about their strengths and weaknesses. Independent work also helps teachers evaluate a student's ability and readiness to learn a foreign language.

Since learning outcomes largely depend on the learner's motivation, a lack of willingness to learn leads to faster fatigue during classes, neglect of homework, increased anxiety, and ultimately makes the learning process ineffective.

Various researchers have studied the importance of additional English language learning from the pedagogical and psychological perspective. In this research, the works of N.A. Afanasyeva, N.A. Baranova, E.B. Erenchinova, S.S. Kulikova and O.V. Yakovleva, A.Yu. Gorchev, I.G. Kochergina, and other researchers were examined.

In their scientific work [9], S.S. Kulikova and O.V. Yakovleva address the issue of understanding systemic changes related to pedagogical management in a digital educational environment. In their scientific work, they propose the use of various educational complexes that include digital tools, educational analytics, and planning and monitoring of educational activities. They also address the use of modern information platforms for educational purposes, which is crucial in today's context.

In [14], E.V. Shakirova and S.V. Kuzmin bring up the problem of the attitude of educators to the use of electronic means of training in educational activity. The work surveyed 50 teachers on the use of electronic devices in the educational process. The survey showed that teachers actively use in their classes, i.e., a computer, an interactive board and even a digital laboratory.

Many domestic and foreign scholars have addressed issues related to the role of teachers in the educational sphere. Thus, the founder of scientific

pedagogy, K.D. Ushinsky, notes in his scientific research: «Children should work independently as much as possible, and the teacher should guide this independent work and provide material for it» [19, p. 239].

However, in her study, scholar I.A. Zimnyaya emphasizes the importance of the teacher's organizational efforts in AFLE classes, as well as the need for independent study: «Independent work is the highest form of student learning, a form of self-education related to their work in language classes» [22].

According to Professor P.I. Pidkasisty, independent work is neither a way to structure the educational process nor a pedagogical method. Professor P.I. Pidkasisty holds the opinion that independent work cannot be considered a form of organizing educational activities or a methodological approach to teaching. In his work, he writes: «Students' independent work serves as a means of engaging them in an independent process of cognition, as well as a tool for the logical and psychological organization of this process. Thus, it can be concluded that a foreign language teacher in an AFLE setting should use independent work as a tool for stimulating students' cognitive activity and interest in learning a foreign language, including independently» [13].

In their study on the history of independent work as a type of activity for students, E.V. Shcherbakova and T.N. Shcherbakova identified the following methods for addressing the issues of independent student activity: psychology, teaching methods, and educational psychology [15].

In this work, the psychological approach is examined through the lens of the concept of the Soviet psychologist and educator A.N. Leontiev, who defines independent activity as a «microsystem of learning». The issues of a didactic and methodological approach to students' independent work are developed in detail in the works of Ya.A. Kamensky, where he examines various forms and methods of independent activity. The psychological and didactic aspect, in turn, is aimed at understanding the essence of independent activity, determining its object and objectives.

Thus, E. V. Shcherbakova and T. N. Shcherbakova define independent activity as students' activities aimed at obtaining education and self-education. They believe that independent study of educational material allows students to acquire the necessary skills in any subject, including foreign languages, and helps to develop perseverance and attentiveness in students [15].

Based on the arguments presented, we can conclude that independent work is a form of students' educational activity that is activated by the teacher in accordance with the developed independent work plan and is focused on achieving the intended educational objectives.

During the planning and execution of independent work, the teacher acts as a supervisor, providing guidance and coordination without directly intervening in the students' actions. This approach enhances the effectiveness of independent work, as it allows the teacher to observe and guide the students while they have the freedom to make independent decisions, promoting the development and improvement of all the competencies necessary for success in their future professional careers.

In his scientific research [4, p.71], A.Yu. Gorchayev examines the educational, upbringing, and developmental functions in students' education. According to him, the most important role of independent work is to provide opportunities for learning. Through independent work, students process information, turning it into practical skills, and organize the acquired skills and knowledge.

In turn, the educational function contributes to the development of independence, the formation of a worldview, and the development of students' personal qualities. Students develop qualities such as responsibility, organization, and teamwork.

Independent work, considered as a form of learning, can be classified in different ways based on various criteria. Depending on the goals of independent work, researchers at different times have identified the following types of independent work (Fig. 4):

Each of the aforementioned types of independent work possesses distinct characteristics in both its organization and implementation. Let us consider them in greater detail.

I. Formative Independent Work: Initiating Cognitive Interest

This type of independent work is primarily employed at the early stage of introducing new content. Its principal objective is not only to spark students' curiosity but also to nurture their intrinsic motivation toward the subject matter. Simultaneously, it functions as a diagnostic instrument for the instructor, enabling a rapid assessment of students' prior knowledge, comprehension levels, and potential stumbling blocks in grasping more complex concepts.

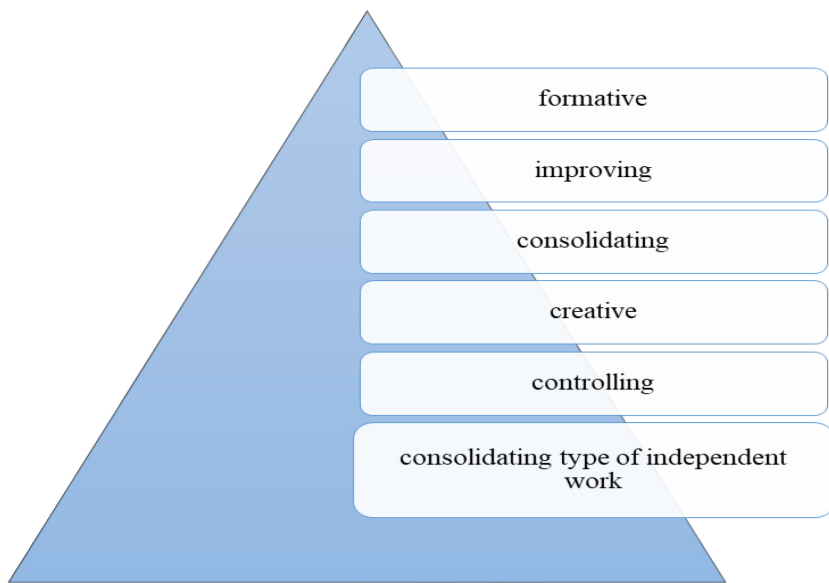


Fig. 4. The key types of independent work used in teaching English in the AFLE system

In the context of supplementary (or additional) English language education, formative tasks are especially valuable for cultivating foundational skills in autonomous learning, albeit initially under the teacher's close supervision. Because this kind of work can be seamlessly embedded into the introduction of new material particularly when the new topic builds upon previously learned content it helps learners establish meaningful connections, orient themselves within unfamiliar linguistic or thematic terrain, and begin developing strategies for independent problem-solving. Thus, it lays the groundwork for more advanced forms of self-directed study.

Particular attention should be paid to the quality of the educational materials provided to students, as they play a crucial role in maintaining and developing their interest in learning a foreign language [11].

II. Developmental Independent Work: Deepening and Broadening Knowledge

This type of independent work is used primarily to consolidate material covered and integrate additional information on the topics being stud-

ied. It involves students' activities that are largely based on independence, with minimal direct teacher involvement in the language learning process. This structure enables students to express their individuality, develop leadership qualities, effective teamwork skills, and self-regulation, which are fundamental for both building productive interpersonal relationships in the classroom and for future professional success. Moreover, developmental independent work plays a crucial role in monitoring student progress over time. By engaging learners in tasks that build progressively on prior knowledge and skills, it provides clear indicators of individual strengths, emerging competencies, and areas requiring further support. This ongoing insight enables educators to tailor instruction to each learner's needs, ensuring that instruction remains responsive and adaptive. Crucially, such targeted, scaffolded practice helps prevent the consolidation of misconceptions, allowing students to develop accurate, nuanced understanding of complex linguistic structures or thematic content in English language learning [5].

III. Consolidating (Evaluative) Independent Work: Verification of Learning

The primary purpose of this type of independent work is to evaluate both quantitatively and qualitatively the extent to which students have grasped and internalized previously taught material. In AFLE settings, this often takes the form of assignments in which learners review and apply grammar rules or vocabulary they have already encountered, allowing the teacher to gauge their level of mastery.

While such assessment-oriented tasks are more typical in formal, general education contexts, they are not always met with enthusiasm in supplementary language programs. The reason lies in their potential to shift the focus away from creativity and communicative engagement, rendering the learning process repetitive or overly mechanical. When overused, this format may dampen motivation and reduce the sense of autonomy that is especially vital in AFLE, where intrinsic drive often compensates for the absence of formal accountability.

Therefore, it is advisable to employ this type of independent work judiciously strategically integrated rather than routine so as to maintain a balanced, engaging, and psychologically comfortable learning environment for both students and teachers [8, 9].

IV. Creative Independent Work: Stimulating Creativity and Independence

This type of independent work is specifically designed to activate students' creative potential. It includes a range of open-ended tasks such as reflective note-taking, essay writing, and the development of individual or group projects. In the context of AFLE, instructors may assign either solo creative tasks or collaborative projects, depending on pedagogical objectives and group dynamics.

The precise nature and scope of these assignments are shaped by several factors: the learning goals of the course, the students' proficiency level, and the collective capabilities of the study group. While the emphasis is firmly placed on fostering originality, autonomy, and personal engagement, the teacher's role remains pivotal. Active guidance throughout the creative process not through direct control, but through strategic scaffolding, timely feedback, and thoughtful prompting ensures that the work retains genuine educational substance. This balance prevents creative tasks from becoming merely expressive exercises, anchoring them instead in purposeful language development and deeper cognitive engagement.

V. Assessment of Independent Work: Knowledge Assessment

The primary purpose of this type of independent work is to effectively assess how thoroughly students have internalized the material covered in class. To implement it successfully in AFLE, instructors are advised to prepare multiple versions of assignments that are equivalent in content and cognitive demand. In certain situations, particularly when the learning objectives are clearly defined and the task is broadly representative, a single version may suffice for the entire group.

Crucially, the pedagogical value of independent work hinges not on its completion alone, but on the systematic review and constructive feedback that follow. Simply marking errors is insufficient; feedback must be formative helping learners understand why a mistake occurred, offer concrete strategies for correction, and encourage reflection that prevents recurrence. Highlighting common pitfalls, providing clear explanations, and suggesting targeted practice significantly enhance the learning impact of each assignment.

In foreign language instruction, maintaining student engagement requires thoughtful variation in the format and design of independent tasks. Intro-

ducing novelty through diverse activity types sustains interest and strengthens motivation. Effective approaches include interactive digital exercises, gamified challenges, and project-based assignments such as creating original texts, recorded presentations, or short videos in the target language. Incorporating authentic materials such as news reports, podcasts, blog posts, or film excerpts followed by guided analysis and discussion, further bridges classroom learning with real-world language use. Most importantly, students should perceive a direct link between what they are learning and their personal interests, academic pursuits, or professional aspirations.

Beyond assessing language proficiency, the foreign language teacher plays a vital role in cultivating a broader set of competencies essential for lifelong success. While core linguistic skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing, remain central, equally important are transversal abilities: critical thinking, information literacy, self-regulation, time management, effective communication, and intercultural awareness. In this expanded role, the teacher functions as a facilitator of learning rather than a mere transmitter of knowledge guiding students to become autonomous, reflective, and resourceful learners.

This holistic approach achieves more than linguistic competence alone. It empowers students to think independently, adapt to new situations, and take ownership of their learning journey. In a rapidly evolving global landscape, such capabilities are not only assets in the job market but also foundations for continuous personal growth. The habits of self-direction, resilience, and reflective practice developed through well-structured independent work thus extend far beyond the classroom, equipping learners to navigate challenges and realize their goals in both professional and everyday contexts.

Conclusion

In the course of our study, we arrived at the following conclusions.

First, contemporary education no longer confines itself to merely training subject-matter specialists; it actively embeds information and communication technologies (ICT) into the very fabric of teaching and learning. Digitalization has ceased to be a peripheral trend; it has become a core driver in shaping students' professional competencies. A new reality has taken shape: the digital educational environment. Computers, interactive white-

boards, online learning platforms, and electronic journals and diaries are now standard fixtures in classrooms and lecture halls. This transformation renders the educational process broader, more dynamic, and more interactive, offering tools and models that support personalized, flexible, and accessible learning paths.

Second, students increasingly turn to online resources as their first port of call for information. For many, it is simply faster and more intuitive to locate what they need through a search engine than to consult a printed textbook.

Third, as digitalization advances and the capacity for independent study becomes ever more vital, educators are leveraging ICT to structure and support autonomous learning. This not only helps students tackle academic tasks but also cultivates essential digital literacy. Such an approach aligns with learners' immediate and long-term goals: expanding their knowledge, mastering digital tools, preparing for self-directed work, self-assessing their progress, and developing the ability to present their findings confidently in public settings.

Fourth, the role of the foreign language teacher has undergone a profound shift. No longer the sole authority or primary source of knowledge, the teacher now acts as a guide and facilitator, curating the learning journey rather than dictating it. In this redefined capacity, the educator helps students navigate the overwhelming flood of online information, fosters critical thinking, promotes effective use of digital resources, and supports the development of individual learning strategies. Crucially, the teacher motivates, advises, gives timely feedback, and nurtures learner autonomy. Cultivating independent work skills is thus essential not only for academic achievement but also for professional adaptability. The ability to independently identify one's goals, articulate needs, and reflect on personal strengths and limitations underpins psychological maturity, self-awareness, and, ultimately, self-efficacy that forms a cornerstone of success in any domain.

Finally, the potential of ICT to boost student motivation and engagement must not be overlooked. Interactive platforms, multimedia content, gamified elements, and adaptive learning pathways make foreign language acquisition more compelling, relevant, and personally meaningful. This not only deepens understanding but also nurtures a sustained, lifelong interest in the subject.

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