

USE OF ACTIVE LEARNING METHODS IN THE TRAINING OF SPECIALISTS IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY FOR EXCURSION ACTIVITIES (IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT)

UTILIZAÇÃO DE MÉTODOS ATIVOS DE APRENDIZAGEM NA FORMAÇÃO DE ESPECIALISTAS DA INDÚSTRIA DE TURISMO PARA ATIVIDADES DE EXCURSÃO (EM AMBIENTE URBANO)

USO DE MÉTODOS DE APRENDIZAJE ACTIVO EN LA FORMACIÓN DE ESPECIALISTAS EN LA INDUSTRIA TURÍSTICA PARA ACTIVIDADES DE EXCURSIÓN (EN UN ENTORNO URBANO)

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ABSTRACT: The study aims to theoretically substantiate the opportunities to use active learning methods in training future specialists in the tourism industry for leading excursions. The authors conclude that the forms and methods of active learning that can be utilized in the training of future tourism industry specialists for leading excursions include: practical lessons in the form of excursions and research lessons in the urban environment, individual types of lectures (dialogue lecture-conversation, lecture-discussion, problem-based lecture, lecture with an analysis of specific professional cases) and seminars-discussion, as well as independent work in the form of individual research assignments. The priority form of active learning is considered to be practical lessons in the form of excursions and research lessons organized immediately in the urban environment.

KEYWORDS: Tourism education. Active learning. Excursion science. Excursion activities.

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RESUMO: O estudo visa fundamentar teoricamente as oportunidades de utilização de métodos ativos de aprendizagem na formação de futuros especialistas da indústria do turismo para a condução de excursões. Os autores concluem que as formas e métodos de aprendizagem ativa que podem ser utilizados na formação de futuros especialistas da indústria do turismo para excursões líderes incluem: aulas práticas na forma de excursões e aulas de pesquisa no ambiente urbano, tipos individuais de palestras (palestras de diálogo - conversa, palestra-discussão, palestra baseada em problemas, palestra com análise de casos profissionais específicos) e seminários-discussão, bem como trabalho independente na forma de trabalhos de pesquisa individuais. A forma prioritária de aprendizagem ativa são as aulas práticas na forma de excursões e aulas de pesquisa organizadas imediatamente no ambiente urbano.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação em turismo. Aprendizagem ativa. Ciência da excursão. Atividades de excursão.

RESUMEN: El estudio tiene como objetivo fundamentar teóricamente las oportunidades de utilizar métodos de aprendizaje activo en la formación de futuros especialistas en la industria del turismo para liderar excursiones. Los autores concluyen que las formas y métodos de aprendizaje activo que se pueden utilizar en la formación de futuros especialistas de la industria del turismo para liderar excursiones incluyen: lecciones prácticas en forma de excursiones y lecciones de investigación en el entorno urbano, tipos de conferencias individuales (conferencia de diálogo (conversación, conferencia-debate, conferencia de resolución de problemas, conferencia con análisis de casos profesionales específicos) y seminarios-debate, así como el trabajo independiente en forma de trabajos de investigación individuales. Se considera que la forma prioritaria de aprendizaje activo son las lecciones prácticas en forma de excursiones y lecciones de investigación organizadas inmediatamente en el entorno urbano.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación turística. Aprendizaje activo. Ciencia de la excursión. Actividades de excursión.

Introduction

The dynamic development of the tourism sector leads to increased interest not only in the problems of tourism development in general but also in the professional training of tourism professionals to improve the topical spheres of the system of tourism education (ANUFRIEVA *et al.*, 2021; NEDOSUGOVA *et al.*, 2021).

The main objectives of tourism education lie in the qualitative improvement of professional training in terms of its continuity, provision of comprehensive development of the personality of a future tourism manager, and the development of future specialists' skills in intercultural communication with representatives of other nations. Therefore, the need for a creative person, a competent specialist with a constant desire for self-development and self-

improvement is extremely high in the tourism industry (PANIKAROVA *et al.*, 2021; SOKOLOVA; SERGEEVA, 2021).

At present, tourism education is in the stage of active development. The newest trends in the development of tourism are aimed at increasing the number of highly qualified professionals to ensure the efficiency of professional interaction with the consumers of excursion services. Accordingly, the search for and implementation of effective methods of training of future specialists in tourism for leading excursions gain extreme importance, which determines the relevance of the problem under study.

The resolution of this problem is hindered by several issues in the organization of training of modern specialists in tourism, namely:

The requirements of the labor market for the professional training of specialists in tourism and the level of their professional competence, which do not yet align with the current world trends and essential needs of the tourism sphere in the context of informational and technological development (ZINCHENKO, BORIAEVA, 2019);

Imperfections of the means and forms of vocational training and staff structure (IVANITSKAIA, 2014).

Literature review

Scientific studies pay due attention to the various aspects of the problem of vocational training of tourism specialists. In particular, scholars explore such aspects as vocational training for the tourism sector (AMOAHA; BAUM, 1997; VASILEVA; NIKOLSKAIA, 2015), peculiarities of practical training of tourism specialists (MAK; LUA; WONG, 2017; MOROZOV; ALEKSEEVNA, 2015), and psychological and pedagogical problems of communication in tourism (DYSHKO, 2013).

Research discloses the methodological approaches to substantiating the patterns and principles of the formation of the content of tourism education (BARANOVA, 2007; HOLDEN; WICKENS, 2007). Pirogova (2016) notes that the improvement of professional education in tourism should rely on the following postulates: 1) professional education forms the human (personnel) capital of tourism, and the efficiency (economic, social) of tourism depends on its quality; 2) tourism education relies on scientific research in tourism; and 3) tourism education, according to forecasts of the development of tourism (from global to local scale), should be based primarily on the paradigm of sustainable development as the most progressive idea of our time. In Kuptsova's study (2016), tourism education is presented

according to three important aspects, namely: fundamental training (knowledge), which corresponds to mastering knowledge according to the curriculum of the specialty; technical training (knowledge of how to do), which polishes mastery and forms skills necessary for specialization; personal abilities (know how to be and how to act), in which personal qualities of the specialist are reflected.

The study of various aspects of excursion activity is carried out by excursion science. Researchers define “excursology” as a field of theoretical knowledge that studies the problems of modelling an ideal excursion and the impact of excursion on people’s consciousness (EMELIANOV, 2009); as an integrated scientific discipline that reveals the theory, methodology, and methods of excursion activity, the history of excursion business, the generalized practice of tourist-excursion institutions (AKSELROD *et al.*, 2015).

Scientific research analyses the problems of tour guide training (BALAEVA; GORDIN; PREDVODITELEVA, 2011; CHILI, 2013). Certain aspects of the professional training of future tour guides are studied in the context of general issues of the theory of excursion science (BAIBUROVA; STEPANENKO, 2010; MUNAR; MONTAÑO, 2009). The issues of tourism training in various types of excursion activities are considered in the context of the problem of methodological support of students’ training for excursion activities (LUKA; DONINA, 2012), vocational guidance of students in the profession of a “tour guide” (RING; DICKINGER; WÖBER, 2009), scientific and methodological support for the professional development of tour guides (DUSENKO, 2013).

Researchers argue (CERVERA-TAULET, RUIZ-MOLINA, 2008) that the professional activity of a tour guide is not limited to the excursion component and also involves other objects of labour provided by the qualification characteristic. The work of a tour guide requires a complete higher education, which predetermines the mandatory professional training of future tour guide specialists in higher education institutions of the tourism industry.

Research on the use of active learning methods suggests that it implies the use of a system of methods primarily focused not on the teacher’s presentation of ready-made knowledge and its reproduction, but on students’ independent mastery of knowledge in the process of active cognitive activity (VERBITSKII, 1991); on students’ performance of the tasks that allow them to not only independently master certain skills but also develop personal creative and communicative abilities (GENIKE, 2014).

The study aims to theoretically substantiate and confirm based on an expert survey the possibility of using active learning methods in the training of future specialists in the tourism industry for excursion activities.

The hypothesis proposed for the study is that the priority form of active learning is practical lessons in the form of excursions and research lessons organized directly in the urban environment.

In accordance with the goal, the objectives of the study are defined as follows:

1. To analyse the current state of training of specialists in the field of tourism for excursion activities based on a review of scientific literature;
2. To determine and characterize the forms and methods of active learning in the process of training future specialists in the tourism industry for excursion activities.

The article consists of an introduction, literature review, research methods, research results, their discussion, and conclusion.

Methods

The methodological apparatus of the study is designed to allow for the study to achieve its goal through empirical data.

In the first stage of the study, the sources of information necessary to realize the purpose of the study are selected. The data for the study is drawn from a review of secondary sources. The source base of the study is represented by two bodies of literature.

The first body of sources is composed of articles from journals indexed by Scopus and Web of Science, collective monographs, and dissertation studies concerning the study of the essence of active learning methods.

The second body of literature is formed by articles from journals indexed by Scopus and Web of Science that focus on analysing the specific features of training future tourism specialists for excursions.

The second stage of the study involves the analysis of literary sources conducted using the methods of theoretical summarization, comparative analysis, and analysis and synthesis.

At the third stage of the study, the expert survey method in the form of an unstructured telephone interview is used to determine the forms of learning and the corresponding methods of active learning to be used in the training of future specialists of the tourism industry for leading excursions (in the urban environment).

The expert survey covers 72 experts, of which 29 are employees of tourist companies engaged in excursion services (tourism) with at least 5 years of experience in the tourism sector, 33 experts are university lecturers specializing in training future specialists in tourism (education) with at least 10 years of experience in teaching.

Expert opinions on various forms of learning activities and methods of active learning in the process of training future specialists in the tourism industry for excursion activities are assigned a rank on a scale from one (the least important criterion) to five (the most important).

Results

The results of the unstructured telephone interview of the experts are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Forms and methods of active learning in training future tourism industry specialists for leading excursions

Forms of learning activities	Active learning methods	Total sample, N = 72	Sphere of activity	
			tourism N = 29	education N = 33
lectures	dialogue lecture-conversation	2.44	2.12	2.74
	lecture-discussion	3.18	2.83	3.32
	problem-based lecture	2.32	2.23	2.42
	lecture with an analysis of specific professional cases	3.54	3.63	3.45
practical lessons	excursion	4.27	4.38	4.13
	research lesson	3.88	4.14	3.53
seminars	thematic seminar-discussion	3.29	3.11	3.48
independent work	individual research assignment	3.46	3.29	3.61

Source: Prepared by the authors

Analysis of the results provided in Table 1 suggests that the most important form of active learning are practical lessons with the use of excursions (4.27) and research lessons (3.88). In turn, the least important forms of active learning are considered by the experts to be lessons in the form of problem-based (2.32) and dialogue (2.44) lectures.

Discussion

What the experts identify as the active forms of learning in the process of training future specialists in the tourism industry for leading excursions are certain types of lectures and seminars, as well as independent work in the form of individual research assignments (AFANASIEV *et al.*, 2021; GRUNINA *et al.*, 2021; KARPOVA *et al.*, 2021).

The priority form of active learning chosen by the experts is practical lessons in the form of excursions and research lessons organized directly in the urban environment.

Practical lessons, which take a prominent place in the training of tour guides, are planned for examining specific theoretical provisions, as well as for the formation of students' abilities and skills in performing the corresponding tasks.

These lessons are taught bearing in mind the essence of the work of a tour guide, i.e., not only in traditional auditoriums but also in the setting approximated to the real professional situation as much as possible, as well as in the urban environment near display objects, in museums, i.e., in the areas where excursions are commonly organized.

Excursions can become a popular form of active demonstrative learning since their characteristic feature is a direct affinity with the activities of a tour guide. Consequently, the training of tour guides should mandatorily provide training excursions as a form of practical training to show methodological techniques at the sites, explore particular subtopics, etc. A significant place should be reserved for excursions in the training of tour guides to allow students to acquire professional skills and qualities, gain professional experience, and develop professional skills (DUSENKO, 2013).

Experts believe that considerable attention in tour guide training needs to be paid to practical **research lessons** to involve students in the procedure of research work. This procedure presupposes direct contact with specific objects (paintings, sculptures, household items, etc.) as excursion objects.

Practical research lessons consist in determining the size, materials, methods of manufacture, etc. of the analyzed objects and interviewing the excursion audience to find out their interests, requests, and preferences. Such active learning with maximum approximation to professional activity contributes to students' in-depth mastery of the studied material (DYSHKO, 2013).

The specificity of such lessons the experts see in the fact that a dialogue takes place not only between students and teachers, museum staff, and visitors to museum excursions but also between students as researchers. Due to their considerable competence, students act as

equal participants in the educational process. Mastering the research skills will encourage future tour guides to make their own discoveries. Research lessons will allow them to investigate the topic in a real professional context using concrete examples.

The experts suggest that tour guide training also involves students' **independent work** as one of the primary means of gaining new knowledge in free time. Pedagogical experience demonstrates that this type of learning activity is effective in preparation for practical lessons and seminars (GENIKE, 2014). The tasks proposed for independent work are the ones requiring a creative approach, the expression of one's personal viewpoint, and the independent completion of assignments. In extracurricular time, students independently study excursion objects, find and research literary sources, identify and justify the features of tourist and excursion businesses, and acquire the necessary professional experience.

Thus, the experts regard students' independent work as an opportunity to develop and expand students' creative approach to the problems of tour guide training, as well as a chance to assess their creative potential individually.

The experts argue that an important place in the process of students' independent work needs to be occupied by creative **individual research assignments** used to provide for the realization of creative abilities of participants in pedagogical interaction, as well as to promote positive dynamics of their personal and professional development (Baranova, 2007). Ensuring the transition from informational to exploratory learning involves the use of new forms of activity that promote the development of students' exploratory thinking.

Students can be offered various types of assignments, for instance, messages and reports, abstracts and compositions, essays, situational dialogues, etc. Moreover, students should be given the opportunity to independently, at their own discretion, choose tasks of the methodical development of the excursion route scheme, new excursion topics, preparation of a role play, situational tasks, project assignments, etc., which directs them toward exploratory activities. The goal of this is to form and develop students' research skills in excursion activities.

Seminars, according to the experts, need to be used as another active form of learning to orient students in their future professional activities. The main condition for holding seminars is the involvement of all students as speakers or participants in the discussion of issues (VERBITSKII, 1991). In this light, the most effective are **seminars-discussions**, in which the teacher voices a thesis or a point of view and creates the situation of discussion, which involves the demonstration of differences in the positions of its participants, exchange

of opinions between them, and the discussion and analysis of contradiction to find the truth through frank dialogue.

The structure of a seminar-discussion is organized according to the following algorithm: introduction by the teacher – the creation of a discussion situation; discussion of seminar questions with justification and defense of one's viewpoint; identification of the best solution from the proposed options; final word by the teacher, summarization, grading all participants in the discussion.

Let us characterize the features of the use of active forms of lectures in the training of tour guides. In characterizing active learning, the experts note that of importance in giving lectures is not only communicating scientific knowledge but also motivating students to productive thinking and independent mastery of educational information. In this respect, dialogical forms of lectures should provide direct contact of a teacher with students, which will make it possible to focus the audience on the most essential aspects contributing to their interest in the learning material and emotional and evaluative perception of information.

The type of dialogue lectures the experts believe to be suitable for training tour guides is **lecture-conversation**. Such a lecture should be held according to the following algorithm: the teacher's question to determine the level of students' readiness to participate in solving the educational problem; presentation of material with the help of questions that encourage students to meaningful perception, active thought activity, independent generalizations; conclusions and generalizations formulated by students; the final word of the teacher, the results of the lecture, evaluation of its effectiveness.

During **lecture-discussions**, experts argue, when presenting theoretical material, the teacher needs to not only use students' answers to the questions but also provide for a free exchange of opinions in-between the logical sections of the material. Thus, such a lecture represents the interaction between the teacher and students, free exchange of opinions, ideas, and views on the studied issues, which enlivens the learning process, activates the cognitive activity of the audience, and allows the teacher to manage the opinion of the group (BAIBUROVA; STEPANENKO, 2010).

Problem-based lectures are advised by the experts to be focused on conveying and covering material through collaboratively solving a learning problem, activating the cognitive activity of students. Certain problems set by the teacher in line with the topic of the lesson provide students' motivation to find the right answers. In some cases, students are offered to find alternatives to the proposed solution (VERBITSKII, 1991). Problem-based lectures should be implemented by means of problem questions, focusing students' attention on the

main things, emphasizing its essence, focusing on the scope of the search for an effective solution.

Problem-based lectures are advised to be read according to the following algorithm: formulation of a learning problem, analysis of inner contradictions; the teacher's proposition of a hypothesis on solving the problem; the involvement of students in discussion and problem-solving (the teacher illustrates conflicting points of view on the same phenomena allowing students to lean towards a certain position); highlighting the most significant parts of the lecture for students to understand the essence of the issues, drawing general conclusions on solving the problem; conclusions and summaries.

In problem-based lectures focused on the development of logical thinking, after the teacher formulates the problem, students are offered questions to think about that encourage them to solve the problem situation independently and creatively (GENIKE, 2014). Thus, the essence of such a lecture is projected onto the teacher preparing students for professional communication with clients through the developed problem situations. Students are expected to analyze the situation and identify the best solution.

Lectures with an analysis of specific professional situations, according to the experts, should use the tasks tested in the work with consumers in the field of B2C (KARASHCHUK *et al.*, 2021).

These tasks are necessary to draw and reinforce students' attention to significant issues, such as methodological techniques for conducting an excursion, when they are given a fragment of an excursion. Students are tasked to assess the quality of the excursion (the methodology of showing and telling). In this process, it is important for the teacher to control the situation, not to allow the discussion to drift beyond the lecture topic.

Conclusion

The need to improve the system of vocational education in tourism is driven by the modern requirements for tourism specialists posed by employers and consumers of tourist services and competition in the labour market, which increases the demand for specialists in tourism. Accordingly, the training of these specialists should provide a high level of theoretical and practical training and readiness to carry out professional interaction with the consumers of tourist services.

In modern vocational education, the informational approach to specialists' training has been replaced by the process-activity approach, which provides the implementation of the

learning technologies referred to as “active”. The experience of active learning at all levels of the system of vocational education shows that its forms, methods, and tools can quite effectively solve several problems that pose a serious challenge in traditional education.

In the context of training tour guides, the objective of active learning of experts is found in the independent and creative processing and assimilation of educational information, the deepening and systematization of the acquired knowledge, and the formation and development of students’ abilities, skills, and competencies.

What the study identifies as the forms and methods of active learning to be used in training future tourism industry specialists for leading excursions is practical lessons in the form of excursions and research lessons in the urban environment, individual types of lectures (dialogue lecture-conversation, lecture-discussion, problem-based lecture, lecture with an analysis of specific professional cases) and seminars-discussion, as well as independent work in the form of individual research assignments. Furthermore, the results of the study confirm the hypothesis that the priority form of active learning is practical lessons in the form of excursions and research lessons organized immediately in the urban environment.

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