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Distance Learning Technologies in Training of Migrant Workers

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Abstract

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The Russian labor market traditionally is attractive for migrants from Central Asian countries such as Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Migrant workers often have low level of professional education, are not fluent Russian speakers and have significant difficulties in adaptation to the host community. In accordance with the new migration legislation of the Russian Federation, in order to receive a work permit, a migrant worker must pass Russian language exam. However, attendance of Russian language courses takes a lot of time that should be used for work. Therefore, the issue of passing the Russian language exams makes a real challenge for those entering Russia or planning to do it. In this situation distance learning technologies that are used in the national testing centers can be very helpful for legal migrant workers from different countries. The author's research summarize 2 years of experience of teaching foreign citizens Russian language with usage of distance learning technologies. The research uncovers problems that appear in course of organization of distance learning, the requirements for teaching staff, logistics and so on. The study was conducted by questioning students from 4 foreign countries of Central Asia and Moldova as well as 12 experts (teachers of training center). Total sample included 140 people, the coefficient of an error - 0.3%. More than 100 people were trained in 2 years period, 89 % of whom successfully passed Russian language exams and received work permits on the basis of the examination certificate.

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Keywords: Migrant workers, labour market, testing center, certification.



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1. Introduction

Russia is a host country for many migrants (mostly from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kirgizstan) traditionally. Migrant workers often don't have secondary vocational education as well as higher education, their Russian is poor and they have problems with adaptation in a new circumstances.

The new law constitutes the staying rules of migrants in Russian Federation. There are new rules for Ukrainians and Moldavians. A Legal status for migrants from Tajikistan and Armenia didn't change. The Russian Federation guarantees the right of the labor for them as well as for migrant workers from Kirgizstan and Uzbekistan. Nowadays, migrant workers cannot get permission for work in service, trade spheres, housing and public utilities without base knowledge of Russian.

Henceforth, aliens have to prove their knowledge of Russian by a certificate. At the same time aliens do not need get certification if they have diploma where Russian language is noted, for those diplomas must have translation signed and stamped by notary. Also aliens do not need get certification if they have USSR's diploma.

2. Using native language for communication

As it said in Center of Migration Studies analytic report "the way to get a host country culture is to contact with native people. It is impossible without common language. That's why the knowledge of Russian is the main factor of integration."

Accordingly to this report, the majority of migrants use native language to communicate with family. It's allows to save culture values and native language far from motherland. The main integration way to Russian language is work (85% migrants have to speak Russian on their job). There was an interview of migrant workers. The question was "What language do you talk mostly?" The answers are show below.

Table 1. The answers for the question "What language do you talk mostly?"

	With family		On the work in Russia		After the work in Russia	
	Mother tongue	Russian	Mother tongue	Russian	Mother tongue	Russian
Kyrgyz	69	24	7	91	38	48
Tajiks	86	12	15	77	39	54
Uzbeks	82	17	6	87	45	47
All migrants	78	20	9	85	41	51

3. The objectives of labor migrants educational of Russian language

A goal of labor migrants' education is to form a communicative competence. It will help them to adapt in socio-culture and professional spheres. An object labor migrants' education is to educate a positive attitude to the language and culture of Russia; to establish favorable conditions for quick communicative-psychological adaptation to Russian language world; to form comprehensive and

verbal skills –elementary level; to form competence and verbal skills of communication in socio-culture and educational-professional spheres – basic level, I certificate, II certificate.

The objectives of labor migrants educational of Russian language:

- to educate a positive attitude to the language and culture of Russia;
- to make conditions for quick communicative-psychological adaptation to Russian language world;
- to form comprehensive and verbal skills – elementary level;
- to form competence and verbal skills of communication in socio-culture and educational-professional spheres – basic level, I certificate, II certificate.

In accordance with new Russian law, candidates for getting permission for work have to pass an exam of Russian language. However, it is problematic and takes much time to attend classes. That's why candidates have to think to prepare for an exam at home.

At this situation, the e-learning is a new way to solve this problem. The results of author's two years research of migrants education with distance technologies are below.

There is a test centre of Russian language at the Academy of labor and social relations, Moscow. There have been 100 migrants educated with distance technologies, 89% of them passed exam successfully and got permission for work. The duration of training is a one year or 250 hours.

4. Some results of e-learning of Russian language

As practice shows, the lecturers have to have following competences:

- to have a degree at Russian language;
- to have «advanced user» computer skills;
- to have special programs software;
- to know how to organize group and individual classes (webinars, video-chats, video-conferences etc);
- to create a courseware for e-learning classes.

The author has taken an opinion poll among candidates to come to Russia for work. This inquiry allowed determining possibilities of distance technologies in an educational process of migrants.

Respondents have graded the educational process on 4-point scale

Table 2. Satisfaction with the program.

The ball	Ball definition	Responses rate people	%
4 balls	“I am satisfied with the program entirely”	23	17,8
3 balls	“I am satisfied with the program, but have some remarks”	96	74,4
2 balls	“I am not satisfied more, than satisfied”	6	4,7
1 ball	“I am not satisfied with the program entirely”	4	3,1

The presented data shows that 92,2% of students were satisfied with the education. It is indicative the average age is 34 years old. It is quite young age for learning a new language. Moreover this people lived in time of USSR and have some verbal skills on Russian. Therefore the e-learning classes were ideal to prepare for an exam for majority of students.

As a result 115 people passed exam of Russian language successfully what is confirmed the e-learning effectiveness.

The students noticed that it is more difficult to study with distance technologies to compare with traditional. "It is impossible to ask teacher if you have some difficulties. You have to wait for a next video-chat".

At the same time the majority of students admit this educational form is convenient enough. "The most important thing is I could prepare for an exam at home, at free time. If I would do it in Russia I have to study after work. It is very complicated". "This form of lessons makes you organize your time more seriously"

5. Conclusions

Considered all, to be noticed is that language knowledge of host country is essential ingredient of socio adaptation. The ability to speak Russian is essential ingredient of socio-culture and socio-labor adaptation for migrants.

And the e-learning is a perspective education form for the candidates who decided to work in Russia.

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