

Teaching English in a rural school: challenges and opportunities (case study of Katon-Karagay secondary school named after Rykov, East Kazakhstan).

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Objectives of the Study: to determine peculiarities of teaching English in rural schools

TASKS:

1

- Formulate key components of an effective organization of the process of teaching English in rural schools

2

- Identify main problems and challenges that teachers and students encounter

3

- Analyze possible solutions to the identified problems and future prospects

RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC

Coverage of the priority directions of development of education in Kazakhstan:

- **Development of rural schools**
- **Improving professional competence of rural teachers**
- **Ensuring access of rural youth to quality education.**

METHODS OF WORK:

- **Observation (Rykov secondary school)**
 - **Survey**
 - **Focus groups**
- **Survey for teachers (schools of the district – 18 teachers)**
 - **Survey for students (Rykov secondary school – 46 students)**
 - **Survey for parents (Rykov secondary school– 74 parents)**
 - **Focus groups with teachers (schools of the district – 12 teachers)**
 - **Focus groups with students (Rykov secondary school– 17 students)**

RURAL PROFILE FEATURES:

- **Distance to towns**
- **Poor infrastructure**
- **Low equipment with computer and information technology**
- **Limited access to the wide range of educational and cultural resource, to high quality medical services**
- **Lack of qualified teachers and health personnel**

CONSEQUENCES FOR SCHOOL:

- **Outdated school infrastructure**
- **Poor material and technical base of schools**
- **Low level of attractiveness for young specialists (Migration of youth to cities)**

AS A RESULT:

- **An increasing gap between rural and urban areas in terms of quality of education.**
- **Rural students in contrast to urban counterparts are less competitive when applying to local higher education institutions**
- **Limited opportunities for rural students to be eligible to apply to international universities abroad and in the country**

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

► **At the state level:**

- An integrated approach to solving the problems of the rural area (infrastructure, education, health)

► **At the level of local units and departments of education:**

- Providing comprehensive systematic methodological support to teachers
- Promoting professional development of teachers
- Encouraging research activities of teachers

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS (2):

- **At the level of teachers**
 - **Further training (on- and off-the-job training)**
 - **Understanding the common vision and priority tasks of the education system**
 - **Stimulation and motivation of educational activity, stimulating students' interest to the subject**

CURRENT SITUATION:

- **Katon-Karagay district**
- Total number of English teachers– 39
- Participated in the study - 18
- Level of Education – graduates of pedagogical institutes or colleges. No holders of academic degrees (many teachers obtained qualification of English teacher already working as teachers of English, for some of them that was the second major)
- Average years of service – 10 years
- Participation in trainings – on a regular basis
- Participation in conferences – low
- Involvement in research projects - low
- Preparing students to participation in research projects on the subject – low

FINDINGS

KEY COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE PROCESS OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN RURAL SCHOOLS

- **Effective methods of teaching**
- **Opportunities for professional development (training, seminars, conferences)**
- **Availability and access to full-fledged learning resources (textbooks, visual aids, online resources, etc.)**
- **Opportunities for interaction and collaboration with colleagues from schools of the district (sharing experience, open house events, joint projects)**

MAIN PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES THAT TEACHERS ENCOUNTER

- **Lack of learning resources(authentic materials, visual aids, limited access to online resources)**
- **Inconsistent type of collaboration with colleagues from schools of the district to share experiences and discuss the urgent issues**

MAIN PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES THAT STUDENTS ENCOUNTER

- ▶ **Lack of study hours (“If we had several hours of English per week...”, “Two hours of English is not enough”)**
- ▶ **Absence of authentic environment (“We would like to practice English with native speaker”, “If we had a conversation club with Americans..”)**
- ▶ **Issues with using electronic resources (“Sometimes during the lesson Internet connection gets interrupted or computer gets frozen”)**
- ▶ **Lack of technical resources (“We would like to study in the computer lab after the lessons, but it is always occupied and we are not allowed”, “I do not have Internet access at home”, “I do not have a computer”)**

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **At the level of school:**
 - **Updating technical resources, hardware and software**
 - **Maintaining high-speed access to Internet**
 - **Providing students with a constant access to computer lab**
 - **Encouraging and supporting professional collaboration (virtual and face-to-face) of teachers of the district**
 - **Supporting teachers' initiatives on professional development**

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **At the level of teacher:**
 - **Ongoing work to improve teaching methods:**
 - **Using innovative methods of teaching**
 - **Improving methods of motivating and stimulating students' activity**
 - **Initiating collaboration (virtual and face-to-face) with the community of language teachers of the district and region**

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

► Teachers:

- Understanding of the requirements of modern system of education
- Aspiration to improve the knowledge and further develop own skills

• Students:

- Motivated to study English
- Interested in learning computer and information technologies in the course of study of the English language
- Willingly participate in extracurricular activities on the subject, in project work

MAIN CONCLUSIONS (2)

► Parents:

- **Aware of the importance of education for the future of children**
- **Willingness to ensure provision of good education to children**
- **Encourage and motivate children to study, but can not always provide practical assistance to children with their homework or projects**
- **Ambiguous idea of understanding trilingual education (explanations are needed)**

CONCLUSION

“...everything begins with school. And for Kazakhstan – with rural schools” N.Nazarbayev

- **Teacher is a main engine of reform.**
- **Combining the efforts of local authorities, district and school administrators, and teachers to address the priority tasks of education.**
- **Understanding the complexity of the professional pedagogical knowledge, especially in the light of the trilingual education.**
- **Strengthening professional cooperation of teachers at school, district, and provincial levels.**

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Thank you for attention!



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