

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AT NONSPECIALIZED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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These days the demands for proficiency in foreign languages is increasing, but at the same time the total number of classes of foreign languages (hours) in nonspecialized institutes of higher education is being steadily reduced. This contradiction presents great challenges for teachers and therefore requires revision of traditional syllabus organization and application of creative approaches in the classroom and outside it. Project-based learning is one of the practical and optimal solutions to this problem.

The project method originates from Pragmatism, the philosophical movement which appeared in the middle of the 19th century and promotes action and practical application of knowledge in everyday life. The implementation of the project method was based on the following pedagogical principles, expressed by many progressive educators: a) promotion of manual activity instead of memorization and verbalism, b) learners' active participation in the learning process, and c) exploitation of facts relating to the immediate reality as a source for learning. It is amazing, but the idea of project-based learning in its entirety is conveyed in an ancient Chinese proverb: "Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand".

Among the most persuasive arguments in favour of project-based learning are the research data of psychologists, who claim that 90% of what we do independently remain in our memory.

Many benefits of incorporating project work in second and foreign language settings have been suggested. The process leading to the end-product of project-work provides opportunities for students to develop their initiative, perseverance, independence, power of observation, interaction in the group, collective and individual responsibility for the final result, which integrated as a whole develop an autonomous and socially active personality. In addition, project-based method reduces anxiety, increases the significance of effort relative to ability, and promotes effort-based attributions. Students demonstrate increased self-esteem, and positive attitudes. Enjoyment and motivation also stem from the fact that classroom language is not predetermined, but depends on the nature of the project.

Projects help to achieve success outside the classroom because they enable learners to use multiple intelligence, not just logical and linguistic intelligence.

In teaching foreign languages project-based learning is a complex activity, the natural integration of language skills, as it embraces various types of communication in foreign languages with the purpose of solving specific research, information and other problems, which is the most efficient approach for nonspecialized institutes of higher education.

Another set of reported benefits pertains to the development of problem-solving and higher order critical thinking skills. These skills are very important, since they are life-long, transferable skills to settings outside the classroom.

Project-based method can be successfully merged with any training resources and incorporated in various types of activities as a means of skill improvement, because students engage in purposeful communication to complete authentic activities, they have the opportunity to use language in a relatively natural context and participate in meaningful activities which require authentic language use.

The following types of projects can be applied in foreign language settings:

- Role and Game Projects (e.g. mock trials, writing scenarios);
 - Information and Research Projects (study of specific legal systems, forms of government etc.);
 - Survey Projects (the Influence of European Legal Culture on Ukraine etc.);
 - Performance and Organizational Projects (talk-shows, clubs etc.);
- Creative and Production projects (essays, stories, radio programs etc.)

The choice of topics and specific problems at any foreign language proficiency level has virtually no limitations, as the teacher in cooperation with the students can always find those aspects of syllabus which arouse the learners' genuine personal interest and ensure their deep involvement in the project.

ON TESTS AND TESTING THE ESP STUDENTS

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ESP students like all those who study English at different schools, institutions, since different ages and for different periods of time are tested by their teachers.

The role of testing should not be diminished. Moreover tests and testing play the role of a motivating factor in achieving the final goals in the process of the English language mastering. Tests are essential because they allow both the teacher and students to evaluate their performance.

The teacher can influence the student's success by the test and the test questions.

As far as testing helps the teacher to determine the student's relevance to the particular level of language proficiency then one of the main requirements for the tests should be their effectiveness. It is this quality of testing that helps students feel more confident and better about themselves. It is very important for students.

It should be kept in mind that students not only want to get a certain grade but also to see how much they've learned in their field and how good is their ability to read, write, speak professional English and listen to professional English, and how much more they know than before.

It is necessary to adjust tests to students' incentive, level and field of interest so that test results encourage them to continue their studies. If a test includes a task the students have never done before then the students may not understand the instructions and get confused and as a result it can create a feeling of insecurity. So the teacher should never test the students on something they've never seen before or use the vocabulary they may not know.