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PROJECT WORK IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

***Анотація.** Мета роботи — зосередитись на важливості проектної роботи, використовуючи метод, який концентрується на тому, хто вивчає мову (а не на мові) під час навчання англійської мови за фахом. Представлені характеристика, класифікація та етапи роботи над проектом. У статті розглянуто деякі практичні питання, які підкреслюють значення створення, адаптації та скорочення способів навчання та матеріалу для того, щоб допомогти студентам розвинути свої мовленнєві навички, необхідні у ділових ситуаціях, тобто у їх майбутній професійній діяльності.*

***Ключові слова:** проект, сконцентрований на тому, хто вивчає мову, зміст, оцінювання, роль, автономія.*

***Аннотация.** Цель работы — обсудить важность осуществления проектной работы используя метод, который сконцентрирован на обучающемся (а не на языке) при обучении английскому языку по специальности. Представлены характеристика, классификация и этапы работы над проектом. В данной работе рассматриваются некоторые практические вопросы подчёркивающие значение создания, адаптации и разумного сокращения способов обучения и материала с тем, чтобы помочь студентам развивать свои языковые навыки необходимые в деловой обстановке, т.е. в их будущей профессиональной деятельности.*

Ключевые слова: проект, сконцентрированный на обучающемся, содержание, оценивание, роль, автономия.

Abstract. *The aim of the paper is to discuss the importance of project work embracing a learner-centred (not language-centred) approach in teaching English for specific purposes. Characteristics, types and stages of project work are presented. The paper examines some of the practical issues, emphasizing the importance of creating, adapting and tailoring teaching techniques and materials to help students develop language skills needed in a business environment.*

Keywords: *project work, learner-centred project, content, evaluation, learner's autonomy.*

Introduction

Markham (2011) describes that project-based learning (PBL) «integrates knowing and doing. Students learn knowledge and elements of the core curriculum, but also apply what they know to solve authentic problems and produce results that matter. PBL students take advantage of digital tools to produce high quality, collaborative products. PBL refocuses education on the student, not the curriculum – a shift mandated by the global world, which rewards intangible assets such as drive, passion, creativity, empathy, and resiliency. These cannot be taught out of a textbook, but must be activated through experience.» [7] Project-based learning has been associated with the «situated learning» perspective of James G. Greeno.[3]

Project work is characterized as one of the most effective methods of teaching and learning a foreign language through research and communication, different types of this method allow us to use it in all the spheres of the educational process. It involves multi-skill activities which focus on a theme of interest rather than of specific language tasks and helps students to develop their imagination and creativity. Nevertheless, teachers are not keen on the idea of providing project work in their lessons because of the disadvantages this method has. The main idea of project work is considered to be based on teaching students through research activities and stimulating their personal interest.

Characteristics of Project Work

A project is an extended piece of work on a particular topic where the content and the presentation are determined principally by the learners. It is an extended task which usually integrates language skills through a number of activities. These activities may include planning, gathering information through reading, listening, interviewing, discussion of information, problem solving, oral or written reporting, display, etc.

Project work is time-consuming of course, it takes much longer to prepare, make and present a project than it does to do more traditional activities.

1. The project is either a group task or individual tasks. 2. When choosing to do project work we are making a choice in favour of the quality of the learning experience over the quantity. And yet there is little evidence that quantity is really the crucial factor. What really matters in learning is the quality of the learning experience. 3. Project work provides rich learning experience: rich in movement, interaction and, most of all, involvement. The positive motivation that projects generate affects the students' attitude to all the other aspects of the language syllabus. Learning grammar and vocabulary will appear more relevant because the students know they will need these things for their project work.

The students will spend all their time speaking their mother tongue. This is true to a large extent. It is unlikely that most students will speak English while they are working on their project. However, rather than seeing this as a problem, we should consider its merits:

It is a natural way of working. It is a mistake to think of L1 (the mother tongue) and L2 (the language being learnt) as two completely separate domains. Learners in fact operate in both domains, constantly switching from one to the other, so it is perfectly natural for them to use L1 while working on a L2 product. As long as the final product is in English it does not matter if the work is done in L1.

Project work can provide some good opportunities for realistic translation work. A lot of the source material for projects (leaflets, maps, interviews, texts from reference books, etc.) will be in the mother tongue. Using this material in a project provides useful translating activities.

There will be plenty of opportunities in other parts of the language course for learners to practice oral skills. Project work should be seen as a chance to practice the most difficult of skills, writing.

Types of Project Work

Project work involves multi-skill activities which focus on a theme of interest rather than specific language tasks. In project students work together to achieve a common purpose, a concrete outcome (e.g., a brochure, a written report, a bulletin board display, a video, an article for a newspaper etc.). Haines identifies "four types of projects:

Information and research projects which include such kinds of work as reports, displays, etc. *Survey projects* which may also include displays, but more interviews, summaries, findings, etc. *Production projects* which foresee the work with radio, television, video, wall

newspapers, etc. *Performance projects* which are connected with parties, plays, drama, concerts, etc.”[4]

What these different types of projects have in common is their emphasis on student involvement, collaboration, and responsibility. In this respect, project work is similar to the cooperative learning and task-oriented activities that are widely endorsed by educators interested in building communicative competence and purposeful language learning. However, it differs from such approaches it typically requires students to work together over several weeks or months, both inside and outside the classroom, often in collaboration with speakers of the target language which are not normally part of the educational process.

Students in tourism, for example, might decide to generate a formal report comparing modes of transportation; those in hotel/restaurant management might develop travel itineraries. In both projects, students might create survey questionnaires, conduct interviews, compile, sort, analyze, and summarize survey data and prepare oral presentations or written reports to present their final product. In the process, they would use the target language in a variety of ways: they would talk to each other, read about the focal point of their project, write survey questionnaires, and listen carefully to those whom they interview. As a result, all of the skills they are trying to master would come into play in a natural way.

Let us consider, for example, the production of a travel brochure. To do this task, tourism students would first have to identify a destination, in their own country or abroad, and then contact tourist agencies for information about the location, including transportation, accommodations in all price ranges, museums and other points of interest, and maps of the region. They would then design their brochure by designating the intended audience, deciding on an appropriate length for their suggested itinerary, reviewing brochures for comparable sites, selecting illustrations, etc. Once the drafting begins, they can exchange material, evaluate it, and gradually improve it in the light of criteria they establish. Finally, they will put the brochure into production, and the outcome will be a finished product, an actual brochure in a promotional style. Projects allow students to use their imagination and the information they contain does not always have to be factual.

Stages in Project Work

Although recommendations as to the best way to develop projects vary, the following general stages can be used for successful project implementation. They constitute a practical guide for the sequencing of project activities for teachers who want to implement projects.

Stage 1. Speculation. This stage includes choice of project topic and sensitization about it, aiming at arousing interest and developing a climate suitable for speculation and investigation that will lead smoothly to the research process. Suggested topics are Global Economy, International Trade, Marketing Introduction, Management Introduction, Introduction Systems and Technologies. Topic is chosen after a dialogue among all members of the group, and the teacher. «The initial stimulus may emerge from the curriculum, or after a discussion about a contemporary local or wider topic of interest».[1]

Stage 2. Designing the project activities. This stage includes formation of groups and assigning roles, decisions concerning methodology, sources of information, activities that will take place, and places outside the classroom that students will visit. The better organized and more analytical the structuring of the activities, the easier and faster the research will be conducted.

Stage 3. Conducting the project activities. At this stage the groups implement the activities designed in the previous stage. Students gather information, process and categorize it. If deemed necessary, there may be intervals of information and feedback, in which students discuss issues related with cooperation among group members, problems of personal relations, and possible changes in group composition. The next phase is synthesis us for thought and action for other students.

Stage 4. Evaluation. It refers to the assessment and processing the information gathered. The final products are displayed, and become a stimulus of the activities from participants and discussion about whether the initial aims and goals have been achieved, implementation of the process, and final products. Evaluation also entails assessment of the experience at individual and group level, identification of errors and problems, but also appraisal of the rich cognitive and experiential material gathered. Evaluation includes evaluation from others, as well as self-evaluation.

The Function of Content

All that the learner needs to know at the time, and all that the learners can accountably learn in the time given are to be taught. The focus should be on language skills, i.e. what the students will be able to do with the language in real-life situations, e.g. at their workplace. This is especially true when students are being put in a workplace situation they cannot communicate efficiently because they lack the specific job terminology and even more, they realize they have forgotten most grammar rules they have studied in university. The teaching methodology should be created, adapted and tailored to the very faculty so as to help students develop those language skills

needed in their future careers. For this, the teachers should try and design teaching materials that enhance students to do purposeful tasks based on the real life while using appropriately the English language, e.g. conducting a conversation at the workplace using confidently the vocabulary specific to the specialty; holding a meeting, roleplaying a business phone call, an interview etc. Students of our University may choose doing project work as an alternative to translating economic literature from English into Ukrainian according to curriculum.

The Role of the Teacher.

Learner-centred teachers should look for responsible ways to share power with students. Concerning the teaching components in which students should be encouraged to be more actively involved, Weimer suggests that «teachers should allow students to make controlled decisions about course activities, assignments, course policies and even evaluation activities» [10] while Wilson suggests that «teachers should allow students to have some control over class materials.» [11] On a more metaphorical level the role of learner-centred teachers has often been compared to that of a guide,[8], a coach[2], or even a negotiator [10].

The Responsibility for Learning

Students should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning by becoming less passive and more actively involved in their learning. In order to get students to accept responsibility for learning, building appropriate class climate that enhances student responsibility and autonomy should be started with. To achieve this, teachers should first try to involve students as much as possible in the process of setting the conditions for learning. For example, teachers and students should work together in order to agree on a list of appropriate class policies and practices. But in order to make amends for the limits of class time and to increase the chances for successful language learning, students need to be initiated to develop their own learning strategies outside the English classes as well, so that they may become autonomous learners.

Processes and Purpose of Evaluation

Weimer's new role of evaluation does not break altogether with its traditional role, i.e. giving grades, but it offers an enlarged one, so that in learner-centered teaching evaluation is still an important teaching aspect but it is meant not only to generate grades but most importantly to promote learning: «This new purpose of evaluation assigns a new role to students: they should learn how to assess their own performance and actively participate in the assessment of their peers' performance» [10]. There are several ways of achieving this, e.g. we could organize a debate on a controversial topic and split the students into three groups: one group will be assigned to be in favour of the controversial issue, the other group will be against it and the third group should only sit aside and assess their peers'

performance. This easy-to-do activity may raise students' awareness about their strengths and weaknesses and about how the whole learning process takes place. Also important in the LCT evaluation is formative feedback. Moreover, in order to reach its goal, feedback should be constructive, i.e. it should «be directed toward the performance, not the person, should use language that describes more than it evaluates, and should not overload the receiver. Its effectiveness is enhanced if it is immediate and well-timed» [10].

The Balance of Power

Most of the important decisions about learning for students are made by teachers alone so this may obviously be an underlying cause for the students' lack of motivation and indecisiveness. As Weimer points out, learner centred-teaching “involves sharing power with students i.e. giving students some controlled power over those learning processes that directly affect them, not just transferring power wholesale. [10] In other words learner-centred teachers should look for responsible ways to share power with students. Concerning the teaching components in which students should be encouraged to be more actively involved, Weimer suggests that teachers should allow students to make controlled decisions about course activities, assignments, course policies and even evaluation activities.

Conclusion

It is important to implement project work as it influences the students to be real learners . They can do projects on almost any topic factual or fantastic. Projects can help to develop the full range of the learners' capabilities. Projects are often done in poster format, but students can also use their imagination to experiment with the form.

Projects can be performed differently in reports, displays, wall newspapers, as well as parties, plays, etc. The organization of project work may seem to be difficult but if we do it step by step it'll be easy. The learners should define a theme, determine the final outcome, structure the project, identify language skills and strategies, gather information, compile and analyze the information, present the final product and finally evaluate the project. Project work demands a lot of hard work of the teacher and the students, nevertheless, the final outcome is worth the effort.

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ЗАСТОСУВАННЯ ІНТЕРАКТИВНИХ МЕТОДІВ ПРИ ВИКЛАДАННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ В НЕМОВНИХ ВИЩИХ НАВЧАЛЬНИХ ЗАКЛАДАХ

***Анотація.** У статті розглянуті інтерактивні методи навчання англійської мови, які базуються на засадах гуманістичної психології і пов'язані з теорією розвивального навчання, а також наведений приклад систематики евристичних питань на заняття з іноземної мови, визначені найефективніші прийоми та особливості їх застосування.*

***Ключові слова:** інтерактивні методи навчання, моделювання ситуацій, евристична бесіда.*