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INCORPORATING PROJECT BASED LEARNING IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) CLASSES

Ушбу мақолада олий таълим муассасаларида хорижий тилларни ўқитишда лойиҳалашга асосланган таълимни қўллашнинг ижобий ва салбий томонларини ўрганилган ва тавсиф этилган. Лойиҳалашга асосланган таълим нафақат тил кўникмаларини ҳосил қилишга, балки, мотивацияни, лидерлик ва бошқа сифатларни ривожлантиришга ҳам ёрдам беради. Муаллиф бу борада пайдо бўлган ғояларини талабалар ва ўқитувчилар нуқтаи назаридан тақдим этади.

Статья описывает преимущества и недостатки использования проектного обучения в преподавании иностранных языков в высших учебных заведениях. Проектное обучение оказывает положительное влияние не только на языковые навыки, но также на мотивацию, лидерские и другие качества. Автор представляет идеи как с точки зрения студентов, так и преподавателей.

The given article describes the advantages and drawbacks of Project Based Learning in teaching foreign languages at Higher Educational Institutions. Project Based Learning has positive impact not only on language skills, but also on motivation, leadership and other qualities. The author presents ideas from the point of view of both students and teachers.

Калит сўзлар: лойиҳа асосидаги таълим, таълим услуби, акс, мулоҳаза, асиллик, трансферабл (ҳаётий) кўникмалар.
Ключевые слова: метод проектного обучения, стиль обучения, рефлексия, обратная связь, аутентичность, передаваемые навыки.
Key words: Project Based Learning (PBL), learning style, reflection, feedback, authenticity, transferable skills.

Project Based Learning (PBL) has been widely used in modern methodology recently. The given work will analyze advantage of implementing Project Based Learning in EFL classes as well as its drawbacks and will give some practical ideas about implementation of PBL during the lessons.

This approach to teaching has numerous advantages both for students and teachers. First of all, Project Based Learning helps to develop students' languages skills, both input and output, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, originally Project Based Learning was used not in teaching language. According to G. H. Beckett, H. Alberty (1) mentioned that Project Based Instruction was used in teaching Agriculture students, which was supposed to be more effective and motivating for the students(2). Nevertheless, later, this method became more wide-spread among teachers of different disciplines including foreign language teaching.

What are the benefits of Project Base Learning in terms of language skills development? As it has been mentioned above, receptive and productive skills' development may be observed. Logically, they may be put in the following order: reading, listening and speaking (together) and finally writing.

However, before moving to the advantages and ways of implementing Project Based Learning it is worth mentioning the stages of PBL. There are 10 stages defined by K. Sheppard and F. Stoller (3) and F. Stoller(4). They can be roughly categorized into 3 large groups.

The first group of actions is pre-stage. The following are examples of the pre-stage: teacher and students choose the topic of the project and the structure of the project.

The second group is while-stage. In this part of the Project Based Learning the experiment or research is actually conducted. The following are examples of the while-stage: students collect the data, analyze and study it.

The third and the last part of the Project is so-called post-stage. Here students not only show what they have learned, created or designed. One of the most important parts of this stage is evaluation stage. After presenting the product other members of the class or even community may evaluate its effectiveness. The following are examples of the post-stage: product presentation and evaluation.

So the preparation stage includes practice and development of the following skills: speaking and listening. The process mostly consists of discussion of the project form, structure, length and outcomes and it is clear that students and teacher will talk to each other and simultaneously listen to each other. What is important here for the teacher is to let all of the students express their opinions and involve their active participation. Students talk to each other and express their opinions. Together with the speaking and listening they develop critical thinking, as students learn not only to listen to each other's ideas, but try to analyze them and evaluate to find out whether this or that idea is useful and suitable for the given project or not. They also learn how to cooperate with each other and without the teachers' control or guidance. However, it is not right to say that there is no teacher

control. Project Based Learning can and must be carefully thought and controlled by the teacher. Although one of the peculiar features of Project Based Learning is collaborative learning (student collaboration) it is not correct to say that it is only student driven. Teacher must regularly meet with the students, observe their progress and support in the difficult situations. At the given period there is almost no reading or writing. However, it is not correct to say that there is no practice of the writing skills. During the discussion-negotiation stage there is some writing as students need to note down the main criteria, rules, dates, etc.

In the while-stage all four skills are practiced in integration. For instance, students are looking for information on the chosen topic. To do this, they read books, magazines, newspapers, various literature. So as it is clear, reading skills is practiced. However, there is another way of gathering new information, which is listening. Students listen to some news, TV programs, interviews, or even movies and cartoons. This is practice of listening skill. At the same time students write down the necessary information, key words, dates, numbers, names of people or places, stages or steps, etc. this is practice of the writing skill. The next stage is speaking and listening. These two skills always go together as one is impossible without another one. Students cannot talk and not listen to each other or vice versa. After listening to each other students must reflect on the given information. So, after students have collected information individually, they meet and compare the information. As the amount of words for the written final product is limited students need to agree on the most necessary and important information. Here they should also show their ability to cooperate and come to one conclusion.

The final- post-stage of the Project-Based Learning is the product itself, its presentation and evaluation. The language skills practiced here are: writing, speaking and listening. In most cases the outcome of the Project-Based Learning is the product- a new tool or instrument that can be applied in real life. However, in language classes it is more difficult to create practical and applicable product, thus, the outcome is usually presented in the form of report, booklet, or brochure, which naturally involves practice of writing skills. However, in the process of presentation speaking skill is of central importance. Students make presentation of the product thus, practicing their public speaking skills, presentation skills and other. And the final skill practiced at this stage is listening. Although it is common to think of the audience for the product presentation consisting of other students and teacher only, it is not always so. The audience of the presentation may consist of any willing participants- volunteer students, other teacher, parents and friends of the students and other representatives of the society ho may consider this product useful or beneficial. After the presentation stage there is usually question-answer

period which involves active listening to the questions being asked or comments made and answers to the given questions.

In addition to the four language skills there are some other aspects of human activity which are being practiced during Project Based Learning. They are so-called "XXI century skills" or it is possible to add transferable skills, for example: collaboration, critical thinking, presentation skills, leadership skills, independence, self-confidence and tolerance. Let's discuss them in detail. Collaboration may be developed subconsciously as students work in groups. They learn how to manage their time, how to interact effectively. Moreover, one of the biggest advantages of Project Based Learning is its suitability to various learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile. Students talk and listen to each other- auditory learning style. Students need to read various materials and watch different videos- visual learning style. Finally, kinesthetic and tactile learning style is practiced while students are preparing their final product.

The main aim of teaching and learning a foreign language is to make the learner be able to communicate successfully with native speakers, or to develop communicative competence. However, this is almost impossible or very difficult to carry out not implementing authentic activities. Project based activities are authentic in their nature. The task students usually perform is not artificial. Making a brochure or a travel guide, creating some new instruments or equipment is an authentic task and as a result requires use of authentic language.

However, there are several drawbacks of this method. One of them is difficulty in evaluating students' attendance and participation. As project work is usually done in groups or at least in pairs it is clear that the responsibilities among the students should be divided. As a rule, this is the task of the teacher to assign the roles, however it is not obligatory and for some students/groups (especially senior students) it is possible to let them choose the responsibilities independently. But when the final product is presented how can the teacher evaluate if all students worked equally well? It is impossible to rely on students answers only. Thus, there should be a certain procedure. For example, students may be asked to come up to the teacher in a certain period (e.g. once a week or in two weeks) and tell what they have done. It can also be given as written task. Students can write feedback on peers what a certain person did in the given period. Or it can be a self-evaluation. In addition, it is a good practice of writing skills.

One more difficulty that most teachers come across is dominating students. In the class some students may dominate over the weaker or more passive ones, however, there is the teacher who controls such students and equalizes the participation. Naturally, it is impossible to do the same during the project work. And it is the student who can solve this problem, but not all students are conscious

enough to take control over their learning. Some students are happy when someone else makes his/her tasks and let the situation go as it is. This also leads to difficulty in evaluating students' performance as the final result is given, but the teacher does not know how much each student contributed in its creation.

The last problem that the teacher usually faces is deadlines. Sometimes it is quite difficult to make students submit the tasks on time even during the classes. But making students follow the deadlines of different stages of a project work is even more difficult. Still, there is a way out of this situation. The teacher may divide the project work into smaller stages and give the deadline for each of them instead of asking for the final product at the end. This is equally useful for both teacher and students. As it has been already mentioned, the students will divide the tasks to be done equally for the whole period and will not procrastinate. For the teacher there is also convenience in evaluating students as they will bring tasks not at the end of the period, but at certain time.

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