Project Method as an Innovative Technology for Teaching English

Julia Aplaeva[1]

Abstract

The article is devoted to the value and role of project method in the teaching of English. Particular attention is paid to the fact that English is currently outside the curriculum, and in most cases is necessary for the further life of students. The main purpose of project method is to turn a foreign language from a passive object into an active action.

The article points out that the project method creates the conditions under which students learn group interaction and acquire communication skills, which is important for the socialization of students, especially in adolescence. The author seeks to trace the history of occurrence of the method of projects and its application in the practice of teaching English. Particular attention is paid to the stages of the project, and the article provides instructional techniques of work in the development of communicative skills. The role of the teacher and the student in the context of this type of lessons is identified and described in the article. The main purpose of teacher is not the transfer of knowledge, but to help students solve the tasks themselves.

The idea is substantiated that the use of the project method leads to the development of communicative competence and aims to create a sustainable motivation to learn English.

Keywords: competence approach, motivation, the implementation of activities, presentation

1. Project Method as an Innovative Technology for Teaching English

Nowadays international relations are expanding and changing that leads to an increasing role of English for non-English-speaking countries. Knowledge of English is a way to succeed in career and everyday life both. Knowledge of a foreign language is a real necessity and a must for a successful career.

Practice shows that the most useful in the professional world qualified, multilingual person[2]. It becomes a significant socio-economic, scientific, technical and cultural progress. This contributes to the enhancing status of a foreign language as a basic school subject. However, nowadays education should not give only theoretical knowledge, but also the ability to perceive and reproduce information, to work independently. Project-based learning (PBL) is a model that organizes learning around projects. It is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge and culminate in realistic products or presentations

At the turn of the XIX and XX centuries scientists and pedagogues began to think about a new system of education that would focus on a student and his individual aptitude. The origin of the method of projects dates back to the early 20th century in the United States. This method was introduced into school education by an American philosopher and his disciples J. Dewey H. Kilpatrick. E. Collings and proclaimed the principle of "learning by doing". The essence of the method is that students, based on their interests, together with a teacher's help, solved some practical problem. On one hand projects are sources of learning process, and, on the other hand, they are considered as areas where formerly gained knowledge could be put into use. Passed exams and diploma shouldn't be the goal of

---

obtaining knowledge. John Dewey argued that the process of "acquiring" isolated facts and useless skills, time-consuming and thought-provoking efforts, acts destructively: the individual loses the ability to assess really important things. [3]

Using comparative analysis of project method in Russia and the US it could be said about some differences. At the beginning of the 20th century, project method in Russia was considered as a way of developing individual qualities of personality (PP Blonskii, PF Kapterev, ST Shatsky, and others).

This experience has become quite widespread in schools, but the lack of scientific developments of using project method led to that the method began to be used for obtaining specific subject knowledge. This method replaced all other methods of education and eventually acquired a political orientation. Moreover, in 1931 in the USSR the projects were condemned and turned out to be banned. The main reason for this was general orientation of school to transfer knowledge by teacher. [5]

The teacher still plays a leading role in Russian schools, and a differentiated approach of learning is only being introduced into the system. It is the main difference in educational systems.

In Russians schools English was taught in a passive way. The teacher reproduces information without knowing how well the students have mastered this amount of information and whether they will be able to use it in practice. English is an active language. Students need a sufficient amount of language practice.

In fact, if student independently, with teacher`s help acquire knowledge and as a result present them, the language is rooted in students minds. In foreign methodology complexes, the project based learning is widely presented, project tasks are proposed after each section studied. In the Russian schools, the methodology is not yet widespread, despite the fact that many Russian complexes offer various options for creating projects.

The project method requires special skills and training from the teacher. The teacher`s role and the student changes significantly. Teachers should not only conduct classes in the form of lectures, but need to be flexible, in a certain extent artistic, interesting, and interested in a subject. [6] The teacher should always keep up with the times and give as much current information as possible and help students in subject`s mastering. In the context of this method, students play the role of flagship, and the teacher is only a navigator on this huge ship sailing to knowledge.

There are different types of projects. The project`s choice is determined by a communicative task. Everything depends on the purpose and tasks that need to be solved in the course of the work. The type of project determines a structure, methods, sources of information and a reporting form:

1. Group project - research is conducted by a group and each student studies a particular aspect of the topic;
2. Mini-project – Research Consists of Conducting interviews;
3. Individual project – research involves reading up for interesting to the student topic and suitable for individual work.

The method of projects is a game method, and the result is achieved through collective group activity and the final product is developed collectively and presented publicly. Thus, the speech development of competence is developing, which is especially important for foreign language learning. Group work contributes to improving students` communicative skills, and the project activity itself makes it possible to select assignments and topics according to students` individuality and interests. [2]

While preparing for the project students get acquainted with the peculiarities of behavior in a specific communicative situation, get experience in public speaking, and develop ability to express their position openly on a particular topic, learn new lexical and grammatical units, and activate using of language clichés.

The work on the project takes place in several stages; it is more convenient to represent the stages by the example of individual project assignments.

Name of Project: «Great Britain»

Purpose: Learning history, culture, traditions of the country, the assimilation of vocabulary and grammar, gaining experience of public speaking, working in a group, developing communication skills.

Culminating Products and Performances: Create mental map of chosen region of the country, which reflects the main, interesting and most memorable elements of the culture. Create the presentation and perform it publicly.

Stages of preparation for the project:

1. Definition and development of the topic: learning vocabulary, grammatical structures, listening and reading texts on the topic, activating the material in lexical and grammatical exercises
2. Discussion of the project topic: search for answers to problematic issues.
3. Development of the project plan
4. Distribution of tasks, roles: the formation of creative groups, each group must be responsible for a certain region of Great Britain (Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England), the distribution of tasks between members of the group.
5. Discover additional information: search and selection of material in various sources, use of authentic materials (at least 1) for greater reliability of data.
6. Designing the project in Power Point
7. Project Presentation
8. Discussion of the project and summarizing: Reflection. After the project presentations, a general discussion is needed, according to the plan prepared by the teacher.

Name of Project: «Back in days»

Purpose: To form students' understanding of possible ways to realize themselves in live, learning vocabulary, grammatical structures, listening and reading texts on the topic, activating the material in lexical and grammatical exercises, develop the skill of oral presentation and group working.

Culminating Products and Performances: With experience of older generation help students with a difficult choice of their future path in life. Students publish a collection of stories in which specific family stories related to growing up and professional developments are told.

Stages of project`s preparation:

1. Definition and development of the topic: learning vocabulary, grammatical structures, listening and reading texts on the topic, activating the material in lexical and grammatical exercises
2. Discussion of the project topic: Each student creates a story using journalistic research methods, such as interviews and document research. They solve specific questions that help to understand how members of their families went through the growing up stages and how they chose this or that profession.
3. Development of the project plan
4. Distribution of tasks, roles: The class is divided into groups of 3 to 5 (depending on the number of students), each group is entrusted to create a collection of short stories in English.
5. Discover additional information: Search and selection of material in various sources; questioning, interviewing.
6. Designing the project in Power Point
7. Project Presentation: Publish a thoughtful collection of narrative nonfiction writing in which students tell specific family stories of growing up. Present a project using the basic vocabulary and grammar for the topic.
8. Discussion of the project and summarizing: Reflection. After the project presentation, a general discussion is needed, according to the plan prepared by the teacher. The best stories from collections of short stories are published in the school newspaper.

The idea of implementing project method is justified by the fact that its using leads to communicative competence`s development and is aimed to creating a sustainable motivation for learning English. Interesting and unusual tasks create conditions for successful language learning, as students are involved in educational process. However, do not assume that the project method can exist separately from all other teaching methods. Only in combination with all pedagogical methods and techniques we can achieve positive results.

References

[1] Tsiguleva O.V. «Foreign languages as a tool of development professional mobility of a future specialist», International Journal of Multidisciplinary Thought, Volume 04, Number 02, 2014. Copyright by UniversityPublications.net. P. 89-95

[2] Polat, E.S. «Project-based foreign language lessons», Foreign languages in school, Moscow, 2000, P.10-15

[3] Dewey J. «Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education», Academia PH, New York: Macmillan. Retrieved – via Internet Archive.,1916, P.457

[4] Sosnovskii, B.A. « Psychology: a textbook for pedagogical universities», Moscow, 2012, P.50-55

[5] Blochin A.L. «Project method as a learner-centered technology», Rostov-On-Don, Kuban pedagogical university,2005, P.25

[6] Kilpatrick W.H. «Source book in the philosophy of education», New York, The Macmillan company,1923, P.371