<<Կրթություն առանց սահմանի>> ՀԿ

Ավարտական հետազոտական աշխատանք

Թեմա`   **The Role of Project in Learning a Foreign Language**

Առարկա`   **Անգլերեն**

Կատարող`   **Գրիգորյան Լիլիթ Վոլոդիայի**

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Research Paper

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Presentation title:

What is Project Based Learning(PBL)?

Research focus: What are the advantages and disadvantages of PBL approach?

Introduction

Now as we are living in the age of rapid technological development, there are also great challenges for the modern workforce. One of them is the huge strategic hole we have in our system of education. To motivate and engage the future labor force, educators need to involve or even re-invent their teaching methods.According to some official studies,most of employers value their workers' critical thinking,ability to solve problems,communication skills more than their qualification certificates.

And Project Based Learning is the best solution to the problem which allows to transform competence and proficiency into creativity,critical thinking,collaboration and communication which lie in the foundation of modern learning.

Project Based Learning connects academic situations and teaching to real-world problems.It is a work,often involving people, applying knowledge for solving problem allows the learners to raise their thinking to a new level,develop collaboration skills,a work which is planned and organized carefully,which is completed over a period of time and intended to achieve a particular aim.

Project Based Curriculum is designed to engage students using real-world problems.As students do the work they often use content knowledge and skills to complete successfully the project.They show their knowledge in action through creation.

In Project Based Learning the role of the teacher changes from content-deliverer to facilitator. A form of learning where students are responsible for their learning.It is pupil-centered activity. Student-centered learning involves learners being active rather than passive recipients of knowledge that is driven by individual academic needs and abilities. This type of pedagogical approach believes that the student should be the focus of the learning and that should be placed at the center of the process.Pupils work more independently through Project Based Learning process.Teacher provides support when needed.Learners must understand why they make a project and how useful it's for them.They are encouraged to make their own decisions about how best to do their work and demonstrate their understanding. The goal in this system is to empower student learning by working through student interests and needs through an ever-expanding release of power and authority given to students.

While PBL can certainly be content-specific it can also integrates multiple subjects into one project,PBL encourages learners to make meaningful connections across content areas rather than thinking about each subject in isolation.They use knowledge from different subjects to finish the multifaceted,cross-curricular project.

As educators,it is essential to prepare our students to meet the demands of today's changing society.With increased enagegment,Project Based Learning develops critical thinking,communication,collaboration and creativity also known as Four Cs of 21st century Learning,these skills are required for college,work,life beyond school.

Dr. David Reese is a strong supporter of PBL in education, "When working with educators, I often find educators see the final product of the project as the learning. This may be partially correct, but my belief is that process is how we provide students with opportunities to reach high levels of Bloom's taxonomy and utilize important 21st-century skills." Opportunity based projects go beyond the content and truly prepare students for the modern workforce.

Project based education follows a flexible, differentiated model where students have the freedom to work independently or collaborate either in person or virtually. A quick Internet search brings up many additional ideas and examples of ways to present content virtually. For example, record your presentations, use other videos, post online readings, and other resources, establish small, online study teams, and so on.Children will also need ways to respond virtually and regularly communicate with you and one another online. Rachelle Dene, a Spanish and STEAM teacher at Riverview Junior-Senior High School in Oakmont, PA, said "PBL has been a good option for students to explore their own interests. It can also be a good opportunity to engage families in learning together. It provides valuable learning experiences for students in a variety of grade levels and helps students develop future-ready skills."

The Advantages of the Project Based Learning

This approach has a number of benefits:

Through project work the learners master:

Time management:Delivering the project on time requires proper time management skills,so the learners should first estimate the time required for the fulfillment of the task.

Organizational skills:It's important to organize the project mentally as well as physically and are developed during project work.

Collaborational skills:Group research and project fulfillment is a great experience for students which allows them to see the importance of group work.This is a precious lesson for their future office work or even for a running business.

Problem-solving skills:Project Based Learning stimulates the students to think outside of the box and look for new ways of problem-solving.

Self-direction:During their project work the learners not only have to manage the time but also decide where to move further at each stage of research.

Ability to find information:Any research presupposes that the learner have to look for information himself not from a teacher.It is very valuable aspect.

Lifelong learning ability: Due to the fact that Project Based Learning is based on learners' interests and their active part in it ,the approach develops an interest and habit of lifelong education.

There are actually 5 essential future-forwarded skills, anybody can model through experimental studies:

Be water: Project Based Learning teaches students to be more flexible,so they could adapt to ever-changing social needs.It trains the learners to overcome the project challenges without predetermind expectations.

Burn to emerge: The Project Based Learning celebrates failure,as it allows the learners to grow, making them look for new and new possible problem solutions.

Make melodies: Project Based approach makes the students invent solutions, developing their design and creative thinking.Nowdays we need innovative thinking and unique solutions to survive.

Tie Lions Down: The power is in unity and the new educational approach stimulates the learners to negotiate, cooperate and unite efforts for better results,unity motivates the learners.

Stare Down The Future: PBL prepares the students for the unpredictable and is proven to be a transformational approach.

The Disadvantages of Project Based Learning

Though Project Based Learning has a number of benefits and advantages we can't mention that it has also some disadvantages that can't be ignored when we choose this approach of education for learners.

It's Time Consuming:An effective project-based learning design requires a large amount of time as it may take time to collect materials and information about the projects.

Lack of Interest: Sometimes it may happen that students feel a lack of interest in their project subject which might distract their minds from the project.

Needs a Dedicated & Hardworking Staff. To be honest, not teachers can be hard-working and completely dedicated to their students. But, the PBL approach really needs hardworking staff dedicated to the projects of their students.

Uncomfortable for Differently Abled Students: The project-based learning approach might be uncomfortable for differently abled students. They sometimes may not feel encouraged to finish their projects in the given period of time.

Many definitions of Project Based Learning have been proposed by various authors:

Beckett (2002) defined a project as "a long term (several weeks) activity that involves a variety of individual or cooperative tasks" (p. 54). Projects involve not only gathering of information, but also "discussion of the information, problem solving, oral or written reporting, and display" and can be completed "outside the classroom in the students' own time" (Hedge, 1993, p. 276). Project-based learning is largely group-based and relies on student input for its direction (Legutke & Thomas, 1991). Wurdinger, Harr, Hugg, and Bezon (2007) defined project-based learning as "a teaching method where teachers guide students through a problem solving process which includes identifying a problem, developing a plan, testing the plan against reality, and reflecting on the plan while in the process of designing and completing a project" (p. 151). According to Haines (1989), projects are activities in which "the students themselves play [a role] in the initial choice of subject matter and in the decisions related to appropriate working methods, the project timetable and the eventual 'end product'" (p. 1).

Some factors and stages for implementation of a Project Based Learning Project:

A high degree of planning and organization is needed for Project Based Learning and several key factors should be considered.The project is required to have clearly stated goals.The objective which the learners follow should be supported by project activities,so that final project could answer the standards defined in the curriculum.

The second factor to be considered is timeframe and materials to support deep understanding and engagement.The timeframe should be organized in a good way that learners have time for interpretation of content,effective collaboration,project development,time for design process,etc.

The third factor is collaboration,the students should learn collaboration skills by partnership,team project,etc.

Another factor is the real-world connection.It is important to arrange opportunity for each student to develop real-world practice with a purpose,collaboration/team work,project management,effective use of feedback.Students' knowledge and competences should be evaluated as a result of project work and assessment should be basedv on clearly defined standards;student reflection and revision.

The following general stages can be used for successful project implementation.They constitute a practical guide for the sequencing project activities for teachers who want to implement projects in their classrooms(Kriwas,1999)

Stage one: Speculation

This stage includes choice of project topic and sensitisation about it,aiming at arousing interest and developing a climate conductive to speculation and investigation that will lead smoothly to the research process.Topic is chosen after a dialogue among all members of the group and the teacher.(Brinia,2006,79)

Stage two: Designing the project activities

This stage includes the formation of groups and assigning of roles,sources of information,activites that will make place,and places outside the classroom the students must visit.The better organized and more analytical the structuring of the activites,the easier and faster the research will be conducted.(Fragoulis,2008)

Stage three:Conducting the project activities

At this stage the groups implement the activities designed in previous stage.Students gather information,process and categorize it.If necessary there may be intervals of information and feedback,in which students discuss issues related with cooperation among group members,problems of persanal relations and possible changes in group composition.

The next phase is synthesis and processing information gathered.The final products are displayed in the school or wider community and become a stimulus for thought and action for other students,teacers and local community.The project moves away from school and becomes social intervention,connecting the school with community and real life.(Fragoulis,2008,35)

Stage four:Evaluation

 Evaluation refers to the assessment of the activities from participants and discussion about whether the initial aims and goals have been achieved,implementation of te process and final products(Brinia,2006,82).Evaluation also includes assessment of the experience at individual and group level,identification of errors and problems but also appraisal of cognitive and experiential material gathered.

Suggested English learning projects

This section proposes some suggested English learning projects which can be used for students of English:

Speaking Projects: Speeches and presentations on audio/video cassettes, oral proficiency interview on audio/video cassettes, picture talk on audio/video cassettes, songs on audio cassettes, recorded talk journals, videotaped poster board presentations or retelling, panel discussions, debates, class discussions on audio/ video cassettes, weather reports on audio/ video cassettes, English corner activities on audio/ video cassettes, drama and play on audio/ video cassettes, English speech contests on audio/ video cassettes, conference/ business interpretation on audio/ video cassettes, and newscasts on audio/ video cassettes, etc.

Listening Projects: TV or radio news in American/ British English and transcripts, BBC news,a recorded cassette and transcripts, the course lecture summaries and transcripts, paragraph dictation, or summarized scenarios of a recorded media.

Reading projects: reading logs, reading responses, readings about different topics, book reports, lab reports, newsletters, advertisements, classified advertisements, reflection papers, published pieces of writings, reading reviews of a movie/a story/a novel, and newspaper article writing.

Writing Projects: Compositions and drafts, guided writings, journal entries, diaries, letters to pen-pals, e-mail correspondence, book reports, lab reports, field trip reports, newsletters, advertisements, brochure or booklet writing, story rewriting, academic paper writings, reflection papers, published pieces of writings, reviews of a movie/ a story/ a novel, and newspaper article writings, problem/solution essay project.

Translation Projects: Translations of campus briefs/company brochures/ articles/ stories/ technical writings/ travel guides/ advertisements, and literature translation, consecutive interpretation project, etc.

English teaching project: Lesson plans, teaching vocabulary at different levels, visual aids, pictures for speaking class, games for grammar lessons, learning styles, motivation, etc.

Others: Standardized tests and quizzes, goal-setting worksheets, and self-assessment records that reflect linguistic competence of students, projects for different specializations, e.g. linguistic project, British culture project, culture portfolio project, etc.

With a PBL project to work on, students can build up motivation and autonomy, expanding intellectual development and improving a lot of skills and knowledge needed for their life. However, the teacher, with the role of an instructor and facilitator, should provide sufficient assistance and cooperation so that the students could fulfill their projects comfortably and motivatedly.

A case study of project work: from theory to practice

Participants:pupils from the 9th grade of Basic school N123

Goals of project work:The overarching aim was to implement project work in order to make students work 4 weeks,students aware of the history of London and places of interest on London and use it as a mechanism for cross curricular, and interdisciplinary work, as well as to make use of new technologies.

The specific aims were:

Cognitive aims:

1) To help students learn about London and places of interest there.

2) To help students realize the significance of the historical environment.

3)To improve students' reading, writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary skills, and communicative competence.

Emotional aim:

1)To foster respect about the collaborative efforts of people who lived in the specific geographical area.
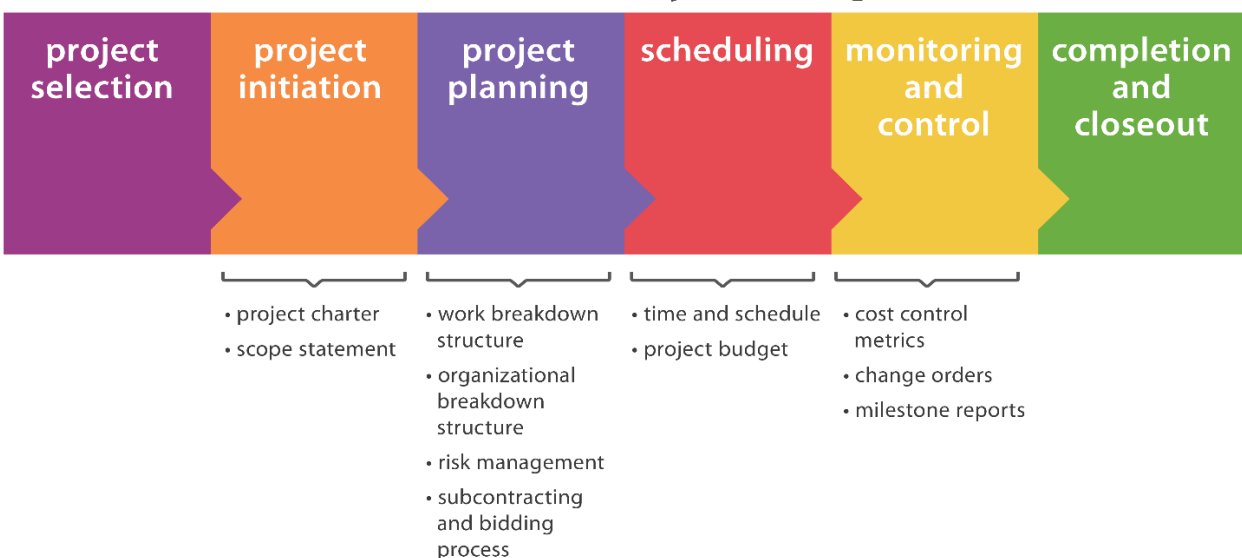
Psychomotor aims:

1)To acquaint students with observation and research.

2)To foster the development of curiosity and observation skills to students.

Sequence of project activities:

Drawing on Stoller (2002), the following six stages were followed. The first step included choosing the topic of the project and agreeing on the final outcomes. The project topic was London and its places of interest. In the second stage teachers and students structured the project work. This included determining information required, sources of information, how analysis of information will take place, formation of project groups on the basis of the students' interests and needs, and assigning roles and coordinators for each group. The third stage included the gathering of information from a variety of sources.At the end pupils presented the result of their group work,it was a small informative film about London and its places of interest,it was a great surprise for us that pupils had made also another film dedicated to our capital Yerevan and its places of interest were also included in that film.The final stage included evaluation of the project. Evaluation was expressed positively and not negatively, because the aim was to reflect on language and content mastered, effectiveness of steps and activities used (Stoller, 2002; Fragoulis, 2008:54). The focus is on whether and to what extent knowledge, experiences, and skills acquired formed new values and attitudes that changed or substituted old negative attitudes. These transformations constitute the essence of real learning (Mezirow, 1991).

Traditional View of Project Management

| project selection	project initiation	project planning	scheduling	monitoring and control	completion and closeout
	• project charter • scope statement	• work breakdown structure • organizational breakdown structure • risk management • subcontracting and bidding process	• time and schedule • project budget	• cost control metrics • change orders • milestone reports	

Discussion and Conclusion

The activities presented in the article are a different way of teaching English as a foreign language adopting the pedagogical principle of exploratory learning. With these projects and the steps for implementing a PBL project, the teachers of English can motivate their students not only inside but also outside class, making full use of the benefits of PBL to help the students well prepare for future in terms of both English skills and social ones. Students acquire knowledge through a process of "building" it, form groups, cooperate, use authentic, "real" information sources, process and evaluate them, take initiatives, and make decisions. They develop autonomy because they have choices and develop a sense of control and responsibility for their learning, approaching learning in a way that suits their "abilities, styles and preferences" (Skehan, 1998: 273).

The teachers who implemented the Project Based Learning model,stated that their experience gained was extremely important. Despite problems of school infrastructure and resources available, and lack of experience in project work, their initial fears and insecurity were finally overcome. They evaluated positively the potential offered by the project method and expressed the need for their systematic training in the method.

The pedagogical implications are clear. Education is not offered with impersonal teaching methods and educational tools. The teacher is indispensable source of inspiration and encouragement, a "living example" to students. In addition, knowledge of modern teaching methods, and willingness to experiment with non-traditional teaching practices are powerful tools for the achievement of teaching aims, such as increased motivation, interest, and performance in the hands of teachers in the context of English as a foreign language instruction.
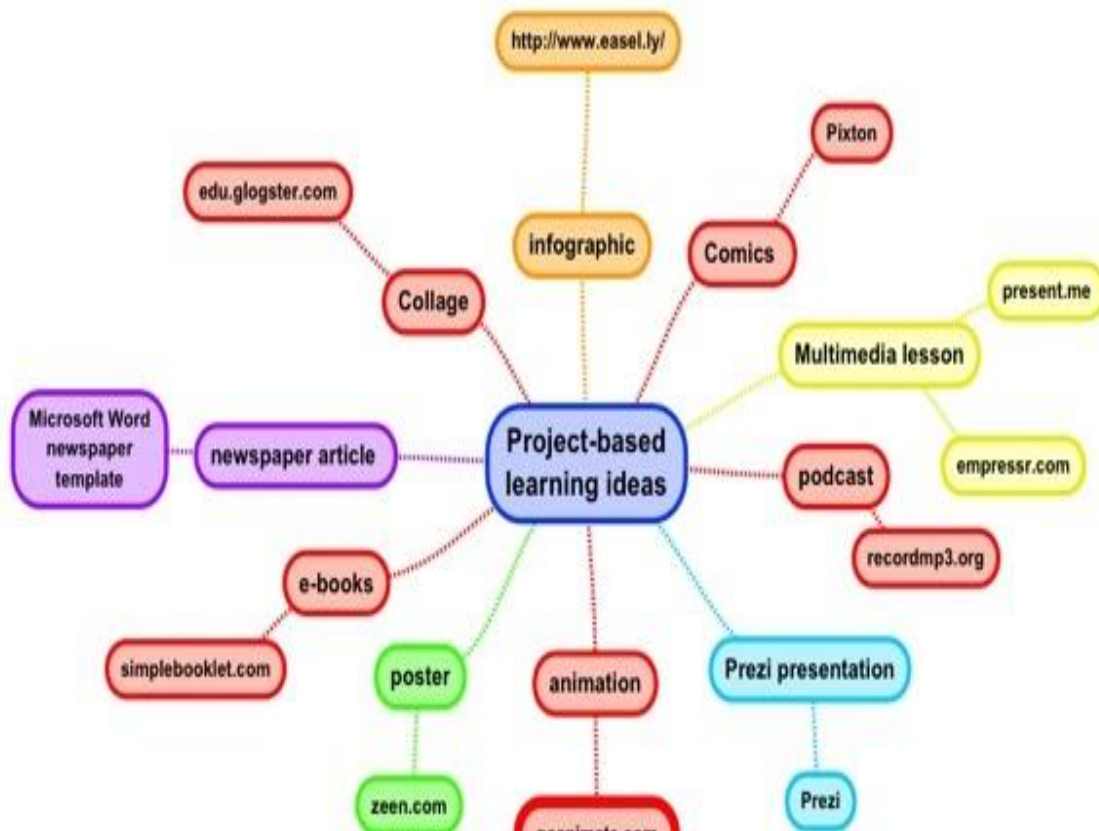
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