IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROJECT-BASED LEARNING STAGES IN UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE LESSONS FOR 5th-6th GRADE GYMNASIUM STUDENTS

Filonova Nataliia Andriivna, a second-year postgraduate student (Group OPNd-1-23-4.0d.) specializing in 011 Educational and Pedagogical Sciences at the Faculty of Ukrainian Philology, Culture, and Arts of Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University.

Academic Supervisor: Karaman O.V., a distinguished Professor of the Department of Ukrainian Language at the Faculty of Ukrainian Philology, Culture, and Arts at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University.

Abstract. *This article analyzes the stages of implementing project-based learning in teaching Ukrainian to 5th-6th grade gymnasium students. Key stages covered include topic selection, planning, research, discussion, presentation, and reflection. The focus is on how each stage impacts students' development of independent learning skills, critical thinking, and communicative competence, which are essential for successful language acquisition, especially in the face of educational challenges. Each stage's contribution to building core competencies, engaging students actively in learning, addressing educational setbacks, and boosting motivation for studying Ukrainian is also examined. A review of recent studies highlights the effectiveness of project-based learning in developing complex skills, demonstrating that this approach promotes student involvement, enhances motivation, and fosters social integration.*

Key words: *project-based learning, project, motivation, educational process.*

In contemporary pedagogical and philological discourse, significant attention is devoted to the search for effective teaching methods that foster the development of key competencies in students and ensure a deep understanding of the subject, particularly the Ukrainian language. Today, the educational process aims to create a cohesive system of universal knowledge, skills, and abilities and to acquire experience in independent activity and personal responsibility, thereby forming key competencies in students.

For teachers, this signifies a transition from simply transmitting knowledge to organizing conditions for students active learning and practical experience. For students, this process involves moving from passive reception of information to active searching, critical reflection, and practical application. Traditional teaching approaches often do not take this into account. At the same time, the current generation of students requires active engagement in educational activities, integration of knowledge from various fields, and practical application of acquired skills.

In this context, project-based learning methods, which involve engaging students in research and creative activities, open new possibilities for the development of their language competence, critical thinking, and communication skills. However, the study of the stages of implementing project-based learning, specifically in Ukrainian language lessons for 5th-6th grade gymnasium students, is an area that has not been

extensively explored, objectively necessitating analysis and the development of appropriate methodological recommendations.

Goals of the Article (Task Statement):

1. Investigate the Theoretical Foundations of Project-Based Learning in contemporary pedagogical and philological discourses, focusing on its specific application for 5th-6th grade students. This includes an examination of existing literature and theories related to project-based methodologies, particularly how they can be adapted to meet the needs of younger learners.

2. Identify the Key Stages of Project-Based Learning and elucidate the appropriateness of their implementation in Ukrainian language lessons for 5th-6th grade gymnasium students. This will involve analyzing the phases of project work, such as topic selection, planning, execution, and evaluation, to determine their effectiveness in enhancing language instruction.

3. Characterize the Impact of Project-Based Learning on developing students' language competence, critical thinking, and communication skills. This will entail reviewing empirical studies and findings to assess how project-based approaches can facilitate the acquisition of essential competencies in language learning.

These outlined objectives will deepen the understanding of project-based learning's methodological features and its role in shaping competent and active students.

The project-based learning method has gained popularity since the early 20th century when American philosopher and educator John Dewey developed and substantiated his didactic concept. Dewey emphasized the importance of fostering individual initiative in learners. He proposed that the key conditions for successful education include a labor-oriented approach, active and independent learning, real-life connection, educational work continuity, individuality, and intellectual freedom (Chala, 2020: 25). Kilpatrick, a follower of Dewey, developed the «project-based learning system», also known as the project method. The American educator defined the project method as «a method that involves performing a certain sequence of actions aimed at solving a problem in real conditions» and «contributing to the formation of experience and responsibility» (Kilpatrick, 1918). The researcher identified and substantiated four types of projects: creative (productive), consumer (aimed at producing consumer goods), problem-based (addressing intellectual challenges), and project exercise. According to Kilpatrick, the use of these projects not only prepared learners for life after school but also helped them organize their present lives (Mykhailova, 2016: 84).

In the academic literature, the project method is considered an effective tool for developing students' key competencies, particularly their ability to work independently, think critically, and gain practical experience. The works of contemporary scholars such as Vasylevska L., Horoshkina O., Izbash S., Isaieva O., Karaman S., Karaman O., Korytska H., Kucheryuk O., Lukyanova L., Morse N., Polinok O., Semenoh O., Sysioeva S., and Yatsenko T. indicate that project-based learning and its stages are actively researched.

Significant attention has been paid to the practical implementation of the project method in the educational process by Pyrozhenko L., Selevko H., and Pyehota O.

In the scholarly works of Lutsenko H., Bevz V., Chala N., Mykhailova O., Kulalayeva N., Bulvinska O., Telizhenko O., Sikora Y., and Karplyuk S., the main requirements for integrating project-based learning into the educational process have been formulated. Researcher Titova O. emphasizes the relevance of the project-based learning method, as it fosters creativity among learners, which is one of the most desired skills in today's world (Titova, 2018). Tchoshanov M. notes that «the project method is a system of educational activity built on the active involvement of students in the process of cognition and the acquisition of practical experience through solving tasks that have significance in real life» (Tchoshanov, 1999). Olena Pometun adds that the project method creates conditions for developing the student's personality, as it allows for integrating knowledge and acquiring practical work experience (Pometun, 2004).

Therefore, researchers consider project-based learning to be an effective way to integrate theoretical knowledge and practical skills, foster students understanding of the societal significance of education, expand personal experience, and develop intellectual independence and collaboration skills. This underscores the practical relevance of using the project method in contemporary educational practices aimed at nurturing competent, creative, and socially active individuals.

In Ukraine, project-based learning was initiated in the early 1920s as a result of didactic searches aimed at activating educational activities, linking learning to life and production, and implementing labor education for students (Kulalayeva, 2019: 18). The method gradually gained momentum and eventually became popular in the educational landscape of independent Ukraine.

According to the Buck Institute for Education, project-based learning is a method in which students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills by researching and responding to engaging and complex questions over a certain period. The project method serves as a model for organizing the educational process, focusing on the creative self-realization of the individual while developing their capabilities by creating a specific «product» under the guidance of a teacher. Project activities help students recognize their responsibility for collective efforts, enhance their involvement, increase the effectiveness of their work, and boost their competitiveness in presenting their results. Thus, the project method becomes one of the priorities for creating a school of thinking rather than rote learning (Grobova, 2021: 166).

According to researchers (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008; Thomas, 2000), project-based learning includes the following aspects:
– students apply knowledge and skills to solve realistic problems in the real world;
– it enhances students' responsibility for the work they complete;
– teachers act as coaches and facilitators of inquiry, conducting reflections;
– students often work in pairs or groups. This learning format involves engaging students in organizing and acquiring knowledge and creating their own products. It develops critical thinking skills, productive collaboration, communication, reasoning, synthesis, and resilience under time constraints and specific goals (Barron, 2003);

Co-founder of the modern science school Science Gen, Inna Dyomina, identifies the following advantages of project-based learning:

– the traditional classroom transforms into an open learning space where students move at their own pace;

– the project execution process creates a need for self-learning and self-improvement;

– based on memorization and repetition, learning shifts towards integrating, discovering, and presenting acquired knowledge;

– students have the opportunity to experience all stages of «production», from idea generation and model creation for the future product to its implementation;

– it allows teachers to build a positive relationship history with students under new conditions and assign roles to students, highlighting their individuality and natural talents.

Of course, amidst these apparent advantages, a particular risk is associated with project-based learning: the possibility of failing to meet educational objectives and achieving results. However, this can be avoided by following the sequence of project-based learning stages and planning the process rationally (Diomina, 2018).

The stages of project-based learning for 5th-6th grade students in Ukrainian language classes involve a systematic and step-by-step organization of educational activities, where each stage performs an essential function in the educational process and contributes to the harmonious development of students. Traditionally, the main stages of implementing project-based learning in Ukrainian language classes include:

1. Preparation Stage: This stage's essence lies in selecting the topic, identifying the main educational problem, and formulating the didactic goal.

At this stage, the teacher collaborates with the students to choose a project topic that is relevant, meaningful to the learners, and connected to the Ukrainian language curriculum. The project theme must correspond to the student's age characteristics and foster their interest in the subject. For example, topics such as the language of teenagers, Ukrainian culture, or folk customs in a linguistic context could be selected. During this stage, the teacher assists the students in articulating the problem they will address (Anishchenko, 2017: 19).

2. Planning Stage: This involves discussing ways to solve the problem, developing a detailed project work plan, forming working groups, distributing roles, determining the final product's format, and presenting the project results.

At this stage, the teacher collaborates with the students to determine the sequence of tasks, allocate responsibilities within the team, and set time limits for each stage, all while remembering that the teacher's role is that of a facilitator. Planning also includes identifying sources of information and research methods that students will use. It is essential that, at this stage, learners understand how their efforts will contribute to achieving the overall project goal.

3. Project Implementation Stage: This stage involves active research activities by the students, during which they gather information from various sources, including textbooks, online resources, encyclopedias, and more. Surveys, interviews, or studies of peers' opinions may also be conducted to obtain relevant data for the chosen topic.

For instance, if the project pertains to language culture, students might explore sources that provide examples of idiomatic expressions in literature or everyday life.

Following this, students must analyze the collected information and discuss it in groups. This process helps them learn how to present their thoughts, argue their points, and critically evaluate the results obtained. Creating an environment for open discussion is essential, allowing each student to contribute their ideas and suggestions. This also fosters the development of communication skills and teamwork, as students must agree on conclusions and determine the final format for presenting their material.

At this stage, the teacher may provide practical assistance (if necessary), guiding and monitoring the students' project execution, and helping create an environment for open discussion. Consequently, 5th-6th grade students develop specific knowledge, skills, and competencies (Tokarenko, 2013: 61).

4. Final Stage: Defense of group projects and presentation of the project's final product, which includes evaluating project activities based on established criteria and analyzing successes and failures encountered during the project work.

The presentation is the culminating stage where students showcase the results of their work in the form of reports, multimedia presentations, video materials, or posters. In Ukrainian language lessons, the presentation may include a speech or a theatrical performance on the project's topic. This stage fosters the development of public speaking skills, argumentation, and the ability to express information concisely and clearly. Following this, the teacher and students analyze the effectiveness of the project activities and identify a new problem. It is vital for both the teacher and students to objectively assess their project work. To facilitate this, students can engage in self-assessment and peer assessment, which promotes critical thinking and reflective skills. Reflection is a crucial part of project-based learning, as it allows students to recognize their contribution to the project, evaluate the challenges and successes encountered during its implementation, and formulate conclusions regarding their own development and future goals.

The execution of projects consists of various stages; however, at every stage, it is essential to emphasize that the responsibility for their learning lies with the students themselves. This is a very effective way of collaborating within an agreed-upon theme or question. It teaches students to define goals, plan (structure) their work, and evaluate results. It requires a high level of activity and independence from the project participants (Grobova, 2021: 167).

The project method involves forming a specific problem and gradually revealing and solving it, with a mandatory presence of ideas and hypotheses, precise planning of actions, and distribution of roles. This means that each student has specific tasks within the framework of close interaction, with project participants responsible for their parts of the work. Regular discussions of intermediate steps and results are also essential (Dovbenko, 2005: 49).

Therefore, project-based learning in Ukrainian language classes for 5th and 6th-grade students is an effective method that contributes not only to acquiring subject knowledge but also to developing key competencies such as critical thinking, communication, and independent work skills. Each stage – from topic selection to reflection-plays a crucial role in ensuring a deep understanding of the material

and enhancing motivation to learn. Through the step-by-step organization of projects, students not only apply their acquired knowledge in practice but also gain experience in teamwork, learn to set goals, plan, and effectively utilize resources.

Project-based learning integrates interdisciplinary knowledge, makes the learning process meaningful for students, and helps to overcome educational losses by stimulating active participation in learning. Thus, this method is promising for the modern education system, as it ensures the comprehensive development of the individual, adapts students to the conditions of the contemporary information environment, and prepares them for further social and academic success.

Future research prospects lie in substantiating the linguodidactic conditions of project-based learning, taking into account specific topics from the curriculum/ model program in 5th and 6th grades.

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