

Project work at English lessons

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СІЛТЕМЕ
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The problem of using project work in foreign languages teaching and learning is of great importance. 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 activities which focus on a theme of interest rather than on specific language tasks and helps the students to develop their imagination and creativity. Nevertheless, teachers are not keen on the idea of providing project work into 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.

In schools and colleges anywhere in the world you see students carrying bags and rucksacks with logos in English. Students discuss films about to be released starring English-speaking actors, buy magazines with pictures of their favourite pop groups, and wear T-shirts printed with slogans and logos in English. They talk about football teams, Formula 1 racing, and international tennis championships. During their breaks they eat and drink food with recognizably English names, read English advertisements, access the Internet, listen and sing along to the latest hits.

Consciously or unconsciously, students bring the outside world into the classroom, but they may not always have the opportunity to activate what they know and use it in the outside world. Project work takes the experience of the classroom out into the world and provides the opportunity for informal learning.

The original reason for developing project work at the beginning of the 1980s resulted from the impact of the communicative approach on what teachers were doing in the classroom. Project work pushed forward the boundaries by bringing students into direct contact with authentic language and learning experiences not usually available within the four walls of an ELT classroom using textbooks.

Project work offered learners an opportunity to take a certain responsibility for their own learning, encouraging them to set their own objectives in terms of what they wanted and

needed to learn.

A project is an extended piece of work on a particular topic where the content and the presentation are determined principally by the learners. The method of projects appeared at the beginning of the century, when all the pedagogues and the philosophers tried to find ways of developing the active, independent child's thinking. The method of projects can be used when teaching English at any lesson, devoted to any topic. A project is typically defined as a collaborative enterprise, frequently involving research or design that is carefully planned to achieve a particular aim. Any project is based upon some problem. To solve it, the students need not only bare knowledge of the language, but a large amount of different subject knowledge, necessary for solving this problem.

Project work captures better than any other activity the three principal elements of a communicative approach. These are: a concern for motivation, a concern for relevance, a concern for educational values.

Project work has advantages like the increased motivation when learners become personally involved in the project; all four skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking, are integrated; autonomous learning is promoted as learners become more responsible for their own learning; there are learning outcomes -learners have an end product; tasks and therefore the language input are more authentic; interpersonal relations are developed through working as a group; content and methodology can be decided between the learners and the teacher and within the group themselves so it is more learner-centered; learners often get help from parents for project work thus involving the parent more in the child's learning; if the project is also displayed parents can see it at open days or when they pick the child up from the school; a break from routine and the chance to do something different.

The disadvantages of project work are the noise which is made during the class, also projects are time-consuming and the students use their mother tongue too much, the weaker students are lost and not able to cope with the task and the assessment of projects is very difficult. However, every type of project can be held without any difficulties and so with every advantage possible.

There are a lot of classifications of project work activities, presented by different scholars. The main types of projects are information and research projects, survey projects, production projects and performance and organizational projects.

There are a number of different approaches to choosing a project for the class. Teacher should select one, which fits in with a particular vocabulary or topic area that students are studying. Also, a project can be selected to give students specific skill practice. There are, of course, other important factors to take into account when choosing a project, such as the level and interests of the students.

Though project work may not be the easiest instructional approach to implement, there are many potential pay-offs. At the very least, with the project approach, teachers can break the routine by spending a week or more doing something besides grammar drills and technical reading.

The organization of project work may seem difficult but if we do it step by step it should be easy. We 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 from the teacher and the students; nevertheless, the final outcome is worth the effort.

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Not all the teachers are ready to use project work during teaching. Some of them think that it is not useful; it is only time-consuming, noisy and has no benefits, except fun. It is the main problem of the developing of the project work methodology. This technic is more studied and more often used by foreign scientists and teachers, than in our country, or in Russia.

Project work is effective, interesting, entertaining and should be used at the lesson. So, we have a recommendation for the following study of this methodology and more frequent usage of it.

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