PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF A PROJECT WORK AT A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASS IN ARMENIAN SCHOOL: PRACTICAL ASPECT

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Project-based Learning is a student-centered pedagogy that involves a dynamic classroom approach in which it is believed that students acquire a deeper knowledge through active exploration of real-world challenges and problems. Students learn about a subject by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to a complex question, challenge, or problem. It is a style of active learning and inquiry-based learning. Project-based Learning contrasts with paper-based, rote memorization, or teacher-led instruction that presents established facts or portrays a smooth path to knowledge by instead posing questions, problems or scenarios.

The main goal of the given paper is to show the didactical potential of Project-based Learning at English classes in Armenian schools. The practical aspect of the implementation of projects works (with a certain example of a project work) is highlighted.

II.   INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

John Dewey was considered to be the first teacher who used Project-based Learning. He initially promoted the idea of "learning by doing". According to Dewey education and learning are social and interactive processes, and thus the school itself is a social institution through which social reform can and should take place.

Dewey's educational theories were presented in "My Pedagogic Creed" (1897), "The School and Society" (1900), "The Child and the Curriculum" (1902), "Democracy and Education" (1916) and "Experience and Education" (1938) [2].

In his writings on education Dewey continually discussed the ideas of democracy and social reform. Dewey makes a strong case for the importance of education not only as a place to gain content knowledge, but also as a place to learn how to live. According to Dewey, the purpose of education should not revolve around the acquisition of a pre-determined set of skills, but rather the realization of one's full potential and the ability to use those skills for the greater good. He notes that "to prepare him for the future life means to give him command of himself; it means so to train him that he will have the full and ready use of all his capacities" (*My pedagogic creed, Dewey, 1897*).

According to Thomas Markham (2011) Project-based Learning "integrates knowing and doing. Students learn knowledge and elements of the core curriculum, but also apply what they know to solve authentic problems and produce results that matter. Project-based Learning students take advantage of digital tools to produce high quality, collaborative products. Project-based learning refocuses education on the student, not the curriculum — a shift mandated by the global world, which rewards intangible assets such as drive, passion, creativity, empathy, and resiliency. These cannot be taught out of a textbook, but must be activated through experience" [4, p.38-42].

James G. Greeno (2006) has associated Project-based Learning with the "situated learning" perspective and with the constructivist theories of Jean Piaget [3, p.79-96].

Blumenfeld and others elaborate on the processes of Project-based Learning: "Project-based Learning is a comprehensive perspective focused on teaching by engaging students in investigation. Within this framework, students pursue solutions to nontrivial problems by asking and refining questions, debating ideas, making predictions, designing plans and/or experiments, collecting and analyzing data, drawing conclusions, communicating their ideas and findings to others, asking new questions, and creating artifacts" [1, p.369-398].

Project-based Learning's time has come. The experience of thousands of instructors across all grade levels and subject areas, backed by research, confirms that it is an effective and enjoyable way to learn and to develop deeper learning competencies required for success in college, career, and civil life.

Here are the advantages of Project-based Learning highlighted by the majority of researchers and teachers:

- making school more engaging for students;
- improving learning;
- building success skills for college, career, and life;
- providing opportunities for students to use technology;
- making teaching more enjoyable and rewarding;
- connecting students and schools with communities and the real world;
- promoting educational equity, etc.

Project-based Learning emphasizes learning activities that are long-term, interdisciplinary and student-centered. Unlike traditional, teacher-led classroom activities, students often organize their own work and manage their own time in a project-based class.

The practical example of a project work arranged by us in a foreign language classroom in an Armenian setting is given below.

II. THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT WORK

The aim of the project and main work packages. During our internship at Gandzak secondary school N1of Gegharkunik region, Armenia we decided to use the project work technology in order to promote self-access work and interest in the other culture clothing.

The title for the project was selected as it was the topic of the day: *"National Clothes"*.

The main *aim of the project* was to provide students with general information on the national clothes.

The *specific objectives* of the project were the following:

➢ to use vocabulary related to the topic "Clothes";
➢ to discuss the information the students have gained about national clothes;
➢ to give some additional information on the topic of the project;
➢ to develop communication and linguistic skills of the learners;
➢ to develop cooperation and team-working skills of the students.

During the project the following competences of the learners were to be developed:

- linguistic competence;

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- speech competence;
- strategic competence;
- cultural competence;
- cross-cultural competence, etc.

The project was delivered in the English language.

In order to organize the project work we have worked out three main work packages.

The main work packages developed during the project were the following:

❖ Work Package 1: Teaching.
❖ Work Package 2: Research.
❖ Work Package 3: Final event (exhibition-presentation).

Table 1: Main work packages of the project

Work packages	Activities
WP 1: Teaching	Reading, translation, vocabulary acquisition, grammar revision, exercises; etc.
WP 2: Research	Research with the use of the Internet resources on the topic of the project
WP 3: Final event	Presentation of the project in the form of exhibition

Planning and Initiation of the project. The project planning is one of the most important phases of the project work. It has to take into consideration several factors:

▪ *Target audience*. The main target audience for our project was the group of learners of the 5th grade of Gandzak school N 1. In total 20 students were actively involved in the project. Besides, the headmaster, two foreign language teachers and other specialists were involved in the organization and implementation of the project.
▪ *Availability of resources* (books, the Internet, computers, smartphones, other didactic materials). Before the initiation of the project we carefully inspected the resources (mainly printed materials) available at the school library. Since they were not sufficient and most of them did not correspond to the needs of the project we have decided to use the Internet resources during the project. The school is scarcely equipped

with computers and projectors. Thus we decided to use computer and projector, and pupils used some painting materials for the presentation of their final works on national clothes.

- *Time-management.*

Execution of the project. The execution of the project comprised the main three work packages mentioned above:

- teaching performed through the series of classes (classrooms hours and extra-curricular activities);
- research conducted by the learners in order to obtain necessary information on the subject of the project;
- the main final event in the form of an exhibition-presentation at the end of the project work.

WP 1: Teaching. The title of the project was selected as it was the topic of the day. The topic was from the 5th grade English textbook [5, p.80].

WP2: Research. As there was no text in this unit we decided to make some research connected with national clothes which will not only raise students' interests but also promote their research ability. The class was instructed to find information on our national and other national clothed with the corresponding images. Three students were given the assignment to find information on the first jeans. As we decided to conduct a project work we gave them two weeks to prepare their finding materials. The director of the school, two foreign language teachers and other specialists were involved in the organization and implementation of the project.

WP 3: Final event. At the beginning of the class we introduced the topic of the lesson to the audience. The students presented their findings and images on the Armenian national clothing. Then the students presented their information and images on Russian, Georgian, Ukrainian, Indian, Mexican, Belarusian, Chinese, Japanese and Swiss national clothes. At the end of the lesson three students presented their materials on the first jeans.

III.FEEDBACK AND IMPACT OF THE PROJECT WORK

Feedback. In order to measure the outcomes of the project we used interviews with the target audience as well as questionnaires to understand the strong and weak points of the project work technology used by us and to use

the feedback gained from the participants for the self-assessment of the effectiveness of the experimental teaching.

Upon the end of the project the class was assigned to answer the following questions:

1) Was it interesting to learn about others national clothes?

    a) Yes, it was.

    b) Yes, but we were overloaded with research materials.

    c) No, it was not interesting.

2) How did you like the project work? Was it useful to learn new things?

    a) It was very interesting.

    b) It was very interesting but time consuming.

    b) It was boring.

3) How did you like the way of our teaching/learning?

    a) It was motivating.

    b) It was not so interesting.

    c) It was boring.

4) Did the project prompt you to communicate?

    a) Yes, it did.

    b) No, it didn't.

5) Did the project broaden your worldview?

    a) Yes, it did.

    b) No, it didn't.

After answering the questions we had the following results among the 20 learners.

- *Question 1:* For 12 of them it was interesting to learn about the others national clothing, for 8 pupils it was interesting but they were overloaded with researching materials.
- *Question 2:* For 17 of them it was interesting to conduct a project work and they found it useful, for 3 students it was interesting but time consuming.
- *Question 3:* For 20 students the way of our teaching was motivating.
- *Question 4:* For 20 students the texts of the project prompted them to communicate

▪ *Question 5:* For 20 students the project work broadened their worldview.

Impact of the project. Project Impact is how the project affects the matters which it comes in contact with. By giving a project impact appraisal we define effects, both positive and negative, which the project is expected to produce.

The impact of our project was foreseen at its design and planning phases.

Upon the end of the project we summarized our project impact on different target audiences: learners, teachers, larger public.

Impact on learners:
- By the end of the class pupils were impressed;
- During the project they were embodied;
- The project promote pupils' self-access;
- The project helped them to develop their critical thinking skills;
- The project helped them to develop their communication skills due to the cooperative learning;
- The project helped to develop their linguistic skills as the whole work had been done in English.

Impact on teacher(s):
- The project gave me an excellent opportunity to get to know the students, to understand their weak and strong points;
- The project work can be a basis for the implementation of other projects within the educational process while teaching English;
- It allowed me to understand my abilities as a teacher and a project manager, to critically analyze my competences and work to strengthen them.

Impact on other parties:
- Invited parties (school headmaster, administrative staff, parents, etc.) gained knowledge on the subject of the project;
- Invited parties improved their cultural and cross-cultural competences through the project which enabled them see the similarities and differences between various cultures;

- Teachers of other school subjects can use the project work technology in their classes as well.

To sum it up, Project-based Learning makes foreign language classes more engaging for students, it improves learning, it builds success skills for the future life, it provides opportunities for students to use modern technology, it makes teaching and learning foreign languages more enjoyable and rewarding, it connects students and schools with communities and the real world, and finally it promotes educational equity.

Key words: *linguistic didactics, Project-based Learning, project work, English language learning.*

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ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ԴՊՐՈՑՈՒՄ ՕՏԱՐ ԼԵԶՎԻ ԴԱՍԻՆ ՆԱԽԱԳԾԱՅԻՆ ԱՇԽԱՏԱՆՔԻ ՊԼԱՆԱՎՈՐՈՒՄՆ ՈՒ ԻՐԱԿԱՆՑՈՒՄԸ. ԳՈՐԾՆԱԿԱՆ ԴԻՏԱԿԵՏ

Ռ. Ռ. ՍԱՐԳՍՅԱՆ
Մանկավարժական գիտությունների թեկնածու, դոցենտ,
ԳՊՀ օտար լեզվի և գրականության ամբիոնի դասախոս
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ԳՊՀ բանասիրական ֆակուլտետի «Անգլերեն լեզու և գրականություն»
բաժնի մագիստրատուրայի 2-րդ կուրսի ուսանողուհի

Հոդվածը նվիրված է հայկական դպրոցում օտար լեզվի դասին նախագծային աշխատանքի պլանավորմանն ու իրականացմանը: Ուշադրության կենտրոնում են գործնական խնդիրները: Ներկայացված են նախագծային աշխատանքի բոլոր փուլերը և բաղադրիչները՝ նախագծի նպատակը, պլանավորումը, իրականացումը, հետադարձ կապը, տարբեր թիրախային խմբերի վրա նախագծային աշխատանքի ազդեցությունը:

ПЛАНИРОВАНИЕ И ОСУЩЕСТВЛЕНИЕ ПРОЕКТНОЙ РАБОТЫ НА УРОКЕ ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА В АРМЯНСКОЙ ШКОЛЕ: ПРАКТИЧЕСКИЙ АСПЕКТ

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Статья посвящена планированию и осуществлению проектной работы на уроке иностранного языка в армянской школе. Основное внимание уделено практическим вопросам. Представлены все этапы и составляющие проектной деятельности: цель проекта, разработка рабочих пакетов, планирование, осуществление проекта, обратная связь, воздействие проектной деятельности на различные целевые группы.