



УДК 303.446.2.00113:658

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USE OF PROJECT METHOD FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL COMPETENCE

У статті розглядається метод проектів як ефективний засіб формування соціокультурної компетенції студентів в контексті міжкультурної комунікації як інтегрованої складової частини комунікативної компетенції. Представлений детальний аналіз

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підходів сучасних дослідників до реалізації методу проектів у моделюванні культурного простору, діалогу культур з використанням культурознавчого автентичного матеріалу.

***Ключові слова:** метод проектів, соціокультурна компетенція, проблемне навчання, міжкультурна комунікація, культурний простір, моделювання.*

INTRODUCTION

To intensify training process with a perspective of achieving higher level of education a wide use of interactive training methods for creative skills development is emphasized. Students respect an enthusiastic and accurate explanation of content, but their personal involvement may be the key to higher-order learning [7,302]. Encouraging students' inquiry (in various models) helps to engage them in examinations of content, evaluation of facts, discussion, critical analysis and drawing reliable conclusions. The core elements intended to develop students' thinking skills are identified in David Jonassen's integrated model within three core strands: basic (skills, attitudes and dispositions required to learn essential information), critical (the dynamic reorganization of knowledge to generate new knowledge), and creative (the requirement to go beyond accepted knowledge to generate new knowledge) skills [11,130].

A case study, role-playing situation and simulation projects are considered the most effective methods for critical and creative skills development. A case study tells a factual story within a problem area and then asks students to propose solutions. Role-playing asks to accept certain factual conditions as given and then work toward new solutions to the problem. Simulations set up situations in which certain forces are presumed to have influence and then slowly introduce new events or "facts". All three techniques encourage involvement and creativity on the part of participating students.

One of the very natural ways of acquiring knowledge in a domain is to be immersed in a situation related to this domain and to practice. This mode of acquisition is known as "learning by doing". In the context of business education, where the amount of operational knowledge to transmit is very important, two solutions have been found:

1. The business cases. However, the teaching material used for presenting the knowledge remains the text, lectures notes and discussions.
2. The business simulation games and projects. In this case the idea is to recreate concrete situations by using more adapted media (than the text) and to run simulations' problem solving.

Simulating conditions that people can expect to face in their careers is a popular and practical way to learn and to develop professional skills. Participants can gain many of the benefits of real-world experiences without having to pay real-world prices for their mistakes. The classroom is



typically a safe environment for experimentation.

The main objective of the course “Translation of Business Communication” is teaching the language as real and valuable means of communication, which is a core of communicative competence. In the opinion of scientists, it is a necessary and sufficient condition for intercultural communication. Communicative competence by its nature is a system. As a result of analyzing models of communicative competence it has become evident that there is a variety of approaches regarding its structural components. In the article we follow V. Safonova’s approach, including in communicative competence such components as language, speech and socio-cultural competence [5].

Considering the perspective of Ukraine’s membership in the European Union a training of highly qualified interpreters, able to perform the role of cultural intermediary between native and foreign cultures, is a requirement of modern education. Therefore, the development of ways to form socio-cultural competence of students is one of the priorities. However, the use of traditional methods of teaching is not sufficient for its successful development. Demands of contemporary education are new, up-to-date, innovative approaches, among which the project method, its stages, possible outcomes, analytical elements, introduced in the process of developing training projects meeting well-established requirements have been researched by O. Borysova, T. Mar’yanova, O. Polat, V. Titova, N. Chanilova.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The aim of this research is to define the role and content of the project method in the process of developing socio-cultural competence of interpreters. The objectives are to compare definitions and approaches to the project method, to describe its stages and main components, to identify the outcomes of its use.

RESULTS OF RESEARCH

In many research works the term “project” is used in different meanings:

- a form of classes arrangement, based on a complex nature of activity of all participants aimed at reaching an educational result during appointed period [6, 38];
- a way of organization of students’ cognitive-labor activity, the goal of which is to solve problems, related to projects making, design and production of a real product [6, 10];
- a flexible model of teaching process organization directed toward creative self-actualization of individual due to development of intellectual and physical abilities, will power, creative skills in the process of designing a new product or service with practical value [2, 6].

The last approach is focused on training managers, though it is widely used while training interpreters. Project work, as a rule, focuses on applying



required specific knowledge or skills, it involves students and motivate them to independent thinking, self-confidence, and social responsibility.

In the conceptual field of our research we'll follow E. Arvanitopulo's point considering the project methods as a special form of organizing communicative-cognitive activity, a way of arranging language and speech material, comprising a system of project making (research activity) by students [1, 3].

Introduction of project methods in a classroom is appropriate and recommended due to the following:

- students are better motivated by study autonomy;
- projects by their nature are similar to research, development of research skills is considered as one of the priorities of higher education;
- projects development is a kind of self-education model [1, 3-4].

The concept "project" combines kinds of activities, characterized by such features:

- goal orientation;
- coordination of interconnected actions;
- time limits with an appointed period (start and finish).

It is noteworthy that at practical classes in the course "Translation of Business Communication" different types of training projects are dealt with. But there are mandatory requirements to projects development. The first is to define a problem, topical and having practical value for students. The fundamentals of problem study were described by O. Matyushkin and M. Makhmutov. They find it a necessary and integral part of properly organized process, teaching any course [4]. V. Safonova characterizes problem study as instructor's activity directed toward enhancement of mental and speech activity of students in the process of mastering socio-cultural knowledge and skills [5].

The basic approaches to implement the project method are:

- according to the first, traditional approach initially students are given in a systematic course of study certain skills and facts, then they can apply these skills and knowledge in projects;
- the second approach presents the instruction by the teacher which is an integrated part of the project. Students choose the project, then they discuss possible problem solutions and learn the required techniques and concepts.

The common feature for both approaches is a requirement to provide time for reflection during all phases of project learning. Students also get an opportunity to evaluate their progress. A series of small-scale projects can be widely used to help students develop continuously increasing socio-cultural competence in practical problem solving.

It is of importance to note that the project method is always oriented at independent, individual, pair, group work. Students have to do it during a certain period of time. Projects used for development of socio-cultural



competence should be based on the principle of a dialogue between the cultures and civilizations. They will include the analysis of cultural authentic material from the point of view of their possible use simulating in a classroom such a cultural space, involvement into which is performed on the principle of spreading circle of cultures. In the process of developing cultural space in the conditions of training communication in foreign languages an appropriate material about native country is used. It makes it possible to present the native culture in foreign languages.

The following advantages of the project method are distinguished by the foreign scholars:

- possibility to use acquired knowledge in a creative way;
- opportunities to master cognitive skills;
- a high motivation of students due to personal nature and practical value of project assignments;
- development and improvement of abilities and skills under personal, independent control of results;
- students autonomy, individual responsibility of project results (the lack of formal individual assessment does not hamper or hinder the pursuit of excellence, responsibility raises motivation).

The project method includes choosing a particular theme or topic, defining the main problems and necessary tasks related to them, making a plan of solving problems and several activities, spanning multiple subject areas to integrate all the information about the chosen topics. The role of an instructor is to tap the creativity of students and help them reach their horizon of possibilities by encouraging them to participate in innumerable activities related to the theme of the project. In general any training project is engaging in serious and extensive research about the topic in all its aspects. All possible sources of information can be used for the first stage of its fulfillment: encyclopedias, magazines, journals, newspapers, books, dictionaries, Internet. For creative presentations stories, reports, demonstrations, schemes, charts, diagrams, calculations, etc. can be used.

Most projects are divided into two sections, project development and a session analyzing the results. Conscious learning occurs primarily during the analysis session. Question prompts include procedural prompts (designed to help learners complete specific tasks, learn cognitive strategies in specific content areas), elaboration prompts (to help learners to articulate thoughts and elicit explanatory responses), and reflection prompts (encourage reflection on a metalevel, guide student self-monitoring in problem-solving processes, such as planning, monitoring and evaluation) [8, 9-10]. At the analysis phase students should see how their own participation contributed to a larger understanding of the problem. If possible, they should be able to perceive in retrospect the process of their investigation, how it drove toward purpose, defining objectives according to the main task, how it depended on assumptions embedded in concepts, how the perception of relationship and gathering of facts struggled



with personal opinion, and, most important, how the process drew them closer to reliable answers than they were at the beginning.

The performances, informal and formal, have a special value. Students get an opportunity to display what they have learnt, discovered and created. They are empowered by finding an appreciative, responsive audience and this lends further meaning to their learning. The confidence level of students is rising with each project performance. Every student is included in the team work. The general spirit of interesting and practically valuable activity is generated by project development. It requires much hard work, rational thought, organization and serious research.

The experimental model approach for the design of large scale systems is the key for learning about human organizations, cultural peculiarities. However, problems of interest in the real world are usually so complex that a simple mathematical model can not be constructed to represent them. Exact representation is seldom possible in a project, constraining us to approximations to a degree of fidelity that is acceptable for the purposes of the study. Models have been constructed for almost every system imaginable, to include factories, communications and computer networks, integrated circuits, highway systems, flight dynamics, national economies, social interactions, and imaginary worlds. In each of these environments, a model of the system has proved to be more cost effective, less dangerous, faster, or otherwise more practical than experimenting with real system [10]. A topic is more apt to be suitable for project if it embodies at least one of the following characteristics:

1. Seeing the world through other people's eyes (teams-competitors).
2. Performing tasks simultaneously. Traditional training methods teach skills in a linear fashion, one by one. In the real world, skills are often needed in clumps and have multifunctional nature.
3. Performing under pressure. Some people are skillful negotiators, excellent listeners, clear direction givers - but only when they don't have to perform under pressure. Simulations can create different environments, full of genuine but nonthreatening pressure, affording such people opportunities to practice their skills under duress.
4. Developing systems thinking. Many people find it difficult to grasp the concept of how systems operate. They know the parts of a system are related, but they resist understanding the relationships because they think they are impossibly complicated. A simulation can put people inside a system. As part of the system, they see firsthand how change to one component affects the others.
5. Recognizing cognitive dissonance. People often hold contradictory attitudes or beliefs without being aware of the contradiction. This is known as cognitive dissonance [9].

S.Gilmanov states that any personal growth and formation of basic competencies in the process of making a training project are possible only



considering the following principles: development of students' abilities (focus on working out self-education mechanism, general and specific principles of self-actualization), subjectivity (active participation of students in study); communicative nature (arranging teaching process as collective mental activity); context orientation (study organization regarding future professional activity); modules structure (combination of stages, consistency and integrity of teaching process) [3].

CONCLUSIONS

The project method provides conditions for more sophisticated and relevant inquiry. Participation leads naturally into a critique and analysis, giving participants a more integrated view of the close connection between political, social, interpersonal, cultural, economic, historical, etc., factors. In projects students learn skills of decision-making, resource allocation, communication, persuasion, influence-resisting. Simulations provide participants with explicit, experiential, gut-level referents about ideas, concepts, and words used to describe human behavior. A significant change of the usual training atmosphere and surrounding (chair shuffling, grouping, possibly room dividers, etc.), produces a more relaxed natural exchange of ideas.

The most valuable outcome of this method is that it succeeds in helping students understand, analyze problems and grasp the wholeness of knowledge. For organizational facility different subject areas are separated into subtopics or problem issues, which is essential and helpful. But it has also the disadvantage of creating permanent divisions in students' minds. As students explore the various aspects of the topic, artificial divisions tend to dissolve. Projects generate an intense involvement and enthusiastic activity along with encouraging a healthy spirit of co-operation and collaboration in teams, building relations and making it possible to try and to learn communication strategies, in particular in multicultural environment (simulation provides not only the conditions for this but also cultural background knowledge for enriching and raising general as well as specific professional level). A free and creative exploratory spirit is developed and becomes a habit of the mind, spilling over to other areas of learning as well. Students learn to create and recreate the subject matter for themselves making it relevant to their own purposes and thereby rendering it meaningful for themselves.

Concluding, the significance of the project method to develop socio-cultural competence is determined by possibilities to teach students ways and means of self-education, topicality of acquired communicative skills, in particular an ability to work in mixed groups, performing different social roles; actualization of interpersonal and social contacts, knowledge of different cultures; practical value of using research methods, necessary information accumulation and selection, an ability to make analysis and conclusions.

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