MULTIMEDIA PROJECT ACTIVITY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Aušra Stepanovienė[*]

Mykolo Romerio universiteto Viešojo saugumo fakulteto Humanitarinių mokslų katedra
Putvinskio g. 70, LT-44211 Kaunas
Telefonas 303664
El. paštas: ausrastep@mruni.eu

Annotation. The paper deals with implementing multimedia project work as an innovative ESP (English for Specific Purposes) teaching and learning method in the Faculty of Public Security at Mykolas Romeris University. The purpose of this work is to evaluate the effectiveness of project work, to identify the difficulties encountered and to report the benefits from project work. The main research methods used are the analysis of scientific literature, participant observation, and graphical presentation. The study results show that multimedia-oriented project work is an effective tool for the acquisition of ESP terminology and problem-solving skills. The paper formulates recommendations to improve students' ability to execute project work.

Keywords: innovative, project work, specialty English.

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century is characterized by the ever-increasing flow of information and technical modernization, which influence people's mobility, dynamics and constructionism. The exchange of information does not take place in a single country only but wide cooperation between countries is developing. In these conditions the demands to the professionalism of employees are growing which set new requirements to education, stressing co-existence, respect dialogue, mutual creative activity[1]. In knowledge society the content of the studies, the methods used and the requirements for an educator's professionalism are constantly changing. S.L. Robertson[2] considers that in knowledge society the aim of education is not only to educate professionals for a certain field but it also has to help students form human mutual relationship, collaborate, be open, adopt to the new situations, creatively express their ideas, accept responsibility and challenge. Today the language is not only the vocabulary, but it is also a way for a person to express himself.

Contemporary theories and methodologies have seen many innovative approaches evolve, especially over recent years. Many linguists have worked towards developing increasingly effective methods. Globalization and information technologies are a sign of

---

[1] Alijevs R. (2008). Philosophy of education. The 21 st century. Riga: Retorika A. P.57.
[2] Robertson S.,L. (2005). Re-imagining and re-scripting the future of education. Comparative Education, 41, p.151-170.

today's life and are likely to shift traditional teaching methods from a teacher-centered learning approach to a learner-centered teaching approach by which learning interactivity and meaningfulness are reinforced[3].

In the context of English for specific Purposes (ESP), students need practice at using the vocabulary of their chosen field of study. Therefore, as we - language teachers - are not experts in this field, it is necessary to encourage the students to work autonomously on aspects related to their subject. This work should include the use of the necessary computing and information gathering techniques at their disposal. Project activity forms a suitable framework for this work as it enables learners to improve their linguistic skills in reading comprehension, writing and speaking, and develop problem-solving strategies and teamwork[4].

The **aim** of the paper is to introduce and generalize legal English teaching through project work. The following **tasks** specify the aim: to evaluate the effectiveness of project work, to identify the difficulties encountered and to report the benefits from project work. Research **methods**: the analysis of the scientific literature, participant observation, presentation. The **object** of the research is project work brought into the academic process of ESP.

ADVANTAGES OF PROJECT WORK

The implementation of the project work is based on the following pedagogical principles: a) promotion of manual activity instead of memorization and verbalism, b) learners' active participation in the learning process, and c) exploitation of facts relating to the immediate reality as a source for learning[5]. Many benefits of incorporating project work in ESP settings have been suggested. First, the process leading to the end-product of project work provides opportunities for students to develop their confidence and independence. In addition, students demonstrate increased self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward learning[6]. Students' autonomy is enhanced, especially when they are actively engaged in project planning. A further benefit relates to students' increased cooperative skills, and group cohesiveness[7]. One more benefit is improved language skills[8]. Since students engage in

---

[3] Kiškytė M. (2009). Mokymo modelių taikymas dėstant profesinę anglų kalbą. Kalbų studijos aukštojoje mokykloje. Konferencijos medžiaga. Kauno medicinos universitetas. P. 50-54.
[4] Fischer J.(2008). Language case studies. European Centre for Modern Languages. Council of Europe Publishing. P.15.
[5] Hutchinson T. (2009). Introduction to Project Work. Teaching English. Oxford University Press.
[6] Stoller F. (2002). Project Work: a means to promote language and context. An Anthology of Current Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 107-120.
[7] Kavaliauskienė G.(2004). Research into the Integration of Context-based Instruction. Journal of Language and Learning, 2(1).

communication to complete activities, they have the opportunity to use language in a relatively natural context and participate in meaningful activities which require authentic language use. Such activities are tasks with real world relevance and utility that allow students to select appropriate levels of difficulty or involvement. Among other characteristics, authentic activities have real-world relevance, provide the opportunity for students to examine the task from different perspectives, enhance collaboration, and allow competing solutions and diversity of outcome[9].

Since project work progresses according to the specific context and students' interests, students have enhanced motivation, engagement and enjoyment. Projects being more meaningful to students, increase their interest, motivation to participate and promote learning[10] Enjoyment and motivation also stem from the fact that classroom language is not predetermined, but depends on the nature of the project.

Finally, among other benefits, project work develops problem-solving and higher order critical thinking skills[11]. They are very important, since they are life-long, transferable skills to settings outside the classroom.

When incorporating project work into content-based classrooms, teachers distance themselves from teacher-dominated teaching and move toward creating a student community of inquiry involving authentic communication, cooperative learning, collaboration, and problem solving.

METHOD

A total of 16 third-year students participated in this study were from the Faculty of Public Security at Mykolas Romeris University. The project has lasted for six months and students have worked on it for two hours per week.

The overarching aim was to implement project work in order to make students aware of the juvenile delinquency in Kaunas, and use it as interdisciplinary work, as well as to make use of new technologies. The specific aims were:

---

[8]Levine G., S. (2004). Global simulation: a student-centered, task-based format for intermediate foreign language courses. Foreign Language Annals, 37, p. 26-36.

[9] Williams H. (2008). The Principles of Project Management. Available at http://articles.sitepoint.com/article/principles-project-management.

[10] Klimovienė G., Barzdžiukienė R., Urbonienė J. (2009). The use of innovative methods as the means of developing language competence. Kalbų studijos aukštojoje mokykloje. Konferencijos medžiaga. Kauno medicinos universitetas,.p. 54-58. Kauno medicinos universitetas.

[11] Allen L., Q. (2004). Implementing a culture portfolio project within a constructivist paradigm. Foreign Language Annals. 37, p. 232-239.

Cognitive aims

1.　　To help students learn about the juvenile delinquency in the city of Kaunas.

2.　　To help students realize the significance of the prevention of crimes committed by young offenders

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

Emotional aims

4.　　To sensitize students about the problems connected with the increase in the number of violent crimes.

5.　　To foster respect about the collaborative efforts of people who prevent crimes and solve criminal cases.

Psychomotor aims

6.　　To acquaint students with research opportunities.

7.　　To foster the development of planning and management skills to students.

PROCEDURES

The project basically followed the steps proposed by Stoller[12].

Step 1: Students and teacher agree on a theme of the project.

The project topic was "Juvenile delinquency and prevention in Kaunas in 2005-2010", and it was determined by both the teacher and the students, since it was a semi-structured project. The term "juvenile delinquency" refers to the violation of a criminal law by a juvenile.

The choice of topic for research was based on the following criteria: a) Kaunas has experienced an upward trend in juvenile delinquency in recent years, but there is a lack of research on prevalence and incidence of juvenile delinquency and factors associated with the problem in the city, b) the topic forms part of the students' in-force training, c) it is close to their interests, needs and their future career, d) it creates the conditions necessary for inquiring, investigating and analyzing the world. Students study criminological situation, come into contact with the problems of the city, make judgments, analyze and compare information and gradually acquire legal awareness.

---

[12] Stoller F. (2002). Project Work: a means to promote language and context. An Anthology of Current Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. P. 107-120.

ISSN 2029–1701 (print)
ISSN 2335–2035 (online)

Mokslinių straipsnių rinkinys
VISUOMENĖS SAUGUMAS IR VIEŠOJI TVARKA
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2012 (7) Scientific articles

The project's aim was to assess the issue in Kaunas, to describe the incidents of juvenile delinquency, bullying and victimization in different school settings and to present effective ways to prevent juvenile delinquency.

Step 2: Students and teacher determine the final outcome

In this stage students and the teacher consider the nature of the project, its objectives, and the most appropriate means to culminate the project. In this particular case, the class decided to make PowerPoint presentation.

Step 3: Students and teacher structure the project

This stage 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 following principles were applied in relation to group formation and function[13] a) tasks were at such level of difficulty that students could complete with reasonable effort, b) each group member was allocated some specific responsibilities, c) each group had a goal and motivation to work toward the goal, and d) the teacher checked the progress of groups at regular intervals, providing progress and corrective feedback.

Step 4: Teacher prepares students for the language demands of information gathering

This process and study of issues related with juvenile delinquency was attempted through the cross curricular – interdisciplinary approach. The following activities were implemented:

- Search in a variety of information sources (magazines newspapers, scientific papers, legal documents, the Internet, libraries, etc.).

- Field trip to Kaunas Juvenile Remand Prison and Correction Home to interview individuals who deal with the matters of the minors.

- Collection of articles, legal documents, duty reports, etc. about the juvenile delinquency and prevention in Kaunas.

Step 5: Students compile and analyze information

The students met outside the classroom to practice in their own free time. It is gratifying to see the students work not only as a team but also as a family. Once the students found the previously collected information as not sufficient, they started compiling the information again.

---

[13] Brophy J. (2008). Motivating Students to Learn. Educational Researcher. No 20(4), p.9-23.

ISSN 2029–1701 (print)
ISSN 2335–2035 (online)

Mokslinių straipsnių rinkinys
VISUOMENĖS SAUGUMAS IR VIEŠOJI TVARKA
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2012 (7) Scientific articles

Step 6: Students present final product

After all the hard work, the students were finally ready to present the final outcome of their project. The sixth stage was presentation of the final products, which included:

- Creation of a crime map.

- Drawing of crime rate graphs.

- Creation of a crime prevention guide.

- PowerPoint presentation.

Step 7: Students evaluate the project

Evaluation was expressed positively, because the aim was to reflect on language and to master the content, effectiveness of steps and activities used.

It is worth mentioning that the above activities implemented in the context of project work do not constitute "ideal" or "correct" classroom practices. English teachers should be aware that what is successful in one teaching situation might be inappropriate in another. We simply wish the project presented here to become a starting point for teachers to reflect in relation to their students' needs and interests, and motivate them to incorporate innovative interactive teaching methods in order to make teaching more attractive and keep up with the social reality.

BENEFITS FROM PROJECT WORK

The students gave very positive feedback to the term project. It turned out to be a great success, thanks to the students' hard work, dedication and collaboration. The project work provided the students with a chance to demonstrate their learning. Also, it served as a good way for the students to experience and realizes that a good project performance not only based on the individual's hard work but team work as well.

Most cognitive, emotional and psychomotor aims of project work were achieved by the majority of students. In relation to language skills, most learners' willingness to participate in learning activities increased. At the end of the term, most students showed an improvement in all four language skills.

Students gathered a wealth of information about crime rates from a variety of sources, and gained in-depth understanding of issues related to juvenile delinquency. These findings are similar to findings suggesting the development of content knowledge through project work.

ISSN 2029–1701 (print)
ISSN 2335–2035 (online)

Mokslinių straipsnių rinkinys
VISUOMENĖS SAUGUMAS IR VIEŠOJI TVARKA
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2012 (7) Scientific articles

Their social skills and collaborative skills improved dramatically. After the project work students knew that being a team member entailed certain obligations, most of them developed skills for solving in-group conflicts, and learned to be responsible in relation to the roles assigned to them. Also, all students seemed to have developed their cooperative skills.

At the end of the semester students were requested to give written feedback on the effects of project work. Students' surnames have been withdrawn for the sake of anonymity. It would have been unethical to refer to a particular student without their consent. In general, all students expressed their positive attitudes to doing tasks. To characterize the common view some quotations are given as follows:

Student 1. "The project allowed me to be creative in my thinking."

Student 2. "I felt very motivated doing the project."

Student 3. "I was able to learn more working with my teammates."

Student 4. "Project is very useful for revising vocabulary."

Student 5. "Project work helped me expand my vocabulary size."

Student 6. "I feel more confident after completing the project work."

Student 7. "I was able to have creative input in the project."

Student 8. "I understood the subject matter better after the project development."

Student 9. "I could engage better, absorbing more information with project activity."
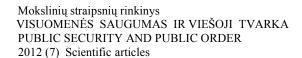
Student 10. "The project allowed me to fully understand what it takes to create a multimedia application from the beginning to end and how to work as a team."

The feedback from the respondents reflects their appreciation for the application of multimedia project work in teaching and learning ESP.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

Basic process skills, as they, had not learned the skills required to project work earlier in their education. Students experienced difficulties in data gathering. They claimed that their experimental skills were insufficient as they did not have the habit of doing research, planning a project and documenting the results.

The most serious problem related to the fact that some students dominated, while others did little work. Also, some students did not use the target language for communication, but their mother tongue. All these problems were remedied by providing cognitive modeling, completing a task while thinking aloud, modeling and illustrating effective strategies and procedures for task completion.

Finally, some students had difficulty accepting the new role of the teacher as a facilitator and coordinator, and not as a source of knowledge and provider of solutions. At the beginning of project work some students felt uncomfortable with being given choices (e.g. topic selection, team formation), and were thus apprehensive about project work. However, most of them soon realized that the teacher was there to support and assist them, albeit in a different way.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper has presented and discussed the use of multimedia project work in ESP classes to help students acquire legal vocabulary better, to equip them with high-order thinking and problem-solving skills and to enable them to experience an IT-oriented learning situation. From the results, we are able to conclude that knowledge of modern teaching methods and willingness to experiment with non-traditional teaching practices are powerful tools for the achievement of teaching aims. Through project work activities students develop autonomy and a sense of control and responsibility for their learning approaching learning in a way that suits their abilities, styles and preferences. Project work on specialty subject has influenced interaction of various spheres and integration in different aspects: objective, didactic and educative. Students' ability to execute project work needs to be improved. Elective lessons aiming to teach executing a project work, collaboration with higher schools and forming science clubs might be useful in this aspect.

REFERENCES

1. Alijevs R. (2005). Philosophy of education. The 21 st century. Riga: *Retorika A.* P.57.
2. Allen L., Q. (2004). Implementing a culture portfolio project within a constructivist paradigm. *Foreign Language Annals.* 37, p. 232-239.
3. Brophy J. (2004). Motivating Students to Learn. *Educational Researcher.* No 20(4), p.9-23.
4. Fischer J. (2008). Language case studies. *European Centre for Modern Languages. Council of Europe Publishing.* P.15.
5. Hutchinson T. (2009). Introduction to Project Work. *Teaching English.* Oxford University Press.
6. Kavaliauskienė G.(2004). Research into the Integration of Context-based Instruction. *Journal of Language and Learning,* 2(1).
7. Kiškytė M. (2009). Mokymo modelių taikymas dėstant profesinę anglų kalbą. *Kalbų studijos aukštojoje mokykloje. Konferencijos medžiaga.* P. 50-54. Kauno medicinos universitetas.
8. Klimovienė G., Barzdžiukienė R., Urbonienė J. (2009). The use of innovative methods as the means of developing language competence. *Kalbų studijos aukštojoje mokykloje. Konferencijos medžiaga.* P. 54-58. Kauno medicinos universitetas.
9. Levine G., S. (2004). Global simulation: a student-centered, task-based format for intermediate foreign language courses. *Foreign Language Annals,* 37, p. 26-36.

10. Robertson S., L. (2005). Re-imagining and re-scripting the future of education. *Comparative Education,* 41(2), p.151-170.
11. Stoller F. (2002). Project Work: a means to promote language and context. *An Anthology of Current Practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. P. 107-120.
12. Williams H. (2008). The Principles of Project Management. Available at http://articles.sitepoint.com/article/principles-project-management.

MULTIMEDINĖ PROJEKTINĖ VEIKLA MOKANT SPECIALYBĖS ANGLŲ KALBOS

Aušra Stepanovienė
Mykolas Romeris University

Santrauka

Šiuolaikinio mokymo tendencijos atspindi paradigmų kaitą, pereinant nuo visuotinai įprastų, tradicinių praeityje naudotų mokymo metodų prie inovatyvių mokymo metodų, kurie skatina interaktyvias mokymosi formas, aktyvų besimokančiųjų dalyvavimą ir integralų mąstymą.

Tradiciniai mokymo metodai, kuriuos dėstytojas naudoja remdamasis poveikio paradigma – aiškinimas, klausinėjimas, demonstravimas, rašymas, skaitymas – keičiami aktyvaus mokymosi metodais, kurie remiasi sąveikos ir mokymosi paradigma: diskusijos, mokymasis bendradarbiaujant, problemų sprendimo paieškos, kūrybinės užduotys.Naujų metodų dėka studentai pasijunta asmenybe, atsiranda glaudesni ryšiai ne tik tarp dėstytojo ir studento, bet ir tarp pačių besimokančiųjų. Jie labiau jaučia atsakomybę, mokosi išsakyti savo nuomonę, įsiklausyti, formuojasi savarankiškas mąstymas.

Pastaruoju metu projekto metodas įgyja vis didesnę edukacinę vertę. Taikant šį metodą, svarbu išmanyti projekto struktūrą, jo parengimo metodiką, apžvelgti metodo taikymo ugdymo(-si) procese galimybes.

Straipsnio tikslas - pristatyti ir apibendrinti projektinę veiklą kaip inovatyvų metodą mokant studentus profesinės anglų kalbos Mykolo Romerio universiteto Viešojo saugumo fakultete. Pateikiami projektinei veiklai reikalingi teoriniai pagrindai, analizuojami sunkumai, su kuriais susiduria studentai, akcentuojama projektinio darbo nauda ir nurodomos rekomendacijos, galinčios padėti tobulinti studentų gebėjimą dalyvauti projektinėje veikloje.

Tyrime dalyvavo 16 Teisės ir policijos veiklos studijų programos trečio kurso studentų. Studentai dirbo po 2 valandas per savaitę. Projektinio darbo tema – "Nepilnamečių nusikalstamumas ir prevencija Kaune 2005-2010 metais". Užduotys, pateiktos darbe, susijusios su specialybės dalyko tema.

Projekto dalyviai parengė ir išleido metodinę literatūrą, sukūrė nepilnamečių padarytų nusikaltimų žemėlapį, grafiškai pavaizdavo didėjantį nusikaltimų skaičių, pateikė nusikalstamumo prevencijos programą ir parengė Powerpoint pristatymą.

Projektinė veikla buvo labai vertinga. Studentai diskutavo, aptarinėjo ir ieškojo informacijos apie nepilnamečių nusikalstamumą, ją atrinko, aktyviai komunikavo tarpusavyje, siuntė grupės nariams sutvarkytą medžiagą, reiškė savo nuomonę, vertino atliktas užduotis. Šis darbas pagerino studentų darbo grupėse kompetencijas, praturtino profesinės anglų kalbos terminų žodyną ir gebėjimą laisvai bendrauti specialybės dalyko tema.

Pagrindiniai sunkumai, su kuriais susidūrė studentai – projektinio darbo patirties, bendravimo įgūdžių, informacijos kaupimo gebėjimų bei iniciatyvumo stoka. Projekto dalyviams buvo nelengva priimti naują mokytojo – konsultanto, koordinatoriaus, bendraminčio – vaidmenį.

Apibendrinus projektinio darbo rezultatus galima pateikti sekančias išvadas:
1. Šiuolaikinių mokymo metodų panaudojimas kalbų mokymo procese yra puiki priemonė pasiekti mokymo(-si) tikslą.
2. Projektinė veikla ugdo studentų autonomiją, kontrolės ir atsakomybės jausmą, nes toks mokymasis atitinka jų gebėjimus, stilių, poreikius, polinkius.

3. Projektinis darbas specialybės dalyko tema įtakoja įvairių ugdymo sričių sąveiką, integraciją įvairiais aspektais: dalykiniais, didaktiniais, auklėjimo.

4. Reikia lavinti studentų gebėjimą atlikti projektinį darbą. Orientuotos į projektinę veiklą pasirenkamos pratybos, glaudesnis bendradarbiavimas su kitomis aukštosiomis mokyklomis, mokslo klubų steigimas galėtų prisidėti prie specialybės užsienio kalbos , taikant projektinį darbą, mokymo(-si) kokybės gerinimo.

Pagrindinės sąvokos. inovatyvus, projektinis darbas, specialybės anglų kalba.

Aušra Stepanovienė*, Mykolo Romerio universiteto Visuomenės saugumo fakulteto Humanitarinių mokslų katedros lektorė. Mokslinių tyrimų kryptys: anglų specialybės kalbos mokymo(-si) problemos, inovatyvūs kalbų mokymo(-si) metodai, teisės tekstų vertimo teorija ir praktika.

Aušra Stepanovienė, Mykolas Romeris University, Faculty of Public Security, Department of Humanities, lecturer. Research interests: problems of teaching/learning ESP, innovative language teaching methods, theory and practice of legal language translation.