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Development of Personal Competences in Project-Based Learning in the EFL Classroom

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Abstract

This article addresses the possibilities for the development of personal competences of students under the conditions of project-based learning in the EFL classroom. The authors describe an experiment, which was conducted during the execution of the module program "*Development of students' personal competences in the process of realization of the TBL method*". On the ground of this study qualitative characteristics of students' personal competence development levels were elicited and described. This paper considers various features of TBL promoting the development of the pragmatic component of education and the learners' personal competences related to motivational-axiological, volitional and, reflexive spheres of activity.

Keywords: PBL; personal competences; EFL classroom; educational activity; organization of activities

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, a change of value systems in the sphere of education has taken place. Many of these changes are the direct result of a new global situation, general conditions of uncertainty and the high speed of informational flow. Nowadays, a new graduate (specialist) should possess such strategies and methods of working that would let him effectively operate in the world of a dynamic, changing and becoming more complicated system that exists in a situation of uncertainty and is oriented to the future. Therefore, the most important values of nowaday society are associated with such characteristics as self-selection (of education, professional pathway, future), importance of a continuous and autonomous education, an ability to forecast, to plan, to build and to realize

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an individual strategy of self-development, changing oneself in the process of organizing one's activities rather than merely coping with the conditions as they exist around oneself.

That is why much attention is paid to understanding goals and a quality of education, embodied and measured with the quality of an educational result acquired as the output of a modern system of professional education. National and foreign researchers treat this issue differently, pointing out key moments that are of great importance to the organization of the modern educational process and defining characteristics of the educational result achieved.

Research devoted to the analysis of an educational process organization practice in university shows that there is a discrepancy between the demands made on the quality of an educational result and the pedagogical technologies used, and not infrequently of pragmatist and value systems of teachers responsible for the educational process (Gippenreyter, 2006; Lebedev, 2004; Faulstich, 2001; Lumpe, 2009).

Here, pedagogical technologies have the particular topicality that self-consistent planning of the content and forms of activity in an educational process are not attached, really, to a definite subject content, but rather realize an over-subject disciplinal component of an educational activity (Bergmann & Göpfert, 2000).

Educational process' organization practice analysis at university shows that nowadays strict requirements to the result of education are promoted in a situation, when an approach to the organization of an educational process itself stays traditional in many ways, and is supposed to traditional means, forms and methods within the confines of an educational process.

Therefore, an obvious contradiction among these demands, made on the educational result of a graduate and pedagogical technologies, goals, and forms of student-teacher interactions at university which, by definition, should ensure an educational process at university and achieve modern results of education possible, are observed.

2. Research design and methodology

2.1. Purpose and Objectives of Research

All of the aforesaid determined a choice of a research target and a research subject. The research target is developing personal competences of university students. The research subject is using the method of projects to develop personal competences of students who learn a foreign language. As a hypothesis, this leads to the notion that developing students' personal competences will be effective if:

- a program of developing students' personal competences during the process of utilizing the method of projects will be established and realized;
- stages and forms of realization of a program of developing of the students' personal competences will be elicited in the educational process;
- features and the main characteristics of a formed ness of personal competences will be defined as a result of assimilating a program of their development.

2.2. Sample group and content

The experimental research was undertaken during the process of realization of the module program "Developing of students' personal competences in the process of realization of the method of projects". The experiment was conducted on the base of 1st to 5th year-students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the National Research Tomsk State University. The term of the experimental work was the period since the academic year of 2007-08 to the academic year of 2010-11. The following groups of students took part in the research:

- 6 student groups took part in a diagnostic experiment aimed at eliciting and analyzing the qualitative characteristics of the educational result achieved from the learning with a definite module of an experimental program and 58 students involved;
- 3 student groups took part in the shaping experiment (35 students).