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STUDENTS' INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE IN THE CONTEXT OF PROJECT APPROACH

An enormous amount of current research is devoted to the integration of project approach in the university curricula. Scientists working in the USA (Stoller, 2005; Ho, 2003; Eyring, 1997), Canada (Beckett, 2002; Lee, 2002), Turkey(Alan, 2005), Ethiopia (Tessema, 2005), Russia (Yesina, 2004; Olkers, 2008; Guzeyev, 2008) and the Republic of Belarus (Maiorova, 2010) describe project work in different instructional settings and point out how English language teachers can capitalize on the content and language learning benefits of project-based instruction [1;2;3;4;5]. It relies on the general didactic and methodological principles of activity, problem-solving, regard for learners' interests, responsibility-sharing, optimum combination of frontal, team and individual forms of instruction, communicative and situational contexts, novelty and collaboration [5, p.50].

The British educator Michael Wallace treats a project as a kind of task-based activity which usually involves an extended amount of independent work, either by an individual student or by a group of students [6, p.46]. Fredricka L. Stoller (Northern Arizona University) examines multidimensional projects, that is, projects structured in such a way as to maximize language, content, and real-life skill learning. Their main feature is a combination of teacher guidance, teacher feedback, student engagement, and challenging elaborated tasks. In Stoller's opinion, successful project-based learning is characterized by the following factors: 1) real-world subject matter sustaining the interest of students; 2) student collaboration accompanied by some degree of student autonomy and independence; 3) a deliberate and explicit focus on form and other aspects of language; 4) process and product orientation, with an emphasis on integrated skills and end-of—project reflection.

To maximize the potential benefits of project work Stoller advocates the tenstep process. The tensteps are described below [1, p. 12-13].

- Step 1: Students and instructor agree on a theme for the project. The instructors should devise tools helping students develop a sense of ownership toward the project.
- Step 2: Students and instructor determine the final outcome of the project. It can have the form of a bulletin board display, written report, debate, brochure, letter, handbook, oral presentation, video, multimedia presentation or theatrical performance. The students and instructor also negotiate the most appropriate audience for their projects (other students, program director, city mayor, a local business).
- Step 3: Students and instructor structure the project. The students and instructor work out project details, discuss roles, responsibilities, and collaborative work groups. Besides, they negotiate a deadline for project completion and agree on the timing for gathering, sharing, compiling information and presenting the final product.
- Step 4: Instructor prepares students for the demands of information gathering. The students need to be informed of the language, skill, and strategy demands connected with information gathering. If students are supposed to conduct an interview, the instructor may plan tasks requiring students to form questions, ask follow-up questions, request clarification, and take notes. If students are expected to write an advertisement, the instructor might review the format and language of formal advertisements. If they intend to develop promotional materials, the instructor may acquaint them with the best samples.
- Step 5: Students gather information. At this stage students collect information using all possible methods: interviewing, letter writing, library and Internet research. The instructor may bring in relevant content resources to help students in their information-gathering activities.
- Step 6: Instructor prepares students to compile and analyze data. The objective of this stage is to master the language, skills and strategies used to compile, analyze, and synthesize the information collected previously. To achieve this aim, the instructor may assign students tasks involving categorizing, making comparisons, and using graphic organizers (charts, diagrams and time lines).
- Step 7: Students compile and analyze information. At this point students work in groups organizing information and discussing its relevance for the completion of the project.
- Step 8: Instructor prepares students for the language demands of the final activity. He engages students in language-improvement activities focusing on skills for successful oral presentations, effective written revisions and editing, persuasive debates, etc.
- Step 9: Students present the final product. They demonstrate the final outcome of their project, as planned in Step 2.
- Step 10: Students evaluate the project. They reflect on the language acquired and the subject matter studied during the whole process. They are also asked to make recommendations that can prove worthwhile in enhancing future projects. At this crucial point teachers provide students with feedback on their language and content learning.

Stoller argues that the positive outcomes cover authenticity of experience, improved language and content knowledge, increased metacognitive awareness, enhanced critical thinking and decision-making abilities, intensity of motivation and engagement, improved social skills, and a familiarity with target language resources.

V. Maiorova (Vitebsk State Technological University) singles out six stages of project work: preparation, planning, research, results and/or conclusions, presentation or report, results and process evaluation. In her opinion, project technology can greatly contribute to shaping a professionally oriented bi-cultural language identity because it helps to optimize the process of teaching a foreign language and enhance motivation through simulation of real business situations. Project-based instruction widens students' world and professional outlook, develops creative abilities and research habits and builds up teamwork skills [5, p.48 - 49].

Michael Moynihan, a New York-based senior consultant for the Economist Intelligence Unit, points out that due to increased global competition, instability in the financial markets, a speedup in the introduction of new technologies and soaring marketing and distribution costs companies start to emphasize productivity as a source of revenue growth. Properly trained human resources become one of the least costly sources of productivity gains [7, p. 4].

The classification of a student's instructional activities defines students' instructional practice as "complex practical hours supplemented by other forms of instruction process and aimed at shaping basic vocational skills, getting a wide familiarity with real production on the chosen specialty and building-up teamwork skills" [8, p.23]. It is intended to provide a competitive edge in fierce competition for entrance to the global job market, "for many employers nowadays look for young people with analytic, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills, broad knowledge background and flexibility of mind complemented by the ability to learn and adjust to changes" [9, p. 80].

And now I'd like to present a case study of project-based instructional practice for 3rd-year students majoring in World Economy. Since 2006 the Department of World Economy, Marketing and Investments and the Department of Foreign Languages for Economic Specialties of Brest State Technical University have been supervising a joint interdepartmental project. The supervisor from the Department of World Economy, Marketing and Investments was in charge of economic content, whereas the supervisor from the Department of Foreign Languages for Economic Specialties was responsible for language input. Our approach to organizing students' instructional practice in the project format is based on the following sequence:

Step 1: Organizational meeting. It is conducted at the University in the presence of the parties concerned: students, project leaders (supervisors from the above-mentioned departments), Department Chairs, the dean and associate deans. The students are informed of practice period terms, assigned practice bases, curriculum and summary accounts they are to submit at the end of practice period. They are acquainted with labor safety regulations and sign in the industry safety log. They are also recommended to study the English-language website of the assigned practice base to get some idea of its activities and formulate questions that might interest them.

Step 2: A visit to the local enterprise performing foreign economic activities and introductory lecture by a leading specialist. The students get acquainted with the organization chart of the enterprise, its output and foreign economic operations. They take snapshots for the future exhibit and may be given some promotional leaflets.

- Step 3: Discussion of the project structure and its final outcome. The students and instructor structure the project by designing the draft outline of the script, dividing individual and collective responsibilities, determining the final outcome (multimedia presentation, video, brochure, leaflet, electronic and/or typewritten copy of presentation script, approximate number and nature of slides, glossary of key economic and technical terms) and negotiating a deadline for presentation event.
- Step 4: Preparation for the demands of information gathering. At this stage the instructor may recommend students to conduct a library or an Internet search. The students browse through the economics books, journals (The Economy of Belarus magazine is very helpful in this respect), newspapers (The Moscow News) and surf the Internet looking for information in industry-related field (including the competitors). With student ability levels in mind, the instructor may focus on effective note-taking strategies.
- Step 5: Attending the Open Doors Day or International Brest exhibition-fair. The information about these events can be found in local press. Such public events provide an eye-opening experience to those interested in foreign economic activities and marketing strategies of local businesses. It is also useful to study and analyze video presentations demonstrated by major companies. Stand attendants usually generously share with the public English-language advertising leaflets.
- Step 6: Compiling and analyzing information. At this stage the students are taught the art of compiling, analyzing, and synthesizing the information obtained. They agree on the final structure of presentation and are asked to organize information accordingly. Working mainly in pairs at one point of presentation script, they choose the most relevant issues, write, revise and edit the text. They also negotiate the nature and number of slides to substantiate their point. The results of their work are then discussed by the whole group, which may lead to heated debates. And only after this, the final script of presentation and the exact content and number of slides is approved by the group and instructor.
- Step 7: Preparation for the language demands of the final event. The students and the instructor discuss the relevance of forum in business life, the role of presentation in professional communication and the factors contributing to its success. The students are asked to divide their parts of script with a pencil according to sense-groups (to mark the pauses), transcribe the unknown words and prepare an expressive reading of the text. Then each student reads his part of the script first to the instructor alone (the latter corrects his/her phonetic mistakes) and later to the whole group. Now students may engage in making cards with their part of the script and memorizing it. They also need to produce the advertisement for the forthcoming event and invitation cards.
- Step 8: Dress-rehearsal of the presentation. Dress-rehearsal takes place in the assigned place (a specially chosen room), it is timed. In the end comments on each participant's performance are given. Students give their proposals on decorating the room.
- Step 9: Presentation of the end product. The final outcome of the project is presented to the audience in a specially decorated room. The enterprise representatives have also been invited to attend the event. The presenters wear badges with their names and the company logo. They are ready to make their presentation interactive, that is, to involve the audience by a special trick (for instance, by inviting them to take part in the guess game when the audience members are asked to listen to the descriptions of construction projects and try to identify them; or the audience may be requested to fill in the questionnaire).

Step 10: Summing-up. Due to lack of time this stage of project work is sometimes neglected, though it is equally important. At this point students are supposed to share their opinions of language and content output and make recommendations concerning the improvement of future projects and enhancing the quality of instructional practice. The instructors are to provide students with feedback on their achievements and evaluate each participant's contribution to the project. The students are reminded to submit the required accounts within an assigned period.

The objectives of instructional practice for 3-rd-year majors in World Economy have been defined in the program and are as follows: to develop an awareness of the international aspect of business; to improve cross-cultural and language skills; to get some idea of the management of people and organizations; to examine the economic environment of business and different factors affecting international operations; to get acquainted with successful marketing strategies. To sum it up, the students are to become aware of foreign economic activities and issues and approaches associated with the motto "think globally and act locally" in markets having different political, economic, cultural and competitive characteristics.

The instructional practice period over, the students are able to do the following:

- gather relevant information using data-collection techniques (interviews, surveys, library and Web research)
 - engage in critical thinking activities based on cognitive synthesis operations
 - demonstrate integrated language skills
 - make business presentations

Since 2006 up to the present the students made presentations featuring such flagships of Brest region industry as unitary enterprise "Brest Branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry", Open Joint-stock Company "Savushkin Product', Open Joint-stock Company "Building Trust No.8", Joint Venture Brestvneshtrans ltd, to name just those projects I was involved in. The interdisciplinary pilot projects enabled students to develop vocational, target language and interpersonal skills needed to expand and deepen their professional competence, strengthen confidence and their ability to make decisions. It is hoped that the graduates of Brest State Technical University will feel confident at tackling foreign economic issues and devising practical plans of action when they join foreign economic departments, marketing departments or public relations departments of local businesses, As the proverb says, "practice makes perfect".

In conclusion, a few recommendations for those responsible for the organization of students' instructional practice:

- design projects with an emphasis on students' immediate and future language needs and content area;
- state language, content, task, skill, and strategy learning objectives in accordance with students' needs and institutional expectations;
 - secure full engagement of each student in all stages of the project;
- thoroughly choose and sequence tasks developing integrated skills serving meaningful aims;
 - combine independent and collaborative work;

- instill the feeling that exchange of information and negotiation of meaning are integral attributes of the project;
- make use of students' background knowledge to discuss issues, analyze and solve problems;
 - provide feedback at the conclusion of the project;
 - admit and appreciate each participant's contribution to the project.

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ЛИНГВОКУЛЬТУРНАЯ СОСТАВЛЯЮЩАЯ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ ЛИЧНОСТИ СПЕЦИАЛИСТА

Смысл современного профессионального образования специалиста, по мнению дидактов, заключается не только и не столько в изучении учебных предметов, сколько в развитии личности обучающегося средствами содержания этих предметов (П.Ф. Каптерев), а также в вооружении личности образовательным потенциалом, который бы обеспечивал возможность самостоятельного творческого развития, способность решать проблемы коммуникативного, нравственного, лингвокультурного, социального, профессионального (и другого) характера как в стенах учебного заведения, так и за его пределами.

Профессиональное образование личности специалиста непосредственно связано с мотивами, потребностями, интересами, стремлениями, склонностями, убеждениями, установками, целями, ценностями и идеалами, которые мо-