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PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

21st century skills such as communication and collaboration, creativity and critical thinking are paramount in today's world. One of the effective technologies for the development of these global skills is project-based learning.

Project-based learning is a student-centered form of learning that involves students spending sustained periods of study time exploring and attempting to solve real-life problems. Project-based learning has its origins in the work of John Dewey, who in 1897 published his book “My Pedagogical Creed”, which focused on the importance of “learning by doing”. English language educators have explored the project work, and it is now part of the English language curriculum in many contexts.

Legutke and Hutchinson use data from case studies of project work in the UK, USA, and Germany to suggest three types of projects:

- encounter projects enable students to communicate with native speakers, for example, American or British visitors to their country;
- text projects encourage students to use authentic English language texts to research an issue, for example, a play to read, discuss, dramatize, and rehearse;
- class correspondence projects involve letters, photographs and videos etc. as exchanges between learners in different countries. [1]

Projects usually involve a number of features:

- the study and use of authentic English language materials;
- an emphasis on student group-centered experience and de-emphasis of teacher-directed work;

- the encouragement of student responsibility for planning, carrying out, and presenting the task;
- the use of a range of research skills;
- activity outside the classroom in the students' own time. [1]

As practice shows, project work incorporates such main elements of communicative approach as motivation, relevance and educational values. Positive motivation is the key to successful language learning, and project work is particularly useful as a means of generating this. As to relevance, that is, how the learners relate to the language, we can state that project work helps to make the language more relevant to learners' actual needs and encourages the use of various communicative skills.

As to educational values, that is, how the language curriculum relates to the general educational development of learners, practice indicates that project work is very much in tune with contemporary educational aims. Project-based learning has been promoted within ELT for a number of reasons. Learners' use of language as they discuss information and ideas is determined by genuine communicative needs. Most modern school curricula require all subjects to encourage initiative, independence, imagination, co-operation, and the development of useful research skills. So, project work is considered as a practical methodology that puts into practice the fundamental principles of a communicative approach to language teaching. [2]

References:

1. Legutke, M. and Hutchinson, T. 1998. *Process and Experience in the Language Classroom*. Harlow: Longman.
2. Hutchinson, T. 2001. *Introduction to Project Work*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.