Innovative technologies in teaching foreign languages at the university: the project method

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Abstract. The article deals with the methodology of teaching a foreign language at a university using the project method. In the article, the project method is considered as a specially organized, motivated learning activity that is aimed at researching and solving a practical or theoretically significant problem. The article describes the typology of projects and the key stages of project activities. The main tasks of implementing project activities at the university are also considered. The advantages of using the project method in pedagogical practice in comparison with traditional methods of teaching at the present stage are noted. Working on projects promotes the development of constructive thinking of students, increases motivation for learning, develops the ability to work in a team, leadership qualities, as well as skills of cooperation and self-presentation. The author describes the new digital platform "Projectorium", implemented in the Don State Technical University (DSTU). Attention is focused on the description of this platform and its training opportunities. As an example of the effective use of the project methodology, the project description on the topic "My career opportunities in the field of foreign languages" is given.

1 Introduction

The integration of Russia into the pan-European and global educational space has led to the activation of intercultural communication. Thanks to this, the role of language education has significantly increased, as well as the importance of foreign languages for specialists in various fields of science. A foreign language is one of the main components of the development process of a future specialist. Knowledge of the language is necessary for the future professional realization of a person, for establishing contacts with representatives of different cultures, networking with new colleagues and implementation of interpersonal and intercultural communication [1]. Today, employers prefer to hire applicants with knowledge of a foreign language, even if it is not necessary for the performance of their duties.

As a result, the tasks of improving the efficiency of mastering a foreign language are currently being set. The formation of readiness for real communication in a foreign language is the main goal of teaching foreign languages at the university at the present stage of development. In this regard, the problem of studying innovative ideas, identifying modern pedagogical methods and teaching tools that optimize the teaching of foreign

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languages is becoming more and more urgent in the world. Such technologies that make it possible to implement current methods in practice and that meet the constantly updated standards of education. The development of modern society is taking place thanks to the achievements of contemporary science [2]. Changes in science and technology dictate the need for changes in the educational system and the introduction of new educational technologies. At the present stage of the development of science, the new values and goals of education are not the transfer of knowledge, but the formation of competencies that in the future will make it possible to independently accumulate knowledge. To acquire the necessary competencies, it is necessary to look for new ways and methods of teaching foreign languages, to look for motives and incentives for learning a foreign language. A foreign language is one of the ways to improve the professional competence and personal professional development of students and is the most important condition for successful work in the profession for a graduate of a modern university. Therefore, more and more often the preference is given to interactive pedagogical methods that help to arouse the interest of students.

One of such innovative pedagogical methods in teaching foreign languages is the project method or the technology of project-based learning. The use of this technique in the educational process dates back to the beginning of the XX century. This methodology covers a wide variety of educational technologies. Project-based learning is based on such pedagogical principles as focused learning, individual and problem-based approaches, and a collective way of learning. Currently, this method, offering ample opportunities for organizing students' research activities, is becoming increasingly common in teaching a foreign language in universities. The project is an integral part of modern educational programs of higher educational institutions, and this is relevant not only for language, but also for technical disciplines. [3].

By its very essence, the project method implies the need to differentiate training, focus on the student's personality, his needs and capabilities. This method is based on the principles of cooperation and inclusion of students in active work; it is a way to develop the creative abilities of students. The desire for independence and originality, for competition, for searching novelty and working better in the language classes can be encouraged and the learners' best interests are satisfied [4].

It should be noted that the personality-oriented approach is the most important and key for the modern education system. The project method, together with such methods as collaborative learning, discussion, Case Study, role-playing games, and others, most comprehensively reflects the main concepts of a person-centered approach to learning. This approach, which requires, first of all, an attitude to the student as a person with special needs, opportunities and aspirations, is based on the ideas of the humanistic direction in pedagogy.

This article is devoted to one of the modern innovative methods of teaching a foreign language - the project method. Currently, this problem is in the center of scientific interests of many Russian (E. S. Polat, M. Yu. Bukharkina, O. S. Vinogradova, V. V. Kopylova, A. P. Kuznetsova, O. M. Moiseeva) and foreign researchers (D. L. Fried-Booth, T. Hutchinson, D. Phillips, S. Burwood, H. Dunford, M. Knoll, J. Hardy-Gould, etc.) [5-10]. The researchers show new opportunities and advantages of the project method in teaching.

The purpose of our research is to determine the project activity, to consider the theoretical and practical aspects of project activity at the university and to trace the features of this activity (on the example of a foreign language project, implemented at the Don State Technical University (DSTU)).

The relevance of the application of project activities in the university is determined by the need to ensure the competitive advantage of the university and its graduates, who by the end of their studies must possess the necessary competencies within their future profession.

2 Materials and methods

To achieve the purpose of our research we made the following steps.

At the first stage of our research, we defined the project method, the typology of projects and the key stages of project activities. The main tasks of implementing project activities at the university are also considered. The project method is a relatively new phenomenon that requires certain technologies and people who know how to work with them.

In the second stage, we looked at the advantages of project-based learning over traditional learning methods.

At the third stage of the research, we presented a new digital platform implemented at the Don State Technical University (DSTU). It represents a new point of view in the educational environment. DSTU is a flagman university in Rostov-on-Don, which has a technical, professional and financial basis for innovations in the educational environment [11]. As an example of the effective use of the project methodology, the project description on the topic "My career opportunities in the field of foreign languages" is given.

As a research method, we used the analysis of scientific literature containing data on the topic of the study, used the method of induction, which allowed us to make a number of theoretical generalizations on the subject under study. The methodological basis of this article is based on the personality-oriented and problem-based approaches to the study of educational activities and professional development.

3 Results

3.1 Definition of the project method, the typology of projects, the key stages and tasks of project activity implementation at the university

The word project in relation to learning, denotes a specially organized, motivated learning activity that is aimed at researching and solving a practical or theoretically significant problem. The results should be presented in the form of a final product that can be seen and applied in practice. The training project has clearly defined objectives, criteria for achieving results and a limited implementation time.

Project-based learning is defined by the specialists of the HSE University as a type of separate, specially organized activity of students, limited in time, aimed at solving a specific problem and having as a result the final product of the activity.

The project methodology is understood as a method of organizing the pedagogical process, which consists in the interaction of the teacher and students in the course of consistent practical activities. It provides a personality-oriented approach to education, based on the characteristics of the individual development of students. This technique makes it possible to use information and computer technologies in the process of preparing projects. The project methodology is based on carefully developed practical tasks.

The project method is firmly established in the pedagogical practice of many countries of the world. One of the main tasks of this method is to arouse students' interest in necessary and important issues or problems that require knowledge in various fields of science. This method allows students to focus their attention on the problem, and therefore this method was originally called problem-based. Students should be able to independently identify the essence of the problem that needs to be solved, clarify various points of view on this problem, as well as their own views on it, be able to formulate possible ways to solve it, and also search for all the necessary information using various information

resources. In addition, they should be able to draw conclusions, summarize and analyze the results obtained.

Next, we will consider the typology of projects by E. S. Polat. This typology can be applied to projects used in the teaching of any academic discipline. In this classification, the following types of projects are distinguished.

Table 1. Typology of projects.

Didactic typology of projects by E. S. Polat	
By type of activity	Research; creative; role-playing; informational; practice-oriented
In the subject-content area	Monoprojects; intersubject projects
By the nature of coordination	Projects with open, explicit coordination; projects with hidden coordination
By the nature of contacts	Internal; regional; international
By the number of participants	Personal; pair; group

Each project is implemented in several stages. In general, there are 5 main stages of the project implementation.

Table 2. Stages of project work.

Stages of work	Content of work
Select a topic	The problem that the project team will investigate is identified. The choice of the topic should correspond to the professional interests and abilities of the students
Development and organization of the project plan	Formulation of the problem; definition of the goal and objectives; preparation of the action plan; determination of the order of work and the form of presentation of the project results
Implementation of the planned project activity	Selection of the necessary information, its analysis, selection and structuring of the material in accordance with the selected plan; work on the creation of the project product
Project presentation	Presentation of the project results in the form of a presentation.
Evaluation and analysis of results	Discussion of the results of work on the project; identification of the advantages and disadvantages of the project. The assessment of project activities by students and teachers is given

The implementation of project activities in the university has several tasks. The main task of project-based training in universities is to improve the quality of education and the formation of certain competencies by students. Another important task is to bring the

content of training in line with the requirements of the market and maintain the competitiveness of the university by developing and implementing projects with the involvement of employers. Projects, for example, will provide an opportunity to solve the issue of employment for graduates after graduating from universities in their specialty. Another important task is the possibility of joint participation of teachers and students of the university in the implementation of grants.

3.2 Advantages of the project method over traditional teaching methods

Currently, the project method is considered one of the most popular in the world, as it makes it possible to meaningfully combine the knowledge of theory and its application in practice to solve specific practical problems and problems. The popularity of the project method is due to the fact that it contributes to the successful assimilation of the material and allows you to develop the necessary communication skills, as well as to form the creative abilities, creative thinking and imagination of students and involve each student in the active learning process. This method allows students to express themselves in the role of authors and deepens the general outlook of students and contributes to the expansion of the level of knowledge of the language.

The project technology is based on the idea that this technique allows students to effectively form independent thinking in the process of solving practical problems. In addition, this technique develops the ability to analyze information, gain experience of cognitive and educational activities in the course of solving problem tasks and predict the results.

The implementation of projects allows the student to apply the knowledge gained in various fields of science to solve project tasks or problems.

This is what makes this method so valuable for modern education. Students of various fields prepare all kinds of projects in the classroom and at the same time rely on the knowledge that they have gained in the study of specialized disciplines.

Training through project activities leads to the study of communication skills and provides the expression of students' own opinions, feelings, and taking personal responsibility for the result. Students learn to evaluate the result of their work, defend their point of view, use visual tools, and speak to an audience.

The project method allows students to form some personal qualities that develop only in the course of their activities. These qualities include the ability to work in a team, the ability to find non-trivial solutions, leadership qualities, as well as skills of cooperation and self-presentation.

Project work has obvious advantages for further development of networking and team building skills, as well as skills for working with people [11].

The popularity of project methods is due to the fact that this method allows students to move away from the acquisition of ready-made and systematic knowledge and move on to their independent acquisition and application to solve a variety of problems.

In project education, the student himself collects all the necessary material, and, based on the meaning of the project, he determines its need.

The student creates his own project from a variety of impressions, knowledge and concepts. It is important to emphasize that using projects in the educational process helps students with necessary practice, gives them confidence in the professional sphere, and fosters professional qualities [13, 14].

In addition, within the framework of working on projects, students develop the skills and abilities of search and research activities. To perform project tasks, students perform the necessary search on the Internet for special materials of various thematic areas. They

organize and structure new information, discuss it in class, design the project themselves, and make a computer presentation of it.

It should be noted that without the use of Internet technologies, it is almost impossible to perform project work today. Moreover, the use of Internet information resources makes it possible for all project team members to work remotely, with different resources, and exchange information.

The duties of the teacher, as a project manager, include: development of the task and project plan, selection of project participants, distribution of responsibilities and assistance in the organization and implementation of the project to participants. The teacher is also engaged in organization of the presentation of project results and evaluation of the work of participants. It is necessary to teach the student to navigate the flow of information, to be able to extract it independently, to teach how to work with different sources. The ability to generalize and evaluate is also important.

With such training, the teacher becomes the coordinator of the practical activities of the students [15].

The teacher is also an assistant, an observer, a source of new information, an expert.

The project method allows the use of a variety of problematic, research, and search methods, which are mainly creative. They should be aimed at a real practical result that is important for each participant of the project.

The product obtained as a result of the project implementation can be presented in a scientific, grant, or professional competition.

Thus, project activities do not have strict rules and requirements for participants and allow students of various fields to join teams and organize new interdisciplinary research, i.e. solve problems using any available methods, tools and knowledge. This allows project participants to create effective mechanisms for solving certain tasks.

3.3 Organization of project activities at DSTU

At the Don State Technical University (DSTU), students are immersed in project activities from the first day of their studies at the university. During the first semester, students participate in "Freshman Navigation Days". This is an educational intensive, in the last week of which the project week starts.

Within the framework of the "Freshman Navigation Days ", students select projects from the list offered to them and develop them throughout the first semester as part of study groups.

Thus, first-year students are invited to get acquainted with the entire educational infrastructure of the university from the very first days and immediately start project work. Work on projects continues in the framework of the course " Basics of project activities ". This course is included in the educational programs of the bachelor's degree and specialty in full-time education. Thus, during the first semester, students acquire the necessary minimum skills for project activities.

To involve students in project activities at the Don State Technical University, a special electronic tool called "Projectorium" is widely used. "Projectorium" is a platform created by the Don State Technical University in order to form the work on project activities among students at DSTU. The Projectorium allows any student to take part in the creation and development of real projects.

The customers are the enterprises of Rostov-on-Don and the Rostov region and the university itself. The platform also allows students to show their skills and abilities in their future professional activities, attract the attention of a potential employer by participating in the development of projects and demonstrating their knowledge and skills.

Students can also test themselves in other study profiles.

The platform offers enterprises the opportunity to conduct research at the university, develop and implement innovative projects, solve current issues with the use of new and fresh ideas, find talented students and invite them to work.

"Projectorium" allows any DSTU employee to formulate a project proposal and a request for the necessary parameters of students (educational program, course, skills).

Here is an example of the effective use of the project methodology of the project on the topic "My career opportunities in the field of foreign languages". The purpose of this project is to strengthen the motivation for students to learn foreign languages in their future professional activities, as well as to help university students choose their future profession, taking into account their inclinations, competencies and type of thinking. The profession in which they would be comfortable to work and maximize their potential.

Knowledge of a foreign language will significantly increase students' awareness when choosing a future profession, interest in studying at a university and the overall quality of the educational environment.

This project has a practical implementation aimed at developing a module for an electronic course on the discipline "Foreign language in professional activity" on the platform SKIF DSTU. This module would motivate students to learn the language for their future professional activities.

Students are offered the following task: create a project on the topic "My career opportunities in the field of foreign languages", conduct research according to the tasks set and submit the project.

Content of the project work:

1. The first stage is to conduct a survey among graduates who have just graduated from school on the subject of awareness of their future professional activities and interest in choosing their future profession. In addition, students will be invited to interview teachers of the department, graduates, undergraduates and analyze their opinions.

2. The second stage is to analyze information about the market demand for specialists who speak foreign languages. Students need to analyze the Job Opportunities website and study the market demand for specialists in linguistics, information systems and technology, and media communications.

3. The third stage is to develop the structure, content and design of the course (in mini-groups). The result of the project work is a computer presentation (in mini-groups) on the topic "My career opportunities in the field of foreign languages" and the presentation of the module for the course on the platform of SKIF DSTU.

The presented project provides an opportunity to see which companies are the most popular and also allows to find ways to cooperate with these companies in the future in order to employ graduates.

Students participating in the project should be interested in the problems of the project. They should be able to analyze and systematize information; be ready to conduct sociological surveys and interviews, and students should also be able to effectively present the results of the research.

The ability to listen to foreign language speech and understand each other when presenting projects is also important.

Working on the project will allow the teacher to successfully support the motivation of students and their interest in a foreign language. It also provides an opportunity for students to think and speak in English. The use of the project method in teaching a foreign language allows students to use a foreign language as a way to express their own thoughts and perceive the thoughts of other people.

4 Discussion

The project method offers many opportunities in the acquisition of knowledge. It is an important part of modern higher education now. When working on a project, students master those competencies that cannot be taught in the traditional form of work. Basically, these are the skills of dividing work, negotiating and decision-making skills, and taking responsibility for the result of their work. "Networking", or teamwork, according to most researchers and business representatives, is the most important competence for moving up the career ladder of a modern specialist.

In DSTU, much attention is paid to project activities. First-year students are introduced to real project work in a team under the guidance of experienced mentors and have the opportunity to defend their own project. This type of work allows students to determine the direction of study at the university and the choice of their future profession.

Various types of project work help students realize their personal creative potential in education, get acquainted with the future professional activity and possibly interest a potential employer.

However, there are some challenges in implementing project-based learning. It can be noted that teachers are not ready to move to a special type of activity – mentoring in the role of project manager. It is important to organize professional development for the training of teachers, and regularly exchange experience. It can also be noted that there is no mechanism for accounting for the labor costs of students and teachers for organizing and conducting project activities.

Therefore, a balanced position is needed to supplement traditional education with project work. Project-based learning should not replace the traditional forms of learning accepted at the university: lectures and seminars. DSTU already uses this method. Projects are included in educational programs with no loss for classes.

5 Conclusion

So, based on the results of the study, the following conclusions can be formulated. The project activity method has many advantages. Among them, we can note the research nature of this type of work. This method increases the interdisciplinary integration of knowledge, skills and abilities, gives a rich experience in creative activities, develops social and communication skills. The project is directly aimed at the result that is important to get when solving a particular problem. This result should be tangible and meaningful so that it can be applied in practice.

The project method promotes the activation of self-education and control skills, the skills of team activity of students, as well as forms the ability to think independently, promotes the development of initiative, responsibility and efficiency of activities. An important feature of this method is its proximity to the specifics of future professional activity.

Currently, much attention is paid to the problem of implementing project methodology in the educational process of many universities. The project-oriented approach at the university allows you to combine traditional and innovative aspects, contributes to the competence growth of students. All this makes it possible to successfully use this approach in the educational process at the university, both in the study of various subjects, and in the study of a foreign language in particular.

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