

DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING IN TECHNICAL SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING (PBL): THE EXAMPLE OF ENGLISH LESSONS

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Abstract. This article analyzes the role and importance of project-based learning (PBL) technology in developing critical thinking skills in college students. In the modern educational process, one of the important tasks is for students to think independently, analyze problems, draw evidence-based conclusions, and demonstrate a creative approach. The use of the PBL method in English lessons not only develops students' language competence, but also forms their critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. The article covers the theoretical foundations of project-based learning, its potential in English language education, and methods of its application in college settings. It also reveals the impact of the processes of searching, analyzing, evaluating, and presenting information by students during project activities on the development of critical thinking. The research results show that PBL technology is an important pedagogical tool for increasing the effectiveness of English lessons and forming students' modern professional competencies.

Keywords: project-based learning, PBL, critical thinking, English, technical school students, communicative competence, independent learning, collaborative learning, innovative pedagogy, educational effectiveness.

In today's era of globalization and the development of digital technologies, one of the main tasks of the education system is to form 21st century skills in students. These skills include critical thinking, creativity, communication and teamwork. In particular, students

studying in vocational education institutions and technical schools need to be able to independently solve various problems in their future professional activities, analyze information and make informed decisions.

In traditional educational methods, the student often participates as a receiver of ready-made knowledge. However, modern pedagogical approaches require the active participation of the student. One of such innovative methods is project-based learning or Project-Based Learning (PBL). This method allows students to gain knowledge through practical tasks and serves to develop critical thinking.

Project-based learning is an educational technology based on the long-term activities of students aimed at solving a specific problem or task. The roots of this approach go back to the pragmatic pedagogy of American educators John Dewey and William Kilpatrick.

In the PBL process, students identify a problem, search for information, analyze it, develop a solution, and present the final result. In this process, the teacher plays the role of a guide and consultant rather than a knowledge provider.

Project-based learning is characterized by the following features:

Active student participation;

Problem-oriented learning;

Independent research activities;

Collaboration;

Achieving practical results;

Developing critical and creative thinking.

Critical thinking is the ability to analyze, evaluate, compare, and draw informed conclusions from information. Since the flow of information in modern society is extremely large, a person needs to use it correctly and be able to distinguish reliable sources.

Developing critical thinking in technical school students creates the following opportunities:

Effective problem solving;

Independent decision-making;

Critical evaluation of information;

Development of logical thinking;

Increasing competitiveness in professional activities.

Therefore, it is important to develop not only language knowledge, but also critical thinking skills in English lessons.

Project-based learning in English language subjects develops students' communicative competence and encourages them to think actively. During the project work, students search for information in English, analyze data, conduct discussions and prepare a final presentation.

For example, projects can be organized on topics such as “Environmental Problems”, “Future Technologies”, “Tourism in Uzbekistan” or “Artificial Intelligence in Education”.

Project work is carried out in the following stages:

Choosing a problem.

Setting goals and objectives.

Collecting information.

Analyzing data.

Creating a solution or product.

Presentation and evaluation.

Each stage requires students to be critical. They compare different sources, examine evidence, and develop the most acceptable conclusions.

Mechanisms for developing critical thinking through PBL

Project-based learning develops students' critical thinking in several ways.

First, students independently search for information. This forms the ability to analyze sources and assess their reliability.

Second, different points of view are studied during project activities. Students consider several solutions to the problem and choose the most effective one.

Third, discussions arise during group work. This develops a culture of substantiating opinions, providing evidence, and respecting opposing opinions.

Fourth, presenting project results strengthens students' communication and reflection skills.

Pedagogical observations show that the regular use of the project-based learning method in English lessons significantly increases student activity. They ask more questions in class, express their own opinions, and strive to solve problems.

Also, students who participate in project activities improve their speaking, writing, and listening comprehension skills in English. Most importantly, they begin to acquire the skills to critically evaluate information and draw well-founded conclusions.

It is also observed that learning motivation is higher in groups using the PBL method. Since students see the results of their activities as a practical product, their interest in studying increases.

Project-based learning technology is one of the effective tools for developing critical thinking in college students. Using the PBL method in English lessons develops students' language competence as well as their skills in analyzing information, solving problems, making independent decisions, and working in a team.

The results of the study showed that project-based learning meets the requirements of modern vocational education and serves to increase the intellectual potential of students. Therefore, it is recommended to widely use the PBL method in teaching English in technical schools. This approach will make a worthy contribution to the preparation of competitive, independent-thinking and modern specialists in the future.

References

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