PROJECT-BASEDLEARNING AS A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND CRITICAL THINKING IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

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Abstract - Teachers face complex challenges and traditional teaching methods are often insufficient to develop student's necessary competencies while modern teaching approaches graduallydevelop. This paper examines the relevance and demand for project-based learning in school education.This article explores the potential of project-based learning as a tool for students to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, develop teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, and develop a professional identity.

Keywords - Project-Based Activities, Education, Competencies, Demand, Relevance, Teamwork, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving.

INTRODUCTION

The modern global education system is significantly influenced by globalization, digitalization, and scientific and technological innovation. These changes create new requirements for the professional teaching of students, particularly in the field of school education. In the context of increasing social mobility and dynamic changes in the labor market, there is a need to develop skills in future professionals such as interdisciplinary interaction, analytical thinking, the ability to make independent decisions, and continuous professional self-improvement [2, p. 135].

The Problem of Relevance
Educational institutions must adapt to new challenges by offering flexible and modern approaches to learning. Globally, there is a shift toward practice-oriented learning models that promote the development of students' professional skills through active participation in real-world projects. However, the concept of project-based engagement remains under-researched, especially in the context of the humanities, including school education system as well. In today's world, where new teaching methods are becoming increasingly in demand, traditional theoretical knowledge is no longer sufficient to traincompetent specialists. Project-based engagement is the activeparticipation of students in real-world projects aimed at solving specificpsychological problems is becoming increasingly important. The relevance of project-based engagement is manifested in the practical applicationof knowledge - projects allow students to apply acquired theoretical knowledgein practice, see its real value, and understand how it works in specificsituations [1, p. 45].This helps reinforce the material and develop the skills necessary for futureprofessional work. Developing key competencies through project participation promotes the development ofcritical thinking, analytical skills, teamwork,communication, planning, and problem-solving skills. All these competencies are essential forthe successful work in any field in the future.

Real world work experience projects often simulate real-world work situations, allowing students to gain valuable experience working with clients, colleagues, and other professionals. This helps them adapt to their future professional environment and feel more confident.

Increased competitiveness
School graduates with experience participating in projects are more in demand in the labor market after getting higher education. They demonstrate to employers not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills, as well as a willingness to solve real-world problems.

Employers increasingly seek out project-based engagement specialists who can not only understand theory but also apply it in practice. They value candidates who have experience working in a team, who are able to solve problems, and who adapt to changing conditions. Project-based engagement allows students to develop these skills and become more attractive to employers [6, p. 45].

Research shows that integrating project-based learning into educationpromotes the development of critical thinking, creativity, and practical problem-solving skills. However, despite the obvious benefits, the implementation of such programsremains low, which may be due to a lack of awarenessamong teachers about the benefits of project-based learning, as well as a lack of resources for its implementation.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A scientific understanding of project-based engagement requires a comprehensive analysis. This

study aims to explore the potential of project-based engagement as a mechanism for the professional development of students in system of public education. This research examines methods that can improve the quality of training for these students and develop their personal and professional potential.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Project-based activities, thanks to their flexibilityand focus on real-world practices, create the conditions for developing a sustainableprofessional identity and key competencies. However, it should be notedthat the revision of educational approaches should emphasizethe students multifaceted role in society. Students should possess not onlyacademic knowledge but also developed practical skills, such as creativeproblem solving and the ability to adapt to a rapidly changing world [7, p. 1018].

The development of educational strategies aimed at developing professional competencies is an important step in the modernization of public education.These strategies must align with state priorities, international standards, and take into account labor market requirements, as emphasized in the "Development Strategyof the New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026" and "Uzbekistan 2030."

Prospects for further research

To further explore the relevance of project-based engagement in the education it is important to analyze successful practices implemented internationally and determine their feasibility for adaptation to the requirements of the Uzbek educational environment.

It is necessary to develop methodological recommendations for integrating project-based activities into the educational process, which could be the subject of future research.

1. Incorporating project-based assignments into academic disciplines: Instructors can develop project-based assignments related to the material being studied.
2. Cross-disciplinary projects: Organizing joint study projects with other disciplines, such as geography or history, can enrich the learning process.
3. Internships and Practical Experience: Local organizations partners may provide students with internship opportunities and participation in real-world projects. This will help students gain practical work experience and apply their knowledge in real-world settings.
4. Feedback and Self-Analysis: Implement a systematic feedback process where students can analyze their actions and reflect on their project experiences.This will help develop metacognitive skills and increase self-reflection.[10, p. 12]
5. Using technology and digital platforms to implement projects, for example, creating a blog or website where students can present their results and share their experiences. This not only develops technical skills but also fosters digital competencies.

These approaches can be effectively integrated into the educational process, promoting deeper learning and developing key skills necessary for future professionals. Organizing student project groupsin creating student project groups working on real projects from organizations or individuals allows students to gain experience working in a teamand solving practical problems under the guidance of experienced mentors.

Collaboration with organizations and institutions establishes partnershipswith organizations and institutions in need of psychological assistance,allowing students to participate in real-life projects and gain valuable experienceworking with clients. These can include schools, hospitals, social services, company HR departments,and other organizations.

Creating virtual project platforms is the development of virtual platformswhere students can find projects, form teams, and share experiences.It promotes the development of a project culture and expands opportunities for participationin projects. [11, p. 9]

Barriers and ways to overcome them

Despite the obvious benefits, introducing project-based engagement into the educational process may face certain challenges:

Teachers may lack time to develop and manage project assignments. A solution may be to revise the curriculum and allocate time for project-based activities.

Implementing projects may require additional resources, such as funding, equipment, and expert advice. A solution may be to attract sponsors and partners.

Some students may be uninterested in participating in projects. A solution may be to create a motivation system that includes project evaluation, rewards, and recognition.

In the future, project-based engagement will play an increasingly important role in the training of students at school. Advances in technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual realityopen new opportunities for creating innovative project assignmentsand simulations. It is important to continue developing partnerships with organizationsand institutions so that students have the opportunity to participate in real-world projectsand gain valuable experience working

with clients even during their study in higher education. It is also necessary to develop newmethods for assessing project activities that will allow for an objective assessmentof each student's contribution to the project and their level of competency development [11, p. 9].

In the future development of project-based engagement, it is worth noting the importanceof integrating interdisciplinary approaches. English language learning is closely linked to otherfields of knowledge, such as pedagogy, medicine, informationtechnology, and even economics.

Another important area of development is the creation and support of mentoring programs. Experienced and practiced professionals, graduates who have successfully implemented their own projects can serve as mentors for students, helping them develop and implement their projects, sharing their experience and knowledge, and providing support and motivation. Mentoring allows students to receive valuable advice and recommendations from professionals, avoid common mistakes, and increase their chances of success.

Project-based activities can be an excellent platform for developing different competencies.For example, students can develop an online course on students' interest projects, conduct an online survey to study public opinion, or create a virtual laboratory for conducting chemical or biological experiments.

Furthermore, it is necessary to create conditions for the presentation and disseminationof project results. Students should have the opportunity to presenttheir projects at conferences, seminars, exhibitions, and other events. This allows them to receive feedback from experts, share their achievements with a wider audience, and enhance their professional reputation.

Project-based learning is a crucial mechanism for students' professional development in psychology. Project-based learning is not just a trendy trend, but a necessity for training competent and in demand specialists. It allows students to gain valuable practical experience, develop key competencies, and shape their professional identity. The results of our study help clarify the impact of project-basedinvolvement on the quality of professional training and identify pedagogicalconditions that facilitate the successful integration of practice-oriented approachesinto the educational process [11, p. 12].

Modernization of the education system, based on project-orientedmethods, will become a key tool for training specialists capableof effectively solving complex problems and meeting the demands of modernsociety.

In conclusion, project-based engagement is a dynamic and evolving process that requires constant attention and improvement. The integration of interdisciplinaryapproaches, the development of mentoring programs and digital competencies, the creation of conditions forthe presentation of results, and the ongoing evaluation of the system – all this will make project-basedengagement an even more effective tool for training competent and sought-after specialists for higher education system.

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