THE ROLE OF PROJECT BASED LEARNING IN DEVELOPING
STUDENTS’ SOFT SKILLS

Karimova Nilufar Ummatqul qizi
Uzbekistan State World Languages University
PhD student
karimova.nilufar@internet.ru

Abstract. The article discusses the role of project-based language teaching in the development of soft skills, which is one of the main requirements of today's labor market for future professionals. The author reveals the potential of specific features of project-based learning in the development of soft skills.

Keywords: soft skills, project based learning, learner-centered approach, communication, social interaction.

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается роль проектного обучения языку в развитии soft skills, что является одним из основных требований современного рынка труда к будущим специалистам. Автор раскрывает потенциал специфики проектного обучения в развитии soft skills.

Ключевые слова: межличностные навыки, проектное обучение, подход, ориентированный на учащегося, общение, социальное взаимодействие.

Аннотация. Маколада бўлажак мутахассисларда бугунги мекнат бозорининг асосий талабларидан бири бўлган софт скилсни ривожланиришда лойиха асосида ўқитишнинг шрни ҳақида сўз юритилади. Маллиф лойиха
The look and nature of our workplaces have dramatically changed over the last few decades. One can see a variety of workspaces including breakout spaces, remote offices, and social areas. Computers, smart phones, and virtual meeting applications have revolutionized the world and enabled us to achieve balance and flexibility within our personal and professional lives. Due to the changes taking place, future employees should understand the current workforce demographics to better prepare themselves to be competitive in a growing job market. Globally, employers of modern world are placing a greater emphasis on soft skills, which are intangible attributes such as the ability to communicate well and problem solve, especially, as there has been a notable soft skills gap [6].

Scholars propose different definitions for the term “soft skills”. One of the popular ones is suggested by M. Robles that states: “Soft skills are character traits, attitudes and behaviors - rather than technical aptitude or knowledge. Soft skills are the intangible, non-technical, personality-specific skills that determine one’s strengths as a leader, facilitator, mediator, and negotiator” [5]. All the theories around soft skills put forward the idea that more opportunities should be given to young people to develop those soft skills that will help university students to make a successful transition from full-time education to entering the labor market. Likewise, in the Republic of Uzbekistan more focus is being made on preparing skillful professionals. On October 8, 2019, the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan “Concept of Development of Higher Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030” was approved. As a result of the implementation of the concept, it is aimed to introduce new state educational standards and curricula that
meet the requirements of a modern innovative economy. Taking into account the STEAM disciplines, with an emphasis not on memorizing and reproducing information, developing competencies and skills important for life in the XXI century such as critical thinking, independent search and analysis of information, etc. is intended. This concept clearly states that at least 10 universities of Uzbekistan should have an international rating. Later, in 2020, Uzbekistan joined World Skills International which is non-profit association, whose goal is to improve the status and standards of professional training and qualifications around the world, to popularize working professions through international competitions around the world.

In achieving education goals, teaching methods play a significant role. Similarly, in order to develop future professionals’ soft skills effective teaching methods should be implemented. From our point of view, PBL offers great potential in this respect. Based on the constructivist theory of learning and communicative language teaching methodology, the project based viewpoint of language teaching has emerged in response to some constraints of the traditional PPP approach, denoted by the process of presentation, practice, and performance (2; 4). Hence, it has the significant meaning that language learning is a developmental process enhancing communication and social interaction rather than a product internalized by practicing language items, and that learners master the target language more powerfully when being exposed to meaningful task-based activities in a natural way. Kloppenborg and Baucus repeat that many of skills learned through PBL are highly in demand by todays’ employers including the ability to work well with others and handle interpersonal conflicts, make thoughtful decisions, practice and solve complex problems [3].

Although there is a discrepancy of views among the advocates of project-based language teaching in relation to the core principles of PBLT, general agreement on the emphasized characteristics can be listed:
The use of authentic materials in the learning process. Abstract knowledge in task-based learning is put into practice and used in real world application. Students become closer to the real world which links them with their future professional career and allows to see their real needs.

Instruction should support learner-centeredness rather than teacher-centeredness. Consequently, learners take active role in the learning process rather than passive listeners which deprives students from practicing soft skills.

The contribution of learner’s personal experiences to classroom learning. Students’ background knowledge, experience are valued, which is key factor in developing critical and creative thinking skills.

The focus is on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language. In turn, it enables students to work in groups, pairs contributing to the development of cooperation and collaboration skills.

Communicative tasks are especially suitable devices for such an approach. It can contribute to the development of communication skills which is considered as one of the demanding soft skills.

More formal pre- or post-task language study may be beneficial. This may make contribution to internalization by leading or maximizing familiarity with formal characteristics during communication.

Traditional approaches are unproductive and unsuitable, particularly where they require passive formal instruction and practice isolated from communicative work.

Learners focus not only on the language but also on the learning process itself. It makes students be aware of their own learning characteristics including learning styles, etc. In this way, it plays a significant role in exposing students to a meaningful learning process while they are engaged in completing their project.

It is argued that it can help foster self-regulated learning and can promote students’ conceptual knowledge within a systematic process of documenting and
reflecting on learning. Students learn to be self-reliant through goal-setting, planning and organization, they develop collaboration skills through social learning and become intrinsically motivated by being encouraged to exercise an element of choice while learning at their own level [1].

Being a learner-centered approach PBL has the following strong and weak characteristics: the strong one - “it would imply things like getting learners to find out information for themselves rather than being told, to create their own materials, to decide on their own syllabuses, to self-asses”. The weak one “would imply things like asking for and respecting (but not necessarily obeying) learners’ requests, a lessening of the teacher-talk and an increase in learner activation”[7]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral products</th>
<th>Written products</th>
<th>Media/technology products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>Research report</td>
<td>Audio recording/podcast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate</td>
<td>Letter/memo</td>
<td>Slideshow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Book review</td>
<td>Drawing/painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live newscast</td>
<td>Brochure</td>
<td>Collage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel discussion</td>
<td>Script</td>
<td>Photo essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play/drama</td>
<td>Guide/manual</td>
<td>Video/animation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storytelling/poetry</td>
<td>Blog/editorial</td>
<td>Web page for a Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slam</td>
<td></td>
<td>Digital story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales pitch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To conclude, being in a culture of learning and exposure to new people and experiences, project based learning contributes to the development of many soft skills with applications to the workplace which apparently will fulfill the needs of
the 21st century job market and in turn contributes effectively adult education in achieving Uzbekistan’s national sustainable development goals.

**References:**