



## The Project Method in the Formation of Cross – Cultural Competences In Students

### KEYWORDS

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**ABSTRACT** *What matters in modern society is not so much the knowledge of the large volume of information but the ability to obtain knowledge and develop skills independently. To implement all of this in practice, future teachers need to be taught how to equip their students with skills and learning methods. We develop in students cross-cultural competences by using the method of projects. From the other side we prepare them how to work as teachers with their future students using this method.*

The main task of Bulgarian school at the moment is to form in students such skills that can let them acquire knowledge independently .

The world we live in is complex and dynamic. Today and in the future we need knowledgeable and capable individuals with innovative and unconventional thinking, tolerant, able to appreciate the success of others, people who educate themselves throughout their lives and promote the best of its uniqueness and experience. All these statements can remain just a wishful thinking if you do not seek and apply methods and forms to intensify educational impact and interaction, stimulate active and interactive learning and to continuously improve the quality of education .

What is the important in modern society is not so much knowledge of the large volume of information but the ability to obtain knowledge and develop skills independently. To make all this become reality , future teachers need to be taught how to equip students with the skills and methods of learning.

In connection with the fact that attention is mainly given to the development of future teachers of ability to work independently, is particularly relevant task to form in them common skills. The latter is a prerequisite for the quality of their work in this direction.

The analysis of the preliminary survey of first-year students of EPF - Sliven showed that they have low activity. For them there is no ability to work independently. This proves that it is not formed, or a very small extent developed in high school. The main reason for such a phenomenon lies in the low level of formation of common skills. Only 5% of the first year students have the skills available and with 34% this level of formed academic skills is characterized as " below average " and " average " level. In 61 % of the respondents the level of common skills is decreasing. Low level of knowledge of common skills practically doesn't allows students to gain a complete educational training to master the standards of teacher education and to become competent professionals .

For this reason, we believe that solving this problem is reflected in a targeted systematic work that will allows students to get common skills and cross-cultural competence.

Nowadays, solving the problem of common skills begins with the application of the competency approach related to the content of education. Competence approach rises to the forefront not the knowledge of the student but his ability to solve problems. This approach has reviewed the role of the student in the learning process. The basis of student's work

should be ability to work with the information , modeling and reflection. The student must not only perceive information and self- thinking but be ready to solve problems in life situations. The requirement for the results of education , sets as main language competences the following main issues - the ability and willingness to acquire knowledge, skills and personal qualities for successful operation in a particular area .

The process of learning the disciplines of psycho - pedagogical cycle students is directed to the formation of cross-cultural competencies, such as: ability to use knowledge in education and professional activity; culture of thinking and problem solving, ability to perceive information, summarizing, analyzing, ability to set goals and choosing the means and way for its implementation, readiness to interact with colleagues and teamwork.

In this process also common educational skills are formed; such as educational- intellectual, educational informative and educational managing .

The broadest possible formation of common skills is given by the integrated approach and design training. The complex approach is an educational technology that allows to develop in students and future professionals new independent position, its integration into already existing knowledge, developing skills to solve vital problems.

Attempts to define project -based learning ( project training, method of project work) have been made since its establishment until today. Despite these efforts, there is still no single, clear definition. Examined in the context of modern education, project training most often is defined as follows:

- scientific approach for teaching – learners are in the centre [Colley, KE et al.(2008) ] ;
- teaching method that uses a complex authentic questions to include students in the long , hard, cooperative learning , with the result - carefully designed product or article [Dickinson, G., et al (2008) .] ;
- educational tool that involves students in the study of important and meaningful questions through research and collaboration , use of technology , creating products and sharing of ideas. [Frank, M., et al. (2006) ] ;
- a systematic approach of teaching, engaging students in acquiring knowledge and skills through continuous research process structured around complex real questions, carefully designed products and tasks [Markham, T. et al. 2003 . ]
- form of organization of training related to continuous learning activities, the integration of content with real-life problems or future career [ Peicheva, R. 2002 ] .

These and other attempts to define the problem direct us to the target capabilities of the project method to achieve important advanced education goals - active learning, linking the curriculum to the practice of people Experiential learning, collaborative learning. Development of important social and personal cognitive and metacognitive skills are stimulated: transfer of new knowledge to new situations, creative thinking, critical thinking, business planning, analysis of performance and reflection.

Most often, projects are used as a method and a tool for learning and self-study to improve the quality and effectiveness of learning. It can not be denied their undeniable contribution to the evaluation of the knowledge and skills of students from higher taxonomic levels. Project learning is closely linked to the constructivist model of learning and teaching, and practical support implementation of the concepts of self-regulation and transformative learning [ Petrov, P., et al 2001. ]. Project training is a part of the structure of knowledge that each student accumulates. Through it he is motivated and involved in his own learning. Due to all these advantages of the method we use it in the preparation of future teachers.

The core of the project is the idea of targeting the training and cognitive activity of students towards the outcome, which is obtained by solving one or another practically or theoretically significant problem.

Valuable for the students themselves is that they get a personal experience from their activity, which combines with their knowledge and skills, competencies and values. This independent creative project work is solving problems of real life. This kind of work allows students to understand the theoretical foundations of the course and its relevance. All design work is always unique because it is aimed at achieving the goals of the students and requires use of their experience .

In the course of project work a large amount of skills and habits are effectively being formed. Among common skills and habits formed in the project activity can be released the following most important in teaching psychological and pedagogical disciplines cycle :

- reflexive skills (skills to understand the problem , to solve it short of knowledge) ;
- research skills ( goal setting, objects and methods of investigation, analysis of the results ) ;
- management skills ( ability to plan classroom level and extracurricular work of students ) .

In general terms the implementation of the educational project goes through the following stages :

- exploratory – studying of the problem by students and formulating the subject of the project;
- analysis - analyzing the situation , information and implementation planning ;
- practical - implementation of the project plan and activities;

- presentative - presentation of the project's products ;
- Control - Evaluation of products and students' work .

To the principal characteristics of the project training [ Peicheva , R. 2002.; Brown, P.L.et al (2007) ; Colley, K .E.et al. (2008)., P.C. Blumenfeld et al. (1997). ] can be assigned also :

- motivational issues (driving questions), which serve to organize and conduct the training;
- autonomy of students that turns them into organizers and leaders of their own learning ;
- cooperation (collaboration) between students, teachers and community members in solving common problems and issues;
- authenticity of the projects based on real problems of life, applicable outside the audience ;
- real products (artifacts) and their presentation, which are tangible results of the project and demonstrate knowledge of the students .

Characteristic features of each project are [ Simon , P. 2006 ] :

- duration in time;
- the existence of stages (phases ) of the activity;
- integrations of knowledge and skills from more than one subject area with the various activities (oral, written and practical) ;
- teamwork, suggesting the development of certain qualities and skills in students – independent planning and organizing of activities by the group;
- availability of a practical or spiritual benefit in a concrete result that can be seen or read .

Evaluation of project activities are carried out according to certain criteria [ E. S. Polat et al 2003 ] . They include the following :

- relevance and topicality of the problem and commitment to the curriculum ;
- activity of each participant in accordance with his individual capacity ;
- collective nature of the decisions ;
- communication and collaboration in teams;
- use of integrated knowledge and skills from other subject areas ;
- personal contribution and innovation in solving the problem;
- originality of the project;
- competence of the participants in the defense of the project and creating of interest in dealing with the problems
- aesthetic and technical design of the project and writing skills.

Formation of cross-cultural competence in students through the project method prepares them to work through the method with students in a real classroom environment. The new role of the teacher in the use of the method is that he be a consultant, mediator, collaborator and advisor to students. To be successful in their profession, teachers need to be trained for this work while still at university .

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