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## THE ROLE OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN SHAPING THE PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS OF 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE GYMNASIUM STUDENTS IN UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE LESSONS

*The article delves into the pivotal role of project-based learning in shaping the professional interests of fifth-grade students in gymnasiums during Ukrainian language lessons. It underscores how project-based learning is a catalyst for the development of communication skills, critical thinking, and student responsibility, empowering students to take charge of their learning. The main stages of implementing project-based learning are detailed, from organization to presentation of projects. The influence of projects on students' professional self-determination is scrutinized, underscoring the significance of applying knowledge in real-life contexts. The benefits of student collaboration in groups are also explored, as it fosters the development of social skills and an interest in various professions related to the Ukrainian language.*

*The problem statement is based on the need to adapt the educational process to the demands of the modern world and the significance of career guidance activities for students during the active formation of their personalities. An analysis of traditional teaching methods demonstrates their inadequacy in providing practical knowledge application, leading to low student motivation. Project-based learning, which focuses on integrating knowledge and practical activities, can enhance students' interest and engagement in learning while fostering essential competencies such as responsibility, critical thinking, and communication. This approach also highlights the crucial role of educators in guiding students through their learning journey, making them feel valued and integral to the process.*

*The article also examines the historical aspects of project-based learning development, starting from the concepts of John Dewey and W. Kilpatrick, and discusses contemporary research that supports the effectiveness of this method. Implementing project-based learning in Ukrainian language instruction allows students to work on real projects, thereby promoting the development of their professional interests and skills needed for future professional activities. This not only prepares them for the challenges of the modern world but also instills a sense of optimism about their future prospects.*

**Key words:** project-based learning, project, professional interests, educational process, professional self-determination.

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## РОЛЬ ПРОЄКТНОГО НАВЧАННЯ У ФОРМУВАННІ ПРОФЕСІЙНИХ ІНТЕРЕСІВ УЧНІВ 5 КЛАСІВ ГІМНАЗІЇ НА УРОКАХ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ МОВИ

У статті проаналізовано роль проєктного навчання у формуванні професійних інтересів учнів 5 класів гімназії на уроках української мови. Акцентовано увагу на тому, як проєктне навчання сприяє розвитку комунікативних навичок, критичного мислення та відповідальності учнів. Описано основні етапи реалізації проєктного навчання, зокрема організацію, підготовку, виконання та презентування проєктів. Проаналізовано вплив проєктів на професійну самовизначеність учнів, підкреслено важливість практичного застосування знань у контексті реальних життєвих ситуацій. Висвітлено переваги співпраці учнів у групах, що сприяє розвитку соціальних навичок та формуванню інтересу до різних професій, пов'язаних із українською мовою.

Досліджено проблему, що ґрунтується на необхідності адаптації освітнього процесу до вимог сучасного світу та значущості профорієнтаційної діяльності для учнів у період активного формування їхньої особистості. Аналіз традиційних методів навчання ілюструє їхню недостатність у забезпеченні практичного застосування знань, що репрезентує низьку мотивації учнів. Проєктне навчання, яке акцентує увагу на інтеграції знань та практичній діяльності, здатне підвищити зацікавленість і активність учнів у навчанні, а також сприяти розвитку важливих компетенцій, таких як відповідальність, критичне мислення та комунікація.

У статті також розкрито історичні аспекти розвитку проєктного навчання, починаючи з концепції Джона Дьюї та В. Кілпатрика, й описано сучасні дослідження, що підтверджують ефективність означеного методу. Впровадження проєктного навчання на уроках української мови надає можливість учням працювати над реальними проєктами, що сприяє розвитку їхніх професійних інтересів та навичок, необхідних у майбутній професійній діяльності, готуючи до викликів сучасного світу.

**Ключові слова:** проєктне навчання, проєкт, професійні інтереси, освітній процес, етапи реалізації проєктного навчання, професійна самовизначеність.

**Problem statement.** The modern Ukrainian education system faces numerous challenges related to adapting the educational process to the demands of a rapidly changing world. One of the priority aspects in this context is forming students' professional interests, which is a crucial stage in their personal development and preparation for adult life. In this regard, an important question arises: How can project-based learning, which is becoming increasingly popular in contemporary education, significantly contribute to the development of student's professional interests, particularly in fifth-grade gymnasiums, where learners are not only actively shaping their identities but also embarking on their journey toward a conscious choice of future profession.

Traditional teaching methods often do not provide students with opportunities for the practical application of knowledge and skills, leading to insufficient motivation and a limited understanding of the connection between learning and real life. Ukrainian language lessons, which can encompass a wide range of professions related to speech activities, have significant resource potential for implementing project-based learning. A detailed investigation into how the introduction of project methods can foster the development of professional interests among fifth-graders is not only required but also holds immense potential for inspiring students to apply their learning in real-life contexts.

Thus, the need for optimal research into the effectiveness of project-based learning in the context of students' career orientation becomes

particularly relevant. The identification of mechanisms that would allow for the maximum utilization of this method in Ukrainian language lessons is an urgent task. Investigating this issue can enhance educational practices' quality and overall education quality, which is a crucial task for contemporary Ukrainian education.

**The article aims** to investigate the impact of project-based learning on forming professional interests: to identify how project activities contribute to developing professional interests among fifth-grade gymnasium students in Ukrainian language lessons and to determine which competencies are formed during project implementation.

#### **Analysis of recent research and publications.**

The project-based learning method began to gain popularity in the early 20th century when American philosopher and educator John Dewey formulated and substantiated his didactic concept. The main idea of this concept was the necessity of developing students' individual initiative. Dewey believed that the success of education depends on factors such as a labor-oriented approach to learning, student activity, and independence, the connection of education to real life, continuity in the educational process, individualized approaches, and intellectual freedom (Chala, 2020, p. 25). According to the educator, experience is one of the central concepts in pedagogy: «Others' words and books can provide us with knowledge, but it is experience that educates» (Dewey's, 1999, p. 12). He also noted that the correct application of the project method leads to the transformation of a problematic situation into a resolved one, thus giving the situation a new quality. G. Romanova states that the project method performs didactic, cognitive, educational, socializing, and developmental functions (Romanova, 2016, p. 56).

Dewey's student was W. Kilpatrick, who developed the concept of the «project system of education», also known as the project method. Kilpatrick emphasized that the implementation of project-based learning is not only capable of preparing students for life after school but also helps them organize their daily lives (Pandazi, 2023, p. 89).

In the 1920s and 1930s, the project method was actively used in the practice of Ukrainian schools, and since the time of independence, project-based learning has returned to pedagogy. The issue of implementing project-based learning

has been explored in research and publications by both foreign and Ukrainian scholars, including J. Dewey, E. Collins, W. Kilpatrick, O. Goroshkina, S. Izbash, L. Vasylevska, N. Matyash, S. Karaman, O. Karaman, L. Kartashova, V. Kyrychuk, O. Kobernyk, O. Lyubarska, N. Morse, O. Polinok, Ya. Pakhomova, Y. Polata, H. Selevk, O. Spirina, S. Shevtsova, and others.

Typically, all variations of project-based learning share standard features – understanding independently acquired information occurs through the lens of personal attitude and evaluation of results in the final product. As noted by German educator A. Flitner, the learning process requires the active involvement of the mind, heart, and hands («Lernen mit Kopf, Herz und Hand»), which signifies engagement «from the heart» (Kulalaieva, 2016, p. 79).

Presentation of the primary material. The project method is a system of education in which students acquire knowledge through effective planning and execution of practical tasks (projects) to achieve defined goals. This method enables the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical activities, promoting a deeper understanding of the material and the development of essential skills. According to O. Horoshkina, projects «help transform knowledge into abilities and skills» for learners (Horoshkina, 2004, p. 81).

The main idea of project-based learning is to focus students' educational and cognitive activities on achieving a specific outcome that arises while solving a defined problem. This means that learners' education should aim to acquire theoretical knowledge and its practical application (Bohdanets-Biloskalenko, Shumeiko, 2020, p. 10).

The application of project-based learning in Ukrainian language classes aims to activate students' cognitive interests, develop critical thinking, and, most importantly, enhance the skills for the practical application of acquired knowledge. However, this method requires students' prior preparation and clearly defined goals, questions, and instructions. Therefore, each project has a well-defined structure and consists of the following stages:

1. Organizational stage (defining the topic, objectives, implementation plan, and final product);
2. Preparatory stage (includes familiarization with educational information and source searching);
3. Project execution (usually takes place in designated groups that collaboratively work on

creating the final product; at this stage, each student needs to maintain a project journal where they record their achievements, challenges, and reflections, as this practice encourages self-analysis and self-improvement);

4. Presentation of the project;

5. Summarizing (includes self-assessment and peer assessment of participants) (Bohdanets-Biloskalkenko, Shumeiko, 2020, p. 11).

Adhering to all stages of project-based learning is crucial, as it provides a systematic approach to education, helping students better organize their actions. Each stage contributes to a deeper topic analysis, allowing for a more thorough understanding of the learning material and its practical application. This process fosters the development of critical skills, enables objective assessment of project results, identifies strengths and weaknesses of the completed work, and provides feedback, which is essential for further improvement of the learning process.

According to researchers (Barron & Darling-Hammond, Thomas) project-based learning encompasses the following aspects:

1. Students use their knowledge and skills to solve real-life problems (Barron, Darling-Hammond, 2008; Thomas, 2000).

In Ukrainian language lessons, learners can work on projects related to their daily lives, such as creating a school newspaper, writing articles about important events in the school or community, organizing a reading competition, or designing board games for learning Ukrainian. These activities contribute to students' professional self-determination.

2. Students' responsibility for the work they have completed increases.

In project implementation, students take responsibility for their actions and outcomes. Additionally, learners choose roles that require responsibility, such as editors, proofreaders, authors of articles, or event hosts. This is essential to professional self-determination as students learn to plan their actions, set goals, and achieve them. Furthermore, the responsibility for completing tasks in project activities prepares learners for future professional demands, where discipline and self-organization are critically important.

3. Teachers perform the roles of coaches and facilitators, supporting the implementation of student projects and conducting reflections (Thomas, 2000).

The Ukrainian language teacher is a mentor, helping students define the project goals, find the necessary resources for researching the topic, and suggest helpful language techniques. As a facilitator, the educator assists learners in navigating the world of professions by providing information about opportunities related to the Ukrainian language. This may include inviting specialists for discussions, lecturers, or mentors, enriching students' understanding of various career paths.

After completing the project, the teacher organizes a discussion in which students share their experiences, discuss what worked and what did not, and reflect on what they learned. These reflections allow learners to recognize their acquired skills and how they can be applied in various professional contexts.

4. Students usually work in pairs or groups (Barron, Darling-Hammond, 2008).

In Ukrainian language lessons, students can work in groups to create collaborative projects, such as dramatizing literary works, creating joint posters on language topics, or developing informational brochures. Teamwork fosters the development of communication and social skills, which are essential for successful professional activities. Students learn to communicate effectively, discuss ideas, and work together to achieve a common goal. This collaborative effort allows learners to identify their strengths, understand where they can professionally excel, and determine their interests, which greatly aids in their future career choices.

Fifth-grade students' implementation of various projects in Ukrainian language lessons should be based on factual information. Project-based learning must be linked to the curriculum and lesson plans. Thus, the project method promotes the realization of a competency-based approach (Kulalaieva, 2019, p. 80).

Competence, as defined by J. Raven, is based on conducted research and encompasses:

- the ability to work independently without constant supervision;
- readiness to take responsibility for one's own initiatives;
- willingness to identify problems and seek solutions;
- ability to analyze new situations;
- readiness to show initiative;
- ability to make decisions based on sound judgments, even with limited information;

– ability to collaborate with others;  
 – capacity to independently acquire knowledge, taking into account personal experience and feedback from the environment (Anishchenko, 2019, p. 96).

As we see from the above, project-based learning implements a competency-based approach, emphasizing integrating knowledge from various subjects and their real-life applications. This helps students understand how the theory taught in Ukrainian language classes is connected to practice and develops their ability to make informed decisions, evaluate different options, and take responsibility for their choices.

Project-based learning not only fosters students' professional self-determination but also cultivates competencies that are crucial for success in any profession. This gives learners a foundation for development that enables them to adapt to changes in the modern professional landscape and be prepared for new challenges.

**Conclusions and prospects for further research in this area.** In gymnasium education, which focuses on the individual's holistic development, project-based learning in Ukrainian language classes can become an essential

component of career guidance activities. The project method allows students to engage with actual tasks and situations actively, fostering their abilities to analyze, plan, and implement projects of varying complexity and themes. This provides learners with the opportunity to explore different professional roles, helping them to understand their own interests and inclinations.

It is worth noting that students develop communication skills and teamwork abilities through collaboration with peers, teachers, and professionals. These social skills are critically important in many professions, providing students with practical experience that enhances their readiness for future careers.

Thus, project-based learning in Ukrainian language classes enriches students' knowledge and actively influences their professional self-determination and career guidance. Students acquire essential skills and competencies that will be valuable in their future careers by integrating practical tasks. Project-based learning fosters students' awareness of career choices, develops their communication skills, and prepares them for the real challenges of the modern world.

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