

FORMS AND METHODS OF PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

Various forms and methods of problem-based learning are attributable to the most proficient program modes in foreign language classes at higher education institutions. They are distinguished by students' cognitive self-sufficiency level. A problem-based explanation of the learning material, partially research activity, heuristic discussion, problem-based individual research activity, problem-based lectures, discussions, role-plays are considered to be the problem-based learning methods. The contradiction between knowledge and ignorance makes up the backbone of the mentioned education technique. The necessity of searching for missing knowledge, solving the educational tasks, and the searching itself, demonstrated by a teacher using this method, make students' "experience" a problem-based situation. It is the case of interacting with problem learning information (material) which is defined as a 'cognitive need'. It aspires to gain knowledge from a teacher, find it by him/herself, 'discover' and take in something new that is in the students' course and which solves the conflict of the educational problem. A problem-based explanation of the learning material is performed in classes in two types: monologic (a lecture or story) and dialogical (a discussion or workshop).

A partially research activity being used in seminars and heuristic discussions is headed by special questions motivating students to individually discourse, intensively search for answers

The problem-based individual research activity is student's independent, individual search for a decision making, dealing with a problem and then the sequence of all exploring work to achieve the goal. In other words, students form a problem themselves and deal with it, solve it with a teacher's follow-up control. A problem-based lecture is not a simple introducing of the information but creating problem-based situations that cause a cognitive activity, ambition and assures conscientious acquisition of knowledge by students through understanding, "admitting" and solving these situations in collaboration with a teacher. The key element is that "formers are independent as much as possible and the latter is charged with general oversight".

A problem-based workshop allows to put learners under the conditions when intellectual collaboration is essential.

A problem-based discussion with a project advancement is appropriate when the content of the learning material is connected with issues of a scientific and social character, challenges and problems that gives an opportunity to elaborate the solutions in simulated and real implemented projects. The presence of a problem can be used in a role play as well. A settlement of a given problem-based situation is integral to this type of work. In its turn, it intensifies speaking motivation. In this case, a role play is defined as a student's spontaneous behavior as a reaction to his/her group mates in the certain situation where the student being one of the participants has to naturally improvise. A requirement to find the solution is determined by free communication.

The problematical character can be applied in classes with educational television. Giving a searching character to the class, it promotes students' intellection and their thinking. Creating problem situations with educational television is more effective than creating cases by a verbal method since it allows to better understand the essence of an educational challenge.

Keywords: education, problem-based learning, form and methods, a foreign language, contradiction, problem-based lecture, problem-based discussion, problem-based explanation of the learning material, problem-based workshop, partially research activity, student's individual research activity

1 INTRODUCTION

Education efficiency in classes of foreign languages directly depends on using and combination of various forms and methods of teaching. Problem-based learning is one of them which is determined by the student's cognitive individual/self-sufficiency level. A problem-based explanation of the learning material, partially research activity, heuristic discussion, problem-based individual research activity, problem-based lectures, discussions, role-plays are considered to be the problem-based learning methods.

2 METHODS

The following methods were used in the research: 1. the theoretical methods which are related to the literature searches, namely, such methods as compilation of the bibliography. It is the list of the references which have been chosen according to the researched problem. The next one is abstracting that is a concise text of the main content of one or several studies in general subjects. Summarizing is taking of more detailed records the basis of which is to sum up the main ideas and cases of research. Annotating is a short record of the general contents of a book or an article. Citing is a literal record of expressions which are actual or digital data given in the reference. 2. Theoretical analysis is highlighting and reviewing of specific features, characteristics of the phenomena. Having analyzed definite facts, classified and systematized them, we have revealed general and special features in them, set a general principle or rule. The analysis was followed by synthesis that helped to understand the subject matter of the phenomena studied. 3. The inductive and deductive methods are logical methods of generalization of the empirical data obtained. Due to the inductive method we have assumed the conception progress from the private opinions to the general output and from a general opinion to a personal conclusion by means of the deductive method. 4. A comparative method allowed us to set similarities and differences between objects and the phenomena. 5. Analysis and synthesis. The analysis has let to clarify which parts the studied object consists of and synthesis has let to connect the parts received when analyzing into integral. As a result, there was a connection of knowledge gained while analyzing in a single system. 6. Research and synthesis of pedagogical experience of teachers at higher education institutions and teachers of schools directed to the analysis of a status of practice, developing of the best practices.

3 RESULTS

Let us consider the methods and forms in more detail as they are the most efficient technique in classes of learning languages at Higher Education Institutions. A problem-based explanation of the learning material is carried out by means of the monologic speech: a lecture, narration or dialogical speech: workshops and conversations.

Another impactful form of problem-based learning is partially research activity used in seminars and heuristic discussions. All the classwork is directed by special questions motivating students to individually discourse, intensively search for answers (What would you do if you faced this problem? How could you check which of the statements was right? And so on). A teacher is to think out the system of problematic issues in the way that students could benefit from their own knowledge base however the answers should not be in the previous one. In other words, these issues are to cause intellectual difficulties (challenges) and determined thinking search.

There is good reason to invent possible "indirect tips" and leading questions, but at the same time, the teacher him/herself sums up the main points relying on students' answers. It is necessary to mention partially-search activity is that the teacher divides a problem task to sub-problems, schedules the steps to support, but students should solve the problems themselves at the same time each step assumes a creative activity. At the same time the students should master specific, search techniques that we are to teach them. These techniques are to pick up appropriate literature, find facilities to solve a problem, choose it, plan an activity, arrange means for the solution of a task, formulate a hypothesis, check it and issue rationally results. Partial and search activity is used in classes of foreign languages in Higher educational institutions. It is also used when the new material is being introduced by the method of heuristic discussion. The accurate questions or well-organized supervising and its analysis lead students to "discovery" of a consistent pattern,

concept definition and etc.

The heuristic discussion, as it is specified in academic literature, is the interconnected series of questions more or fewer of them are small problems and all together leading to the solution of the problem set by the teacher [1, p. 201]. According to some researchers, the heuristic discussion represents a students and teacher's dialogue which is being developed on the basis of the analysis of the concrete facts with the purpose of a gradual discovery of the essence of the subject studied. Since it has all structural elements of search activity the heuristic conversation is used in classes of foreign languages because it contributes to raising and developing of intellectual activity, students' independence, their thinking, imagination, formation of creative approaches; promotes development of abilities to logically argue, prove, attract the available knowledge to justify judgments and conclusions. Knowledge gained during the heuristic discussions during their work becomes more conscious, mobile and rather solid [2, p. 179].

The presence of problems in classes of foreign languages also contains in independent/individual research activity of students that is completely individual search for a problem solution and assumes existence of a problem and accomplishment of all exploring actions necessary for its settlement, i.e. students themselves state a problem and sort it out with the teacher's follow-up control. It provides with a productive creative activity, maintains students' interest, gives full, well-understood, quickly and flexibly used knowledge. In the meantime, the teacher and students use such research methods as the theoretical analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, abstraction and specification, promotion of hypotheses, their proof or denial, etc. Individual research activity is carried out in classes when writing reports, working on and presenting projects, developing of a great and important issue, searching for corresponding literature for a subject, performing individual tasks from the teacher, etc.

Problem-based explanation is used in classes of foreign languages at a stage of obtaining new knowledge, partial and search activity is used at the stage of consolidation and individual research activity covers all stages of the learning process.

It is fairly possible to notice that the problematical character is practiced in education at foreign language classes. Lectures, workshops, seminars, discussions, conversations, role-playing games can be problem-based. The presence of problem covers also individual/independent work and educational television.

A problem-based lecture is not a simple introducing of the information but creating problem-based situations that cause a cognitive activity, ambition and assures conscientious acquisition of knowledge by students through understanding, "admitting" and solving these situations in collaboration with a teacher when "students are independent as much as possible and the teacher generally guides". The experience has proven that it is most effectively to build problem lectures on the scheme "problem-knowledge" that creates a problem-based situation when students have to creatively think to find a solution. Such lecture begins with "an unresolved task" creating a problem situation which can be solved only at the productive, creative level in audience, and for this purpose it is necessary to attract additional reserves of attention, memory and thinking to work. It will intensify students' cognitive activity. In other words, during the lecture the teacher focuses on creative mastering of the material, keynotes how to study this or that issue stimulating students' individual activity, developing their individuality and independence.

The analysis of academic literature showed that the necessity of search for missing knowledge to sort out contradictions of an educational problem and the search itself shown by the teacher at a problem-based lecture cause students' "experience" of a problem situation that is the interaction situation with the material of an educational problem which is characterized by cognitive need – the aspiration to gain knowledge from the teacher, to find it individually or "open" for him/herself and acquire still unknown knowledge (which is in the student course and resolves a contradiction of an educational problem), and preparation and realization of a problem-based lecture demand from the teacher of specific psychological and pedagogical competence: to know the theory of problem-based education, to understand essence and distinctive features of a problem-based lecture, to master methodical methods of screening and arranging of the content of a problem-based lecture [2, p. 180].

The problem-based learning in classes of foreign languages is used as well at workshop (seminars) as the workshops made on a problem basis allow to place students under conditions when intellectual cooperation becomes a necessity. The dynamism inherent problem-based learning intensifies participants' influence of a problem situation at each other, involves them in various communications, creates more favorable prerequisites for cooperation in the cognitive areas. The seminar as school of thinking can be effective only if it takes place in a situation of a certain freedom, unselfconsciousness and reliance to participants of a discussion.

Problem-based learning tasks in foreign language classes are specific and diverse: deepening of the ideas of a lecture course; familiarizing of students with research activity, etc. But the main thing what the teacher has to aspire to, being the head of a problem-based workshop, is the arrangement of creative discussions of the studied issues and, in particular, the organization of a discussion as the highest form of expression of students' active thinking. Discussions as a training method presents a problematical character since it is based on exchange of views on a certain problem.

A problem-based discussion with promotion of projects is used in classes of foreign languages as well. This approach is applicable only in that case when the maintenance of a learning material is connected with problems of scientific, applicable and social character, contradictions, problems which solution can be worked out in imitated and possibly viable implementing projects [3, p. 202]. Such a way of a class arranging with all options is oriented, first of all, to promotion of the creative ideas and their development. An important structural feature is the successive combination of individual work, work in small groups and all-group discussions. As a result, the ideas stated by each student, outright or indirectly, are included in a small-group discussion, then in a general discussion. The students who are loners, those who cannot do the unrolled analysis of a problem and plan the way to find a solution, those who can be at a loss in searching for the necessary data - all these students must not be excluded from the discussion course. Thus, approach combines two key points: problematical character of content and a care of each student's participation in a discussion.

Conversations can be problem-based in classes of a foreign language as well, in particular, heuristic and problem-based searching. The teacher raises a number of the consistent and related questions. Students answer them, state some assumptions and try to independently prove their justice, carrying out thereby some individual/independent advance forward in gaining of new knowledge.

The heuristic discussion or conversation differs from problem-based search in the fact that statements suggested by students during the heuristic discussion usually run upon only one of basic elements of a new subject and during the problem-based searching conversation students resolve the whole series of problem situations. But these differences are conventions and concern only a measure of problem situations using.

The presence of a problem can be used in a role play as well. An essential element of it is the solution of a problem situation that in turn, escalates motivation of statements. In this case, role-playing game is defined as spontaneous students' behavior as their reaction to behavior of other people participating in a certain situation within which the student, acting as one of participants, has to improvise freely. A requirement to find the solution is determined by free, natural communication. Setting of a problem and need of its solution serve the development of students' critical thinking, and the necessity of careful devise of a situation, search for the only way out develops logical thinking, the ability to reason, to express ideas, convince talkers considering at the same time their arguments and the facts. All these optimally intensify students' communicative activity in classes therefore the use of problem-based role-play is an effective method.

The problematical character in classes of a foreign language can be used with educational television which solves a problem to intensify students' thinking which gives a lesson a problem-based searching feature. Creation of problem situations with the help of educational television is a more effective method than their creation by a verbal method as allows to understand the essence of an educational problem better; attracts the additional stimulating emotions, interest in a problem, search for a solution; gives a chance if necessary repeatedly to return to initial television didactic material; essentially in a new way to realize such an important thesis of the theory of education as a combination of abstractness with visual aspects.

A problem-based task given from a TV screen surely has to have a pause for an individual/personal decision, but it does not mean that there have to be "inactive, passive pieces". At the moments of these pauses the teacher gives the material helping to direct solving of the task which is filling up knowledge with the new facts which are not complicating the process of the individual solution.

The academic analysis of theoretical aspects and practice of educational television gives the grounds to define the following focus of its using in problem-based learning. Firstly, it is a component of the educational information necessary for setting of the educational problem that allows students to better see and understand a contradiction in the process. Secondly, it is the main didactic material reflecting essence of an educational problem on the basis of which problem situations are created and resolved. Finally, it is supporting material facilitating the search and making this or that decision by learners and promoting the proof of the drawn conclusions and generalizations.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Thus, use of various forms and methods of problem-based learning in classes of foreign languages in Higher educational institutions is important and efficient for development of students' creative potential as problem-based learning promotes and forms interest in studying, stimulate initiative, students' activity, flexibility and independence (self-sufficiency) of their thinking, attaches to independent and creative gaining of knowledge, promotes self-education, creates strong motivation, develops such personal trait as the creative relation to the matter, independence, consciousness, activity and responsibility that is especially important within learning process in classes. Forms and methods of problem-based learning, which are distinguished by a degree of cognitive students' independence, are the most effective methods and forms of education. These are a problem-based explanation of the new learning material, partially research activity, heuristic discussion, problem-based individual research activity, problem-based lectures, discussions, role-plays and others. The contradiction between knowledge and ignorance makes up the backbone of the mentioned education technique. The necessity of searching for missing knowledge, solving the educational tasks, and the searching itself, demonstrated by a teacher using this method, make students' "experience" a problem-based situation and aspire to gain knowledge from a teacher, find it by him/herself, 'discover' and take in something new that is in the students' course and which solves the conflict of the educational problem. All the forms and methods should be combined and varied. The efficiency of education directly depends on skillful application and combination of different forms and methods problem-based learning in classes of foreign languages. Relying on the principle of problem presence with taking into account the content of the learning material and forms of the classes arrangement, we can state that the level of students' knowledge and their readiness to the self-study increase, their ability to see new conditions develops where students are in a position of an active researcher of a certain problem that, in turn, considerably increases interest in learning and intensify students' educational activity.

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