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DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT METHOD IN PEDAGOGICAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Abstract: This article examines the project method as a pivotal pedagogical technology that promotes active student engagement in the learning process while cultivating critical competencies. The development and evolution of the project method in pedagogical theory and practice are discussed through distinct stages. The authors highlight the increasing significance of this approach within the framework of contemporary educational settings.

Keywords: project method, pedagogy, active learning, core competencies, classification, periodization.

РАЗВИТИЕ ПРОЕКТНОГО МЕТОДА В ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКОЙ ТЕОРИИ И ПРАКТИКЕ

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Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается проектный метод как ключевая педагогическая технология, способствующая активному участию студентов в учебном процессе и развитию критически важных компетенций. Проанализированы этапы развития и эволюции проектного метода в педагогической теории и практике. Авторы подчеркивают возрастающее значение данного подхода в рамках современного образовательного пространства.

Ключевые слова: проектный метод, педагогика, активное обучение, ключевые компетенции, классификация, периодизация

Contemporary education prioritizes the cultivation of skills essential for the current century, including critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and collaborative teamwork. The project method aligns closely with these educational objectives, offering students opportunities to translate theoretical knowledge into practical application while allowing educators to incorporate interdisciplinary approaches into the curriculum.

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This pedagogical method is presently experiencing considerable transformation and adaptation to align with the demands of modern educational contexts, particularly through the integration of digital technologies and online platforms. Within the framework of STEM education, encompassing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, project-based activities frequently assume a central role in facilitating student learning.

The origins of project-based learning can be traced to the philosophies of John Dewey and William Heard Kilpatrick, who were instrumental in shaping student-centered and active learning approaches. John Dewey, a key figure in progressive pedagogy, introduced the concept of "learning by doing" in the early twentieth century. He argued that the educational process should be closely connected to real-life situations and practical tasks, fostering the development of students' personal and intellectual capacities. Dewey emphasized the importance of experiential learning, asserting that knowledge acquisition should extend beyond theoretical understanding to encourage independent thinking and informed decision-making[1].

Building on Dewey's principles, William Heard Kilpatrick further advanced these ideas by formalizing the project method as a pedagogical strategy. Kilpatrick posited that the project method cultivates essential qualities such as independence, initiative, and responsibility. He maintained that engaging in project-based activities not only enhances students' mastery of academic content but also enables them to apply this knowledge in practical contexts, thus facilitating the integration of skills and competencies[2].

The contributions of Dewey and Kilpatrick established a foundational framework for twentieth-century pedagogical theory, positioning the project method as a pivotal component of educational practices designed to foster learners' personal development through experiential learning and practical problem-solving.

In the Soviet Union, the project method gained prominence during the 1920s, but its implementation faced criticism due to its complexity and perceived inefficiencies under certain conditions. By the latter half of the twentieth century, the method experienced a revival, driven by renewed interest in active learning strategies and competency-based approaches.

Despite its extensive adoption in educational practice, further refinement of the project method remains a critical challenge. A comparative analysis of domestic and international experiences is vital for identifying commonalities and divergences in approaches to project-based learning, underscoring the importance of continued research in this area.

The historical development of the project method can be traced through several key stages, beginning with the formation of its foundational preconditions in the late

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nineteenth and early twentieth centuries [1]. This period was characterized by a reassessment of general education systems, the emergence of humanistic principles in teaching and upbringing, and the conceptualization of developmental education.

In Russia, Leo Tolstoy was among the first to address these ideas, drawing on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's theory of "free education." Tolstoy regarded education as a process of creating conditions for the natural development of students' abilities, emphasizing the teacher's role as non-intrusive and supportive. This perspective laid the groundwork for further exploration of learner-centered pedagogies.

Russian educators N.V. Chekhov and K.N. Ventzel expanded on these principles, advocating for an educational system structured around a specially designed learning environment. Their contributions were integral to the early development of the project method in Russian pedagogy.

Practical applications of these ideas were pioneered by a group of educators led by S.T. Shatsky, who actively implemented project-based approaches. Their work provided some of the earliest concrete examples of this method in educational practice, demonstrating its potential to transform teaching and learning processes.

The period from the 1910s to the early 1920s represents a vibrant phase in the development of international pedagogy and education, particularly through significant contributions by American scholars William Heard Kilpatrick and Elliot Collings [4]. Kilpatrick, a student of John Dewey, established the theoretical foundation of the project method and proposed its initial classification. Meanwhile, Collings conducted experimental studies to demonstrate the advantages of the project method over traditional forms of education, with his findings published in Experience with the Project Method in American Schools. [2]

The subsequent decades of the 1920s and 1930s marked an active phase in the implementation of the project method. During this time, experimental schools widely adopted elements of this approach through initiatives such as the Dalton Plan, individualized study plans, and integrated learning programs. Research by N.V. Matyash and V.D. Simonenko highlighted the role of project activities in cultivating a "project culture" and practical problem-solving skills among students [5].

The 1930s through the 1950s, often referred to as a period of scientific silence, saw a decline in the interest and application of project-based learning. Despite this downturn, the work of B. Otto preserved the relevance of the project method by framing projects as tools for integrating theoretical knowledge with practical tasks.

The period from the 1960s to the 1990s marked a revival of interest in the project method, both theoretically and practically. Notable contributions during this era include Bert Schlesinger's "School Without Walls" in the United States, which

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expanded the method's applicability, and research by N.Y. Pakhomova [6] and E.S. Polat [7], which enhanced its pedagogical foundations.

The late 20th and early 21st centuries, often referred to as the prefigurative period, signify a culmination of historical ideas and modern educational demands. This era is characterized by renewed interest in innovative pedagogical technologies, driven by globalization, rapid advancements in information technologies, and shifting educational paradigms. Modern approaches to project-based learning emphasize the integration of historical methodologies with contemporary strategies for organizing the learning process, enabling the project method to address the challenges of the 21st century effectively.

The contemporary development of computer-based and internet-driven projects has significantly expanded the scope of the project method. This approach is now widely employed across all types of educational institutions, including preschool, general education, professional training, and supplementary education programs. Since the late 20th century, the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into the project method has introduced new possibilities for educational interaction. These advancements have enabled networked initiatives, remote collaboration among students, and inter-school projects, thereby enriching the educational experience and fostering greater connectivity.

The project method demonstrates remarkable adaptability to the characteristics of diverse educational systems and cultural contexts. Its applications extend across primary, secondary, and higher education, as well as professional training and education for children with special educational needs. This versatility positions the project method as a universal platform for integrating interdisciplinary knowledge, enabling students to tackle practical, real-world challenges while developing essential 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork.

In the era of globalization, the project method serves as an effective tool for fostering intercultural competencies. International collaborative projects not only facilitate the acquisition of foreign language skills but also promote a deeper understanding of cultural diversity. By making learning more meaningful and practice-oriented, these projects contribute to the development of globally competent individuals who are better equipped to navigate an interconnected world.

The project method represents an educational technology centered on students' independent and collaborative activities, designed to address specific tasks and achieve meaningful outcomes. This approach emphasizes the integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines while fostering the development of research skills, critical thinking, and creativity.

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Within the framework of modern pedagogy, the project method occupies a significant position in the competency-based approach. It plays a pivotal role in cultivating essential skills, including collaboration, effective communication, innovative thinking, and analytical ability. Moreover, it provides opportunities for interdisciplinary learning, enabling students to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical, real-world applications.

As highlighted by A.A. Verbitsky, the project method empowers students not only to acquire knowledge but also to apply it actively in practice. This learner-centered approach enhances student independence, responsibility, and initiative, aligning with contemporary educational objectives[3].

Recognized as an effective pedagogical technology, the project method equips students with critical 21st-century skills such as analytical thinking, teamwork, and creativity. In the context of globalization, it further supports the development of intercultural competencies, enriching the educational process by fostering a more meaningful and practice-oriented learning experience.

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