

IMPLEMENTING PROJECT BASED LEARNING METHOD IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Abstract: The concept of Project-Based Learning refers to an educational methodology where students are encouraged to engage in real-life projects over an extended period of time. In contrast to traditional learning methods, PBL focuses on problem-solving and active exploration. Children in preschool are naturally curious and eager to explore their surroundings, making them excellent candidates for this type of learning.

Key words: preschoolers, project-based learning, preschool education, cognitive skills, active learning, problem solving

Introduction

In the world of globalization, developing young minds involves the implementation of innovative teaching strategies. Although the project based learning sounds too complicated and overwhelming, it all melts out as you get into the process. Although it is mostly applied in upper classes or higher education, in the experience of most of the developed countries such as Japan, Korea, China etc., project based learning is becoming more popular and efficient method to improve the range of children's abilities, especially their cognitive skills. For preschoolers, this method is particularly advantageous, not only in cognitive development but also in the context of learning foreign languages. This article delves into the main principles of PBL, its benefits for preschoolers, especially in foreign language acquisition, and practical ways to implement this approach in early childhood education.

Literature review

Preschool pedagogy and teaching foreign languages in early childhood have been explored worldwide and new methods and strategies to reach full potentials are still being worked out by famous scholars. Researches in applying project based learning in teaching process and in the preschools education have been carried out by Sara Lev, Amanda Clark, Erin Starkey, Suzie Boss, John Larmer, Laura Mebert, etc. [1,2,3]

Project-Based Learning is an instructional methodology that encourages students to engage in real-world projects over an extended period of time. Unlike traditional learning approaches, PBL emphasizes active exploration and problem-solving. Preschoolers, naturally curious and eager to explore their environment, are ideal candidates for this learning strategy.

Project based learning help the students to learn and discover about themselves and the world around them. Children ask questions, make plans and follow their own ideas. The aim of project based learning is not only to teach children the academic content, but more importantly make them understand themselves as human beings and as learners. Being the center of the process, they build relationship with peers, with their teachers and parents and

with the members of a wider community. Children's inquisitive nature and interests are enhanced by PBL and children are engaged in explorations and discoveries. [1]

Research Methodology

The method of this research is exploratory in nature. The study of project based teaching strategies and techniques brings us to summarizing key elements of PBL:

1. Sustained Inquiry: Projects often span several days or weeks, allowing children to engage deeply with a subject.

2. Authenticity: PBL connects learning to real-world situations, making it easier for preschoolers to see the significance of what they are studying.

3. Student Choice and voice: Children are allowed to select topics or methods to explore, fostering a sense of ownership and motivation.

4. Collaborative Work: Projects typically involve group collaboration, enhancing social skills and teamwork among peers.

5. Reflection: Regular opportunities for reflection enable children to evaluate what they have learned and how they approached the project. [4]

To successfully integrate PBL into preschool classrooms, educators can follow these practical steps:

1. Identify Learning Goals: Educational objectives should be determined according to the preschool curriculum. For instance, if the goal is to enhance vocabulary in a foreign language, select a project topic that supports this aim.

2. Design Engaging Projects: Create projects around themes that are attractive for early age learners, such as "Animals Around the World" or "Gardening in Our Community." Ensure that the projects require active participation and exploration.

3. Facilitate Group Work: Encourage children to work in small groups, emphasizing collaboration. Assign roles within these groups to ensure every child participates actively.

4. Utilize Diverse Resources: Integrate various multimedia resources—books, videos, and interactive tools—applying different learning styles. This variety will enrich the learning experience and keep learners engaged throughout the whole process.

5. Encourage Reflection: After completing a project, facilitate discussions where children can share their thoughts on the process, the language they learned, and what they enjoyed most. This self-reflection can enhance their understanding and retention of the material. [5]

Analysis and results

Implementing PBL offers numerous benefits for preschoolers, particularly when it comes to cognitive development and language acquisition.

1. Enhanced Cognitive Skills: Engaging children in projects help them to think critically and solve problems on their own. Research has shown that early childhood educational programs involving project-based task lead to stronger cognitive skills, such as better problem-solving abilities and improved analytical thinking.

2. Language Development: For preschoolers learning foreign languages, PBL provides context-rich environments that enhance vocabulary acquisition. Through collaborative

projects, children naturally use new language structures and patterns and they improve their verbal skills.

3. Social Skills and Emotional Intelligence: Working on projects in groups, children are engaged in communication and collaboration. Preschoolers learn to get assigned roles, share their ideas, and provide feedback, which are essential skills for both academic and social success.

4. Motivation and Engagement: The hands-on, interactive characteristics of PBL captures children's interest, making them more enthusiastic about learning. When preschoolers notice the results of their efforts, they feel a sense of accomplishment and motivation to engage in future projects. [6]

Conclusion/Recommendations

Project-Based Learning is a unique and innovative teaching strategy to preschool education, particularly in enhancing cognitive skills and facilitating foreign language acquisition. By focusing on inquiry, collaboration, and real-world relevance, PBL not only attracts young learners but also provides them with essential life skills. As educators implement this methodology, they create rich, engaging learning environments that lay a solid foundation for future academic success.

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