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## **Applying Project-Based Teaching Method in EFL at Tertiary Level**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*There has been an increasing interest in the application of Project-based learning among educators, lectures and teachers in Vietnam. However, at Department of Foreign Language, University of Labour and Social Affairs, Project-based learning is not commonly applied in classrooms. Results from questionnaires for lecturers here revealed that although most of the lecturers have heard about project-based learning, not so many of them are clear about the benefits as well as the procedure of the methods.*

**Key words:** *Project-based learning, project, project-based method, modern teaching methods, EFL*

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### **1. Introduction**

Project teaching has been practiced for a long time in the world and is currently a new teaching method that many Vietnamese educators, lecturers, and teachers are interested in. Project teaching is a student-centered teaching model. It helps develop knowledge and related skills through open-ended tasks, encouraging students to explore and realize the knowledge they have learned during the implementation process and create their own products. However, at universities in general and at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and the University of Labor and Social Affairs in particular, project teaching is not yet widely used. Here, many teachers are still confused with this teaching method. With the development of science and technology and the 4.0 working environment, applying project-based teaching methods to foreign language teaching aims to promote positivity, initiative, creativity, and passion for learning. Learner practice is an extremely necessary task.

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### **2. Literature review**

#### **2.1. Project teaching**

##### **2.1.1. What is project-based teaching?**

Project-based teaching method is a product of the American progressive education movement. The idea was initially introduced in 1908 as a new method of teaching agriculture (Kilpatrick, 1918), but educator William H. Kilpatrick elaborated on the concept and popularized it worldwide in his article His famous work: "The Project Method" (1918). Today, project-based teaching can be understood as an organizational method for teachers and students to work together to solve not only theoretically but also practically a comprehensive learning task, and create conditions for students to make their own decisions in all stages of learning, resulting in the creation of a certain activity product (Su, 2013). Thus, it can be seen that the nature of the project-based teaching method or Project Teaching is towards active learning activities, students are the center, against passive learning habits.

##### **2.1.2. Advantages of project-based teaching**

Project-based teaching helps develop knowledge and skills through open-ended tasks, students explore and apply the knowledge they have learned during project implementation (Tra, 2007). In addition to helping learners grasp knowledge vividly, giving students projects to complete also helps them associate school knowledge with real life, helping them I develop other necessary skills such as teamwork skills, time management skills, problem solving skills, information gathering and processing skills, presentation skills, and defending opinions. of the individual before the collective (Thanh, 2010). Through these activities, learners establish their own knowledge. So it can be said that project teaching has many advantages compared to traditional teaching methods, perhaps the most prominent advantage is creating excitement for learners, making them feel that learning is real. interesting, thereby inspiring and passionate about learning for children.

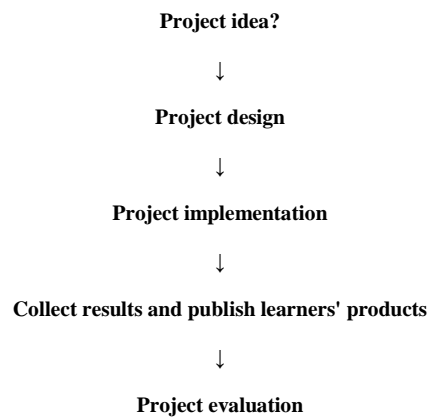
**Classification of project-based teaching according to the complexity of the learning content:**

- Practical project: is a project whose focus is on performing a complex practical task based on applying basic knowledge and skills learned to create a physical product.

- Integrative project: is a project with content that integrates many activities such as learning about practice, researching theory, solving problems, and performing practical and hands-on activities.

#### ***Steps to organize project-based teaching***

Project-based teaching can be divided into 5 main steps as follows:



#### **Step 1: Project idea**

Project ideas can come from social practice, from the content of the training program or from the learners themselves.

Usually, project ideas come from teachers. Teachers analyze the subject curriculum to select content that can be used for projects, or teachers can introduce some research topics. On the other hand, students can also come up with project ideas (Van, 2015). If the project idea comes from the student, the student is responsible for higher learning tasks and the project is often more suitable to the student's interests. However, the limitation of project ideas coming from students is that it will cause many difficulties for teachers to plan projects according to the training program. Therefore, to overcome the disadvantage of project ideas coming from students, teachers and students can also discuss, propose, and determine the project's topic and purpose.

#### **Step 2: Project design**

This step involves building a set of guiding questions for learners, helping learners clearly understand the nature of the problems and forming a system of knowledge (Binh, 2015). This set of questions usually includes overview questions, lesson questions and content questions.

- General questions: are general questions that only provide general direction, this question is related to many lessons and many subjects. Usually, each project has only one general question.

- Lesson questions: are usually open-ended questions but only cover a specific topic or lesson. The goal of lesson questions is to support and develop general questions. Usually, in a project, there are one or two unit questions.

- Content questions: are direct questions to support achieving project-based learning goals. Usually, in a project, there will be many lesson questions.

#### **Step 3: Implement the project**

The teacher organizes groups of students to carry out work according to the set plan. The project implementation team conducts intellectual activities and practical, hands-on activities to complete the assigned project.

#### **Step 4: Collect results and publish learners' products**

The results of project implementation are specific physical products created through practical activities.

#### **Step 5: Evaluate the project**

Teachers organize activities to evaluate the implementation process and results as well as skills achieved by groups of students implementing the project through assessment tools with specific and clear criteria (Thanh, 2010). Teachers should encourage students to participate in the assessment process, as well as organize periodic assessments and apply many different forms of assessment.

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### **3. Current status of project-based teaching at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Labor and Social Affairs**

The results of distributing survey questionnaires to 28 lecturers at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Labor and Social Affairs, showed that the majority of teachers (68%) had heard of the concept of Project Teaching, as well as had a general understanding of the concept of teaching. project learning, but there are still many teachers in the Faculty (72%) who do not know all the characteristics and do not grasp the process of organizing project

teaching. The teacher survey also shows that most teachers have not used project-based teaching much in class, however, the majority of teachers (92%) have a desire to learn more about project-based teaching and hope to learn more about project-based teaching. There are favorable conditions to apply this method in foreign language teaching. The biggest difficulty on the part of the lecturers found through the lecturer survey is that the lecturers have not found project ideas to assign to students to tie in with the content of foreign language teaching in the English program at the University. Studying Labor and Society.

#### 4. Some learning projects applied to foreign language teaching at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Labor and Social Affairs

The following are some learning projects that can be applied in foreign language teaching for teachers of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Labor and Social Affairs with the hope that teachers here can apply them successfully, widely and regularly. Through these projects, and more importantly, from the model of these projects, many other projects can be created for students.

##### 4.1. Project to record conversation video clips

The main goal of the project is to develop the student group's ability to communicate in English.

The specific steps to carry out the project are presented in the following table:

Steps	Teacher's Duties	Student duties
<i>Step 1: project idea</i>	Give some project topics, for example; Record a video clip about a trip to visit a museum in Hanoi, or a tourist destination in Hanoi, or your group's sidewalk restaurants in Hanoi.	Collaborate with the teacher to come up with project ideas by choosing one of the topics the teacher offers that suits the group's interests and implementation conditions.
<i>Step 2: project design</i>	Teachers develop a set of guiding questions for students to carry out projects - Content questions: + grammatical structures/vocabulary used to ask for directions, information about tourist attractions/sightseeing/restaurants + grammatical structures/vocabulary used to comment/evaluate tourist destinations/sightseeing/restaurants + grammatical structures/vocabulary used to interrupt and ask for information in English conversations.	tudents work in research groups to answer the teacher's guiding questions.
<i>Step 3: Project implementation</i>	Teachers support students when they need it.	Students work in groups: - Plan the budget, time, and method of project implementation. - Go to the group's chosen location. - Record a group conversation video at the selected location related to the application of vocabulary and grammar content in the lesson. - The group together edits and re-edits the recorded video clip content to suit the time and content requirements requested by the teacher.
<i>Step 4: Collect results and publish learners' products</i>	Collect the student group's project products as video clips and present them in class using a projector. Submit video clips	Submit video clips
<i>Step 5: Evaluate the project</i>	Evaluate the student group's project through the available criteria: - how to present the video	Participate in evaluating projects of other groups with teachers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- quality of student conversations (does it meet lesson content requirements based on lesson questions)</li> <li>- Effectiveness of group activities of student groups</li> </ul>	
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#### 4.2. Magazine writing project in English

The main goal of the project is to develop students' English writing ability in many different writing genres, which can be applied to students studying specialized English.

The specific steps to carry out the project are presented in the following table:

<b>Steps</b>	<b>Teacher's Duties</b>	<b>Student duties</b>
<b>Step 1: project idea</b>	Come up with some topics to write about in the magazine, for example about current events, sports, majors, and ESP topics.	Collaborate with the teacher to come up with project ideas by choosing one of the topics the teacher offers that suits the group's interests and implementation conditions.
<b>Step 2: project design</b>	Teachers develop a set of guiding questions for students to carry out projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Content questions:</li> <li>+ structure and style of different types of articles used in magazines: review writing, descriptive writing, interview writing, ...</li> <li>+ typical grammatical structures used to write different types of articles in magazines.</li> <li>+ vocabulary used to write different types of articles in magazines.</li> </ul>	Students work in research groups to answer the teacher's guiding questions.
<b>Step 3: Project implementation</b>	Teachers support students when they need it	Students work in groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plan the budget, time, and method of project implementation.</li> <li>- Work in groups to decide on the content and sections that will be in the magazine as well as decide on the design of the magazine.</li> <li>- Divide writing into different sections of the magazine related to applying the structure, vocabulary, and grammar of different types of articles in the lesson.</li> <li>- Edit the magazine's content and edit each other's articles in the group.</li> <li>- Print the magazine according to the group's chosen design.</li> </ul>
Step 4: Collect results and publish learners' products	Collecting student project products are magazines.	Submit the magazine.
<b>Step 5: Evaluate the project</b>	Evaluate the student group's project through the available criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how to present the magazine</li> <li>- quality of articles in the magazine (does it meet the lesson content requirements based on the lesson questions)</li> <li>- Effectiveness of group activities of student groups</li> </ul>	-Participate in evaluating projects of other groups with the teacher

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## 5. Conclusion

The application of Project-based Teaching in foreign language teaching is an inevitable trend, because this method has proven its effectiveness in promoting students' creativity, self-study, and self-research. By assigning learning projects that closely follow the learning content in the curriculum, combining theory and practice, Project-based Teaching is a useful tool in improving the quality of foreign language teaching and learning. at schools.

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