The Implementation of Project-Based Learning in the MYP (Midlle Years Programme of the International Baccalaureate) Unit Planner "The Economy of the Republic of Armenia" To Enhance Geography Teaching Process

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Keywords: Project-based learning, the MYP unit Planner, The National Economy of the Republic of Armenia, 21st century skills, Geography Teaching Process

Աշխարհագրության ուսուցման գործընթացի արդյունավետության բարձրացման նպատակով պրոբլեմային ուսուցման կիրառումը «Հայաստանի Հանրապետության տնտեսությունը» ՄԲ հետազոտական միավորի շրջանակներում (Միջազգային բակալավրիատի հիմնական դպրոցում)

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Ամփոփում։ Պրոբլեմային ուսուցման կիրառումը աշխարհագրության ուսուցման արդյունավետության բարձրացման ուղիներից մեկն է։ Սույն հոդվածում հեղինակները դիտարկում են «Շիրակացու ձեմարան» միջազգային գիտակրթական համալիրում կիրառված «Հայաստանի Հանրապետության տնտեսությունը» ՄԲ հետազոտական միավորի (Միջազգային Բակալավրիատի հիմնական դպրոցում) օրինակը։ Վերջինիս շրջանակներում դպրոցականներին հանձնարարվել է պրոբլեմային առաջադրանք «ստեղծել» ընկերություններ՝ հիմնվելով ՀՀ բնական պայմանների և բնական ռեսուրսների առանձնահատկությունների վրա։ Արդյունքում՝ սովորողները հետաքրքրությամբ յուրացրել են ՀՀ տնտեսության վերաբերյալ թեմաները, ներկայացրել առաջարկություններ ՀՀ տնտեսության ձյուղերի և ենթաձյուղերի զարգացման վերաբերյալ, «հիմնել» ընկերություններ՝ զարգացնելով ձեռնարկատիրական մտածողությունը և «քսանմեկերորդ դարի» կարողությունները։

Վ՜ռորոշ բառեր՝ պրոբլեմային ուսուցում, Միջազգային Բակալավրիատի հիմնական դպրոցում կիրառվող հետազոտական միավոր, Հայաստանի Հանրապետության տնտեսություն, «քսանմեկերորդ դարի» կարողությունները, աշխարհագրության ուսուցման գործընթաց

Реализация проектного обучения с помощью МУР (Основная школа международного бакалавриата) Юнита "Экономика Республики Армения" для улучшение процесса обучения географии

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Резюме: Авторы рассматривают проектное обучение как одно из решений повышения эффективности учебного процесса географии. В данной работе авторы представляют педагогический опыт в международном научнообразовательном комплексе "Лицей Ширакаци", приведя пример преподавания через МҮР (Программа основной средней школы) юнит "Экономика Республики Армения". Задачей проекта было "создание" компаний на основе географических особенностей и природных ресурсов РА. В результате студенты мотивированно изучали экономику РА и предлагали свои идеи по развитию новых отраслей экономики и "созданию" новых предприятий, думая, как предприниматели и развивая навыки 21-ого века.

Ключевые слова: проектное обучение, МҮР юнит, Национальная экономика Республики Армения, навыки XXI века, процесс обучения географии.

Contemporary Geography Teaching is facing with issues to develop students' 21st century skills in order to prepare them ongoing changes of the real life. UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, refers to quality of education by its Goal 4 [2]. The International Baccalaureate Organization (the IBO) also declares the importance of 21st century skills by its mission [9]. Geography is a subject of the IB "Individuals and Societies" (I&S) subject group. The IB makes stresses towards inquiry, real-world case studies and analysis [5.p.7]. Thus, developing students' problem –solving and critical thinking skills are vital aims of modern Geography Teaching too being discussed by international significant organizations.

Problem-based education was developed through centuries since ancient times, but Yu.K. Babanski, I.Ya. Lerner, M.I.Makhmutov, A.M. Matyushkin, I.A. Ilnizkaya, I.P.Podlasi, V.A. Slastenin, M.N. Skatkina and others developed its current theory [1].

Project-based learning is a part of active learning, where students deal with problem-based situations and use their knowledge and skills in new ways or unknown situations by processing mental operations such as comparing, contrasting, synthesizing, evaluating, creating, etc. These develop students' critical and creative thinking skills, as well as learners' metacognitive thinking [3].

Therefore, we hypothesize the Problem-Based learning as a way to modernize Geography Lessons and develop students' 21st century skills.

The IB education uses unit planners to target its aims and objectives. In the context of the MYP curriculum (Middle Years Programme), a unit is a period of study that concludes with a summative assessment [4, p. 50].

It is a complex document, which has the following main parts: Inquiry, Action, and Reflection, e.g. the MYP Unit Planner "The Economy of the Republic of Armenia" (Table 1).

We chose a research question for our study: "To what extant is Problem –Based Learning effective to teach the MYP unit Planner "The Economy of Republic of Armenia"?"

Being a Geography Teacher at "Shirakatsy Lyceum" international scientific-educational complex. which is unique educational a establishment in the Republic of Armenia and implements the three ΙB programs [7] http://shirakatsy.am/en/about-us-2/, we created and used MYP unit planners for Geography Teaching by linking it to Problem-Based Learning.

"The Action" includes the content of the unit, learning and teaching strategies, formative and summative assessment tasks, and resources.

The content contains topics about the historical and geographical overviews of the Economy of the RA, its branches, spatial features, international relations, etc. We used problem-based situations in each topic while doing formative assessments, such as completing tests, geographic problems, working with contour maps, creating posters and oral presentations. The summative assessment task (Table 2) was planned according to instructions of GRASPS situational tasks [6].

Table 1. The MYP Unit Planner "The Economy of the Republic of Armenia" (the Inquiry phase; extract)

Teacher/s	Ani Mkrtumyan		Subject group and discipline	Individuals and societies (I&S)
Unit title	The Economy of the Armenia	e Republic of	MYP year	4/9 th Grade
	Amenia		Unit duration (hours)	20 hours

Inquiry: Establishing the purpose of the unit

Key concept	Related concept(s)	Global context		
Systems	Processes,	Globalization and sustainability: Students will study		
	Globalization	about quantitative and qualitative changes in the economic		
		system of the RA by linking with current processes of		
		globalization.		
Statement of	Economic systems of co	Economic systems of countries process interconnected under the influence of		
inquiry	Globalization.	Globalization.		
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Inquiry questions

Factual— What are the main branches of economic system of the RA?

Conceptual— How do effect global interactions toward spatial aspects and structure of economic systems of countries?

Debatable—Which global organizations or countries should we choose as economic partners and why?

Table 2.The summative assessment task of the MYP Unit Planner "The Economy of the Republic of Armenia"

The 2.11th Summative dissessment task of the 1111 Start tarties. The Bestony of the Republic of Il menta				
Goal	Students are asked to research economic and spatial features of the RA for			
	participating in an economic "Exhibition".			
Role	Students are "businessmen", who present chosen branches of the Economy			
	of the RA and promote them.			
Audience	Students should find partners/ other students to collaborate with as other			
	"businessmen".			
Situation	"Businessmen" have certain amount of money to invest in the territory of the			
	RA based on its natural resources and current economic features. They			
	should make reasonable "choices" to create a type of business projects and			
	support their project ideas with arguments and facts.			
Products or Performances	"Businessmen" should collect high quality data about a chosen branch, find			
	out or create products for designing their "Exhibition" pavilion to attract			
	more partners.			
Standards	Students are assessed by given rubric according to the IB I&S Criteria:			
	Investigating (B), Communicating (C), Critical Thinking (D)			

Students were asked to design geo-inquiry questions, collected data about their topics, analyze the data and visualize it, create maps and products by designing their pavilions. In addition, they acted to present prospective branches of the Economy of the RA by implementing the geo-inquiry process [8].

"The Reflection" phase of the unit includes phases of "Prior to teaching the unit", "During teaching", and "After the teaching the unit", where are discussed the aims against the results of the unit, used teaching strategies and their usefulness, students learning experience, future planning by presenting the results of the teaching and conclusions. We would like to mention that selected formative and summative assessment tasks led towards the understanding the content of the unit by engaging students in active and real-life problembased tasks to discover economic features of Armenia and "create" new "businesses". Students were motivated to "think like entrepreneurs" being interested to discover new information to support their "business plans and feel responsibility for the future of their homeland.

To draw a conclusion, we would like to emphasize that real-world problem based- tasks motivate students to study the topic of "the Economy of the RA" by busting their interest toward Geography Learning process and increasing its effectiveness.

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