

Application of the project method in teaching legal disciplines

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1. INTRODUCTION

In training future lawyers, in addition to good theoretical training, an important role is played by the formation of such practical skills as legal argumentation and analysis, critical thinking, oral and written advocacy skills, emotional intelligence, the ability to search, communicate effectively, and have basic knowledge of management. All these skills can be developed when carrying out practical cases, which a lawyer may encounter in valuable activities. The project method is one of the pedagogical technologies that combines theoretical material and practice.

The project method has been used in education for a long time but was first described in the book "Project Method" 1918 by the American psychologist and educator William Kilpatrick. After that, the project method quickly spread among Northern and Central European countries.

The project method is actively and quite successfully used in foreign universities of various fields of sawmilling: in the USA, Great Britain, Belgium, Israel, Finland, Germany, Italy, Brazil, the Netherlands, and many other countries. Today, scientists refer to the project method as a technology of the 21st century that involves adaptation to the changing conditions of human life in a post-industrial society [1-4].

At the beginning of the XXI century. Teachers recognize project learning technology as one of the personally oriented pedagogical technologies based on identifying the unique essence of each student (the student) and his individuality. At the same time, the role of the teacher changes. Its main task is to create a suitable educational environment where the student can rely on his potential. Students gain experience in solving real problems and contemplating the future independent life they project in their studies. In Ukrainian pedagogical practice, projects appeared in the last decade due to the activities of international organizations that developed and disseminated educational projects. Currently, this method is widely used in training specialists of various specialties, as it has rich didactic opportunities for training.

2. METHODOLOGY

Implementation of the research goal includes the following research methods: summarization of the latest scientific publications on the analysis of student training; historical method, which is used to analyze the features of the development of the project method and its implementation in modern legal education. The system method was applied to investigate the stages of project preparation and the content of its main parts. The formal-logical or dogmatic method was used to formulate concepts and definitions that reveal the essence of the project method.

3. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Design helps students to understand the role of knowledge in life and learning. Knowledge ceases to be a goal; it becomes a means in fundamental education, helping to master cultural thinking patterns to form one's mental strategies, allowing everyone to independently master the assets of science, technology, technology, and culture.

This method was used to teach the optional discipline "Local democracy: best European practices for Ukraine." This discipline aims for students to achieve modern, constructive, fundamental thinking and a system of special knowledge in European practices of local democracy. Having studied the available domestic and European tools of local democracy (for example, petitions, participatory budgeting, elections, etc.), students, divided into groups, choose a specific problem that is in their city, village, street, or entrance (for example, environmental issues, garbage removal, lack of convenient infrastructure) and with the help of tools of local democracy develop a project to solve this problem. Students work on a project over an extended period – from a month to a semester – that engages them in solving a real-world problem while applying their theoretical knowledge and developing critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills.

The project method will make it possible to develop skills in applying the tools of local democracy to solve real, local problems. This method contributes to the formation of decision-making skills based on the goals of sustainable development, particularly the sustainable development of cities and communities. The innovative use of the proposed method consists of the visualization of the research subject, mainly due to the possibility of participants initiating petitions, participating in city council meetings, conducting surveys of community residents regarding the tools of local democracy, etc.

One of the essential methods for the successful implementation of the project is the competence approach, which will not only contribute to the expansion of the knowledge of students and other participants of the online course but will also form fundamental skills in applying the tools of local democracy to solve specific regional problems. A special place in the project is the formation of civic competence of participants of all categories: students, local activists of public organizations, officials of local self-government bodies, and civil servants.

Trust, cooperation, and providing students with greater independence are at the heart of the project method. After all, it is not the teacher who defines a specific problem, but the students define it based on their vision. The value of this method lies in the fact that it is wholly focused on the student while it is based on the principle of "learning by doing." Unlike traditional education, this method allows students to solve a specific community problem with minimal guidance from a teacher perceived as a facilitator rather than a provider of knowledge.

The project method is a good stimulator of the student's interest in the educational material and the discipline. Its use is possible in any course when studying legal disciplines because developing practical skills and creating conditions as close as possible to practice are essential factors in forming a future specialist. It is also advisable to use an interdisciplinary approach when using this method. In particular, when combining knowledge from several subjects, it is possible to approach the problem's solution from different angles, making it possible to solve it more effectively.

As a result of the application of the project method, it was possible to obtain the following results:

1. Activation of training. The development of specific projects accelerates the process of students acquiring practical skills for solving real problems and helps students learn in practice, contributing to active learning.
2. Increasing students' motivation to study legal disciplines. Students understand the importance of studying legal disciplines when solving practical situations and relying on theoretical knowledge. It is possible only through thorough theoretical training to solve the problem and correctly apply law norms effectively.
3. Development of independence and responsibility. The project method focuses on students' independent activity, starting with choosing a topic and ending with selecting a tool for solving it. This method contributes to students' understanding of the importance of learning to acquire knowledge independently, correctly assigning roles in a team, planning time, etc. Each student can perform tasks corresponding to their capabilities and interests when working on a project. Using this approach, students can improve their self-reliance and take responsibility for their learning. They can gain valuable independent learning experience and develop an individual learning style that works best for them.
4. Development of critical soft skills that can be acquired through own experience: mastery of constructive communication.

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