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## **APPLICATION OF THE PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING METHOD IN TEACHING HISTORICAL SUBJECTS IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT**

### **Summary**

The article analyzes the historiography of the problem method usage in the pedagogical activity and draws conclusions about its active application. The definition of the problem-based learning method, the main tasks and mandatory requirements during its implementation are given. Various forms of problem-based learning in a higher educational institution are characterized by problem-based lecture; problematic task in seminar classes; problematic situation; the student's independent research activity. The dependence of technology on the teacher's personality as well as his knowledge, abilities, skills, and professional experience are traced. The main requirements for high school students which allow them to participate in the problem-based learning process actively are highlighted. The experience of using the problem-based learning method in teaching the educational components "History of newly independent states", "History of the Middle Ages", "History of the Slavic peoples", "Political history of the modern world" for students both of the first (bachelor's) and second (master's) higher education levels at the Faculty of History of Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University is described. The role of the teacher at implementation stages of this method is highlighted.

**Keywords:** problem-based learning method, history, teacher, student of higher education, higher educational institution

## **Introduction**

The 21st century presents society with new challenges related to the modern development of human society, scientific and technological progress and its achievements, in particular, informatization and computerization of the educational process; as well as the changes that have taken place in the consciousness of the modern young generation. Nowadays the use of non-standard approaches in various situations of our life and education is required. Traditional teaching methods of the past often cannot meet the needs of higher education students in obtaining the necessary knowledge and professional skills. The pace of modern life requires a change in approaches to the learning process in both secondary and higher education.

It is important to note that setting a problem when teaching a certain subject from historical disciplines is very important due to the fact that this involves the higher education students in the process of understanding and analyzing a specific issue. This contributes to the fact that a higher education student himself becomes an active participant in the learning process and interested in solving the problem. At the same time, the creative abilities of both the teacher and the student are revealed.

Setting a problem requires the teacher to be deeply immersed in the subject presented to the audience. The superficial knowledge of the material will not allow the teacher to formulate a problem that may interest the student. The very formulation of the problem is a delving deeply into the specific and relevant issues that require their solution. Therefore, the teaching of historical disciplines in higher education institutions requires the involvement of both the teacher's knowledge and his experience in presenting this discipline.

The use of the problem-based learning technologies is becoming more relevant in the conditions of the presently widespread distance learning in higher education because of the extraordinary events, epidemics, etc. In this case, the replacement of ineffective traditional control of the students' knowledge in seminar classes with creative, problematic tasks and situations contributes to the objective progress assessment of those students who, because of the weak preparation, will not be able neither to analyze the problem nor give the necessary answer.

The problem-based learning is a technology of the educational process in which problematic tasks, questions, and situations are created; and these tasks must be solved by higher education students under the teacher's guidance [13, p. 127].

## **Purpose, subject and research methods**

The purpose of the study is to characterize the method of the problem-based learning, its main components and application in higher educational institutions within the teaching of historical disciplines. The subject of the research is the problem-based learning method structure as well as the examples of its application in teaching the historical disciplines mentioned above. The methodological basis of the research is the methods of analysis and synthesis, comparative method and systematization; the principles of historicism, scientificity, objectivity which helped impartially in the specific historical period create the problematic tasks on the subjects of the educational disciplines "History of newly independent states", "History of the Slavic peoples", "History of the Middle Ages", "Political history of the modern world" taking into account different points of view on certain historical events, phenomena and personalities.

## **Research results**

The historiography of the research problem is represented by a number of scientific works that reveal the essence of the problem-based learning and its application in higher education institutions. In particular, it is necessary to highlight the I. Pereguda and N. Myronchuk's study named "Application of the problem-based learning in a higher educational institution". Their research reveals the content, types of the problem-based learning and the main algorithms for its use in higher educational institutions [13]. N. Shtokina's "Problem-based learning in the training of future teachers" [16], L. Pavlyuk's "Problem-based learning as a means of forming research skills" [9]; O. Kyseleva and A. Yefimenko's "Application of the problem-based learning technologies under the conditions of higher education standardization" [5] also touch the problem.

The analysis of our research is also based on the publications devoted to various aspects of the higher education teachers' activities. In particular, we should highlight the collective publication "Competences of higher school teachers in the era of changes: diagnostics and analytics (based on the results of research at Kyiv University named after Boris Grinchenko) / Khoruzh L., Bratko M., Kotenko O., Melnychenko O., Proshkin V.; [for sciences ed. Dr. Ped. Sciences, by Professor L. Khoruzhoy] (Kyiv, 2018). Among the mentioned competencies in the context of the problem-based learning it is necessary to pay attention to innovative (the ability to solve educational problems unconventionally and apply new forms and methods of learning),

communicative-interactive (the teacher's ability to interact with students using interactive methods of communication), professional self-development [7, p. 23, 30].

Analyzing the historical dimension of the problem-based learning in Ukraine, it is important to note that the researchers working in the Soviet period, such as I. Lerner, A. Matyushkin, M. Makhmutov, T. Kudryavtsev and others, were engaged in the development of the problem-based learning concept relying on the works of psychologists in 1966-1980s. The problem-based learning was considered by some of them as an approach to the activation of learning. Such training strengthened the developmental and educational functions of the educational process [1, p. 198].

As N. Shchokina points out, the implementation of the problem-based learning technology into the educational process puts certain demands on both the teacher and the students in higher education. One can fully agree with the author that a teacher must have thorough knowledge of the academic discipline to be able to pose a problem and stimulate the students to conduct an independent search; to be skillful in communicating with the audience, to respect the opinions of class participants, etc. The teacher must take into account all the organizational aspects of the studying this academic discipline (its specificity, subject themes, questions, etc.) [16, p. 298]. Let us also add that in order to pose a problem a teacher must have an experience in teaching a given academic discipline, find those relevant and important aspects in the subjects and questions that require analysis and take a response from the modern society (especially if it is about the study of modern history). A teacher's theoretical training should be in harmony with his professional skills and human qualities. It is they who can attract the students to solve the problem more. So, the students should be interested not only in the teacher's knowledge, but also in his / her personality. A friendly and attentive attitude to the class participants can be a great incentive for the teacher to be capable to convey the problem to his listeners.

With regard to the high school students as participants in the educational process, it is important to note that the same researcher highlights their motivation and interest to the problem, their ability to think analytically and experience in solving similar tasks [16, p. 298]. Motivation and interest are very important concepts in the problem-based learning. Student's studying in a specific specialty does not mean that this student was motivated to gain knowledge entering a higher education institution. However, in the course of training, the student can reveal his individual creative abilities due to the emergence of his / her interest in the taken problem and discipline. Not all students, as our own teaching experience shows, can respond immediately and actively to the teacher's problematic task. It depends on their intension and

personal psychological characteristics. In our opinion, the audience is better prepared for this if they have received the problematic tasks in the seminar plan and have enough time to think over them. It is interesting that during the discussion of the problematic task an additional or new task or question may arise. The teacher, knowing the each student's previous preparation and assessment level, can offer him / her different micro-tasks to solve the problem. What depends on the student must be prepared and executed by himself.

The problem-based learning is a means of forming research skills. In particular, the scientists emphasize the importance of the student's abstract thinking development which arises under the influence of the problematic tasks and situations created by the teacher [10, p. 170]. The very setting of a problematic task encourages students to mental activity, searching for facts and thoughts helping to solve the task, finding the key to the right solution. Moreover, we must understand that the student's research activity during his / her studying a specific subject is based on certain ideas and hypotheses which are fundamental in his / her mind.

We must also remember that the problem-based learning is a search for an answer to a given task but not a ready-made answer. Therefore, the ideas and hypotheses are important here. They develop the high school student's creative thinking and put him / her in the necessary direction [13, p. 383]. Figuratively speaking, the student immerse himself in the area of research trying to collect attractive points which can help him find the answer to his questions.

A problem lecture is a lecture that involves setting a problem in a specific lesson theme.

O. Kiselyova and A. Yefimenko highlight the structure of the problem lecture which includes actualization of previously acquired knowledge by students; problem statement; putting forward assumptions, substantiating the hypothesis and its proof; assimilation of new knowledge and methods of action; formation of abilities and skills [5, p. 171].

For example, let us pay attention to separate lectures from the educational component "History of newly independent states". In particular, in the "Baltic States" subject such problems can be singled out as: 1) the historical path to the independence of the three republics: common and different; 2) what was shown by the experience of market transformations in the 1990s in each country; 3) the experience of the Baltic states in the EU: achievements and problems; 4) the role of the institution of the presidency in the Baltic states [6, p. 250-257].

In the subject "Armenia and Azerbaijan" it is possible to single out the central problem of Nagorno-Karabakh and ways of solving it at the present stage. The problem forms a number of other issues that need to be understood (e.g. standard of living, public mood in the republics, international support, etc.) around itself [11, p. 30-33].

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are countries that claim leadership in the Central Asian region at the current stage. Which of them has greater advantages and prospects? To answer this problematic task it is important for the teacher to analyze and compare the both countries' leaders (Nursultan Nazarbayev, Zhosym Tokayev, Islam Karimov, Shavkat Mirziyoyev) as well as the socio-economic development of the states.

A lecture devoted to the general characteristics and political regimes of the post-Soviet countries can be successful for the problematic teaching method. It helps to reveal the country's specificity due to that the students may already be more familiar with the lifestyle in those countries [8].

Setting up a problematic presentation of the material is also important when teaching lectures on the educational component "History of the Slavic Peoples". The Middle Ages are quite rich for various events in the Slavs' history but, as our experience of teaching this discipline shows, the main problem of state formation among the Slavs remains. The corresponding pace of historical events is observed the most. Therefore, the students should feel these aspects in the teacher's presentation.

Let us take the subject "Ancient Slavs". An important problem for analysis here is the problem of finding the Slavs' ancestral homeland. The formulation of the problem itself should encourage the listeners to search for objectivity and attract them with different researchers' visions of the subject. The following hypotheses and concepts of the Slavs' origin are expressed. They are the theory of the Asian origin of the Slavs, Danube, autochthonous, Privisel, Vistula-Oder, Upper Dnieper, synthetic ones. At the same time, the students are invited to answer separate questions using the acquired knowledge on archeology and the history of Ukraine. This knowledge will help to give a more substantial answer. The problem can be further analyzed in a seminar session. Another problematic task that the teacher can set during the lecture is to trace the evolution and nature of power relations among the ancient Slavs.

When studying the subject "Establishment and development of the Polish state", it is appropriate to set the problematic task "Relations between the royal power and the nobility in Poland at the end of the 14th - the first half of the 16th century." Using the analysis of relevant events and various researchers' opinions, the teacher opens the way to understanding an important problem in the history of Poland.

A number of lesson subjects from the history of the Slavic peoples can be taught using comparative analysis. For example, if the subject "Czech Republic in the Middle Ages" is preceded by the study of the history of Poland, the South Slavs, then the formulation of the problem task can be as follows: "Government in the Czech Republic in the Middle Ages

(comparative analysis)". At the same time, the lecture audience has the opportunity to participate in the problem discussion relying on the previously acquired knowledge.

It's equally interesting to create the problematic tasks for the study of the South Slavs' history. Thus, studying the subject "Bulgaria in the 7th - 16th centuries", it is possible to make a comparative analysis of the First Bulgarian kingdom's and Second one's development [3].

The second form of the problem-based learning is problem-based tasks for seminar classes.

We will consider the application of the problematic tasks in seminar classes from the educational component "Political history of the modern world". For example, while studying the subject "Countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the second half of the 1940s - 1980s." it is expedient to highlight the specificity of social and political development of such individual countries as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and make a comparative analysis of them. So, students can focus on a specific country, show public sentiments and political crises. Speaking of the latter, these are the events in Poznan in 1956, student actions in 1968, the events at the Gdansk shipyards in 1970, the confrontation of the authorities with the Solidarity trade union 1981, the round table in 1989 occurred in Poland; the Prague Spring of 1968, the Charter-77 movement and the Velvet Revolution of 1989 taken place in Czechoslovakia; citizens' political immobility was characteristic of Bulgaria; the government of Yugoslavia pursued a course of self-government socialism as well as policy of non-adherence to military-political blocs after the Stalin-Tito's conflict. The students are invited to analyze where in the countries mentioned above there were the most active manifestations of oppositional attitudes towards the communist government. It is also possible to highlight these countries' leaders and show what decisions they had to make in difficult years of crisis and how those decisions affected the society's mood (for example, Alexander Dubcek, the head of the Czechoslovak Communist Party during the Prague Spring of 1968; Edward Gerek in Poland (1970-1980 ); Yosyp Broz Tito in Yugoslavia (1945-1980)) [4].

In the topic "Political development of the USA and Canada in the second half of the 1940s - 1980s." it is important to conduct a comparative analysis of the Republican and Conservative presidents' policies in the United States. In particular, it would be appropriate to characterize domestic political activity, crisis political phenomena, foreign policy issues including relations with the USSR.

The problematic task may refer to the certain well-known events, for example, the Caribbean crisis in 1962 and the Soviet and American governments' actions during this conflict. In general, problematic tasks can be built along different vectors of the US foreign policy.



No less interesting and relevant is the setting in seminar classes the problematic tasks devoted to the events which took place in the United States' modern political history. In particular, students can focus on the presidents' activities and their personalities. For example, you can offer to analyze the problematic task: "The presidency of B. Clinton in the USA: achievements and problems." An actual problem at the beginning of the 21st century is that the problem of the international terrorism became a problem for the USA in connection with the tragic events in New York on September 11, 2001. An analysis of the relevant US policy will help to understand ways to solve this problem. It is important to note that the analysis of the problem requires the applicants to study relevant scientific works, to involve the opinions of specialists-historians, political scientists, etc.

When studying the peculiarities of the political system of Spain it is important to highlight the problem of the existence of the Francisco Franco's military dictatorship in the country until 1975. The subject of analysis can be both this ruler's of Spain personality and his internal politics. It is known that Spain needed a gradual liberalization of the political regime. In this context the problem of national movements in certain regions of the country (in Catalonia and the Basque Country) can be singled out [4].

Another form of the problem-based learning is a problem situation. This is a situation when the students have to find new knowledge. This requires the students' search activity as well as the study of certain facts and phenomena. As some authors note, "problematic situations are created in different ways: through the students' encounters with phenomena and facts that require theoretical justification; use of educational and life situations; setting of research tasks; encouragement to analyze familiar facts and phenomena.

The teacher is a generator of the problem situation. Knowing the actual material well, he offers it to the students for analysis and indicates the appropriate directions for finding ways to solve the problem situation.

The presentation of the material also should be problematic. Then a question that needs its solution can be formulated and prompt the students to look for the answer.

On the example of studying topics from educational components, we can offer the following problem situations. When studying the topic of the interwar period in Czechoslovakia it is worth paying attention to the events related to the conclusion of the Munich Agreement in 1938. The students will learn about the agreement content and its participants, so the question about how such an agreement could be allowed to be concluded arises. To do this, students are asked to analyze the Sudeten Germans' situation as well as their moods and problems in Czechoslovakia of the interwar period. It is also necessary to analyze the policy provided by

the Great Britain's and France's leaders, particularly the weak points of their diplomacy in relations with Nazi Germany [9, p. 20-31]. This should contribute to finding an objective answer to the question arised. At the same time, the teacher recommends involving a number of published documents, memoirs, and new articles in order to understand the actions of the politicians who participated in the conclusion of that agreement better.

In the history of Poland of the interwar period the sanation regime (1926-1939) is known. That regime had both supporters and opponents [2, p. 119-120]. The students may be asked to divide into two appropriate groups, find out the reasons for establishing this regime, analyse its policy and give an assessment.

A problematic situation requires the teacher to involve the high school student in solving the problem. This process, in our opinion, depends mainly on the teacher, his personality, creative abilities and desire to improve his knowledge and professional skills. However, the student himself must be present at the class not only formally but also have an incentive to become a participant in the solution of the problematic task.

The teacher's and students' emotional and psychological state plays not the last role in the process of creating a problematic situation. Emotional coloring, expressiveness in the teacher's actions contribute to a better perception of the problem situation by the participants in the seminar as well as influence the activation of their cognitive abilities and desires.

Some researchers draw attention to the fact that a problematic situation arises "if the master's students have a cognitive need and intellectual capabilities to solve the problem", they must also possess a sufficient amount of knowledge for this [16, p. 300].

In our opinion, problem-based learning helps, in particular, the historians-acquirers' research activities in archives. In order to find the necessary documents the student must know his research subject and keywords, which serve like signposts, quite well. In this case it turns out to be easier to find the documents than if the acquirer did not have the appropriate search technology. Working with the arhive documents also helps a collector-researcher to dive into the studied era as well as to reconstruct past events and to feel himself as if he lived in that period of time. Such approach requires non-standard thinking and creativity in the research searching. Those skills are also aquired with the help of the problem-based learning which acts as a kind of training ground for the students.

The setting of problematic tasks is important when the student of higher educational institution performs his coursework and diploma work. In the process of research the teacher adjusts the student's plan, sets problematic tasks that help reveal the individual points of the diploma or course work. These problematic tasks can be formulated as the names of items or

sub-items of the study. It should be noted that a creative problematic task encourages the students to search for material independently using particular archival sources. Nevertheless, the teacher should help the student to choose the right direction of search using archival catalogs, descriptions of fund cases, and other types of reference apparatus at the same time. We consider it expedient to highlight individual subjects for the students' scientific research at the second (master's) level of higher education. In particular, the student who was studying the subject "Government and the Volyn peasantry during the period of the new economic policy (1921-1928)" was recommended to solve problematic tasks related to the peasants' attitudes towards the Soviet government, their attitude to taxes, land management issues, elections. The student's search for answers to these questions required the involvement of documents from the Zhytomyr Region State Archives, analyzing the periodicals of that time ("Soviet Volyn" newspaper). The very process of searching for documents involved both the scientific recommendations for reviewing the files from certain funds and the searcher's independent looking for the necessary information. It is interesting to note that in the search process the seeker was able not only to answer the given task but also to find some little-known information for other problematic tasks.

Another student was given the problematic task for comparative analysis of the social and political development of the South Caucasus post-Soviet countries as the part of his thesis. The task involved the analysis of relations between the government and society, crisis political phenomena, public attitudes. In order to solve problematic issues it was important to analyze the latest research on this issue [12]; to use periodicals and analytical collections and to search for the information about the leading political parties' activities.

The analysis of the social and political life of various countries of the world over the last thirty years is especially relevant for the students. At the current stage the researcher faces a number of problematic tasks that require from the student thorough searching for the information and then providing the comparative analysis. The studied aspects include the population's standard of living, observance of the man's and citizen's rights and freedoms, common and different foreign policies conducted by the countries of a certain region, problems of settling regional ethno-political conflicts. For example, we can characterize the problems of the Transnistrian conflict settlement in Moldova during the last thirty years. It is known that despite numerous attempts to resolve the conflict the problem remains acute. The student must answer a number of problematic questions when working on such a coursework subject. Why are the authorities of this region of Moldova still not meeting the republican authorities' proposals regarding the reintegration? Why does the population of the region support the

government? What factors inhibit the process of resolving such a protracted conflict? All these questions need analysis.

Another important aspect that needs to be paid attention to is the use of computer technologies in the process of problem-based learning. High-quality preparation of presentations for lectures helps to increase the motivation of applicants, strengthens their perception of the material. We can agree with the opinion of L. Shuryshina that the skills acquired by the student in computer science classes allow him to use them when preparing problematic tasks and searching for the necessary information [15, p. 410].

### **Conclusions**

The problem-based learning is an important and relevant educational technology at present. It is used by the teachers of higher educational institutions when preparing and conducting lectures, seminar classes, directing the research work of students of various levels at higher educational establishment.

The requirements for the teacher when applying the problem-based learning technologies include, first of all, his high-quality professional training, experience in teaching the educational component, communication skills and creative thinking.

To solve problematic tasks and situations the students must be well-prepared.

In the course of the implementation of the problematic tasks the candidate faces the prospect of developing creative thinking and abilities gaining experience in scientific and research opportunities, skills, participating in the analysis of complex issues of social and political life in order to understand various processes that take place both in our country and abroad.

Today it becomes obvious that the present life requires prudence and making both balanced and non-standard decisions. In the problem-based learning, as we see, both the research process and its result are important. The student having become interested in a problematic task is involved in an important search process, experiences it in his mind, makes it meaningful, acquires the necessary experience.

The given examples of the application of the problem-based learning technologies in the teaching of historical disciplines in higher educational establishments help to activate the work of students in lectures and seminar classes, during writing the diploma and term papers in order to make the educational process creative and fruitful, saturated with the atmosphere of

searching and obtaining results with the aim to promote the acquisition of new knowledge by the students.

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