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## The use of the project method in the educational process of the higher education institutions for students of historical specialties

El uso del método de proyectos en el proceso educativo de las instituciones de educación superior para estudiantes de especialidades históricas

**Natalia Buhlai**

buglay@ukr.net

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0674-4313>

Professor of History Department, Doctor of Science in History, Mykolaiv V.O. Sukhomlynskyi National University, Ukraine.

**Nataliia Marchenko**

n.marchenko@npu.edu.ua

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8879-4698>

Associate Professor of the Department of Innovative Technologies for Teaching General Education Disciplines, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Mykhailo Drahomanov Ukrainian State University, Ukraine.

**Natalia Grabar**

grabarng7@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5120-0382>

Doctor of Science in Social Communications, Associate Professor, Faculty of Management, Administration and Law, Department UNESCO «Philosophy of Human Communication» Social and Humanitarian Disciplines State Biotechnological University, Ukraine.

**Nataly Zatsepina**

Nat020375@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1866-449X>

Associate Professor of the Department of Tourism, Hotel and Restaurant Business National University "Zaporozhye Polytechnic", Ukraine.

**Katerina Milutina**

katerinamilutina1963@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0013-2989>

Professor of the Department of Developmental Psychology, Doctor of Psychological Sciences, Professor, Faculty of Psychology, Department of Developmental Psychology, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine.

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### Abstract

The article is aimed at clarifying, through a questionnaire survey, certain practical aspects of the use of the project method in the organization of the educational process in higher education institutions. In

the course of the study, the analytical and bibliographic method was applied to study the scientific literature on the use of the project method in the educational process. The authors of the study conducted an online questionnaire survey to clarify certain aspects of using the project method in teaching in HEIs practically. Based on the results of the study, the main most important theoretical aspects of the process of using the project method in HEIs for students of historical specialties have been highlighted. The point of view of students and teachers of HEIs on the key practical aspects of this issue has been investigated.

**Keywords:** interactive teaching methods, students' research work, project planning and implementation, project skills, project-based learning for students of historical specialties.

## Resumen

El artículo tiene como objetivo esclarecer, a través de un cuestionario de encuesta, ciertos aspectos prácticos del uso del método de proyectos en la organización del proceso educativo en las instituciones de educación superior. En el transcurso del estudio se aplicó el método analítico y bibliográfico para estudiar la literatura científica sobre el uso del método de proyectos en el proceso educativo. Los autores del estudio realizaron una encuesta en línea para aclarar ciertos aspectos del uso del método de proyectos en la enseñanza en las IES en la práctica. Con base en los resultados del estudio, se han destacado los principales aspectos teóricos más importantes del proceso de utilización del método de proyectos en las IES para estudiantes de especialidades históricas. Se ha investigado el punto de vista de los estudiantes y profesores de las IES sobre los aspectos prácticos clave de este tema.

**Palabras clave:** métodos de enseñanza interactivos, trabajo de investigación de los estudiantes, planificación e implementación de proyectos, habilidades de proyecto, aprendizaje basado en proyectos para estudiantes de especialidades históricas.

## 1. Introduction

The application of the project method in the educational process of higher education institutions for students of historical specialties aims to create conditions for the development of youth initiatives and their participation in active professional activities. The tendency to implement project technologies is now standard practice in the professional training of specialists in any field of activity.

The theoretical part of this paper substantiates the concept, components, and main trends in the use of the project method in higher education. The practical part of the study includes an assessment of the primary properties of the project-based learning method that lead to its active use in the educational process in HEIs. This part also examines the most important criteria for evaluating the performance of each project participant and the types of projects that have been most actively and successfully used in the educational process in higher education institutions. The survey showed a gradation of the importance of skills acquired by students in the course of project activities while studying at HEIs. Moreover, owing to the survey, the authors could identify the most important areas that require attention in terms of the need to research and consider them when developing project-based learning resources in HEIs.

Based on the results of the study, conclusions have been drawn on the issues raised. In particular, it has been found that one of the primary properties of the project-based learning method, which lead to its active use in the educational process in HEIs, is the ability to combine learning activities

with other activities in the process of project implementation. Besides, the interdisciplinarity of this method has been established. The most important criteria for evaluating the performance of each project participant to achieve the highest quality result are non-standard approaches to solving the tasks, full coverage of participation in all stages of the project, and high-quality recording of information. Meanwhile, according to the respondents, the types of projects that have been most actively and successfully used in the educational process in HEIs are research, game, and practice-oriented projects. According to the survey, the main skills that students acquire during project activities are planning their work, predicting its possible results, collecting and processing material independently, and establishing social contacts. The areas that require special attention in terms of the need for their research and consideration in the development of project-based learning resources in HEIs are identified. These are the identification of a significant search and creative problem that requires a comprehensive study and search for ways to solve it when using the project method, independent (individual, pair, and group) activities of students, and the integrated use of various methods of work in the project method.

The research aims to determine the position of educators and students of HEIs on the peculiarities of using the project method in higher educational institutions.

## 2. Literature review

The use of interactive teaching methods in historical HEIs makes it possible to recreate a problematic situation and test the experience already gained in artificially created conditions. The use of active and interactive teaching methods, which until recently were considered an innovative approach, is now a prerequisite for improving the quality of education (Guo et al., 2020). Interactive learning is a tool that promotes the activation of students' pedagogical and cognitive activities, as it is based on the wide integrated use of didactic and organizational management tools. Thus, this combination allows for a high degree of learning and increases the orientation of the learning process on practical work (Kobernyk et al., 2022).

The researchers emphasize that active and interactive teaching methods make it possible to model the holistic content of a specialist's future professional activity. Such learning adds a new quality to traditional forms of the educational process in HEIs: the content center shifts from the processes of transferring, processing, and assimilating information to students' independent search for it and modeling the possibilities of applying the information in future professional activities (Fuertes-Camacho et al., 2019), (Knoche, 2022).

Thus, the experience of applying active and interactive teaching methods in higher education shows that one of the most effective teaching tools is project-based learning, which most accurately interprets real professional situations and allows for student-centered learning. They can be described as "a process of qualitative transformation of the educational environment for students, which aims to increase their autonomy and critical thinking skills based on a project-based approach that encourages new means of curriculum development, teaching, and learning" (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Owen, 2022).

Defining the essence and specifics of using the project method in the educational process, researchers note its creative, transformative nature. They emphasize that participation in projects promotes students' involvement, creativity, and self-confidence in their abilities to develop research skills and integrate knowledge. At the same time, the project method should be

considered a comprehensive pedagogical method that allows individualizing the educational process and allows revealing creative abilities in planning, organizing, and controlling activities (Carbonell et al., 2021), (Martin & Padula, 2018). The diversity of goals and objectives of the project method indicates its multifunctionality, which is guaranteed by its didactic, cognitive, educational, socializing, and developmental functions (Drozdova, Rogulskaya & Rudnitskaya, 2021).

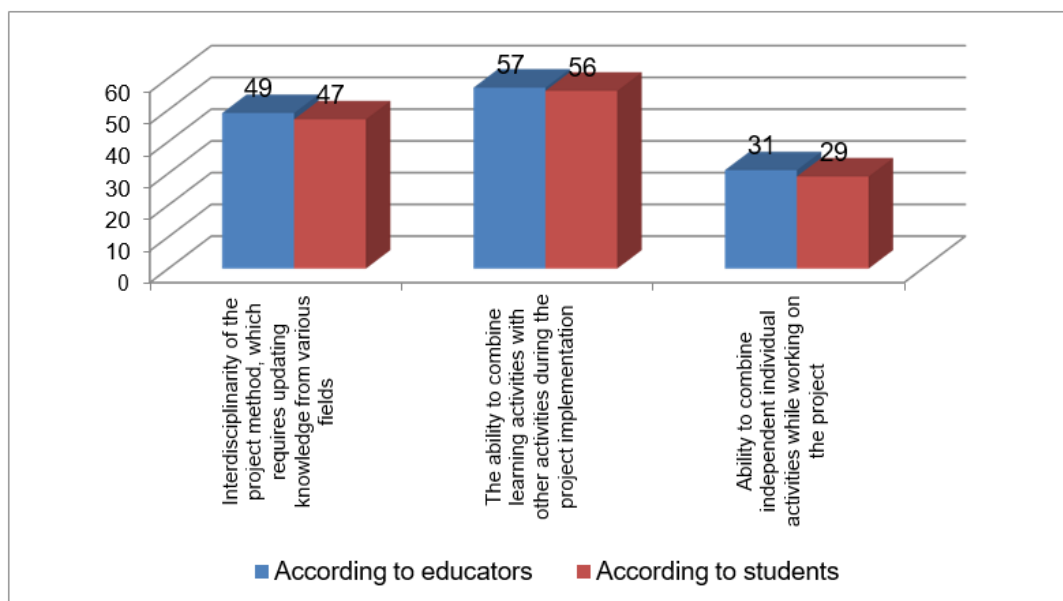
There are basic requirements for using the project method in the educational process. It is essential to define the problematic task (situation), the solution of which requires critical and comprehensive analysis in the process of its research; the theoretical, practical, and cognitive value of the project. Moreover, it is important to pay due attention to the organization of the student's research work (individual, pair, group); creation of the content part of the project with the recording of gradual results; choice of research methods; systematization of information collection and analysis. The final stage will be a discussion of the results of the work (presentation, publication, website, etc.); design and presentation of the results; project evaluation; conclusions that determine promising areas for further research (Menziez et al., 2021), (Lee et al., 2021).

### 3. Methodology

A practical study of current trends in the use of the project method in HEIs was conducted by interviewing 184 educators and 273 students in 16 HEIs in Poltava, Lviv, Zhytomyr, and Kyiv oblasts of Ukraine. The study was conducted using the Survio service.

### 4. Results

First, the survey revealed the respondents' opinion on the primary properties of the project-based learning method that lead to its active use in the educational process in HEIs (see Fig. 1).



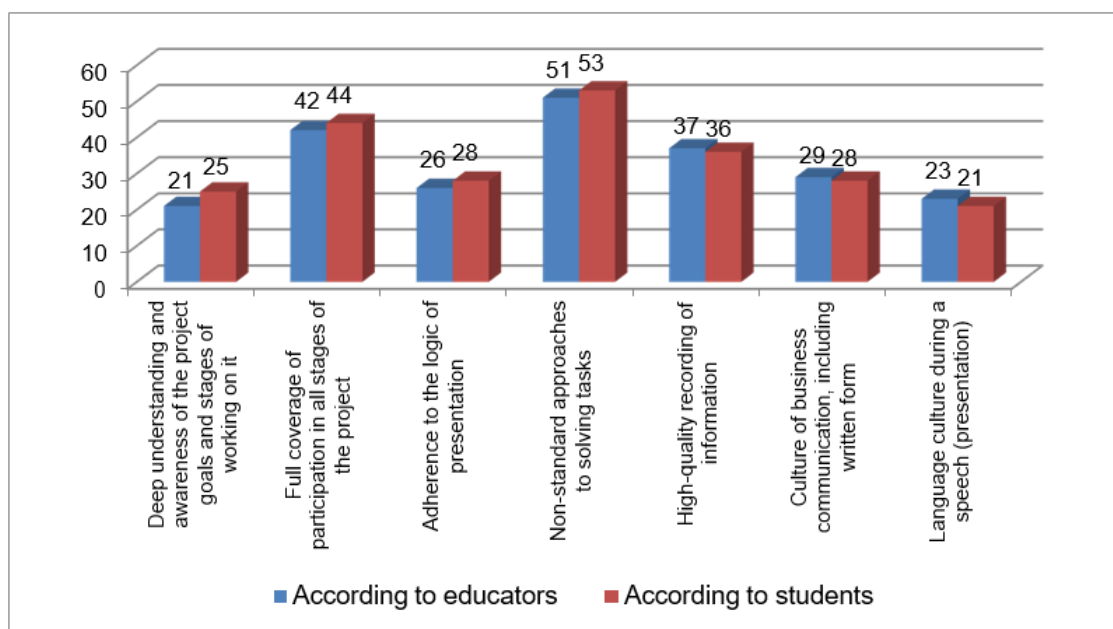
**Fig. 1.** Primary properties of the project-based learning method that lead to its active use during the educational process in HEIs for students of historical specialties, %.

Source: built by the authors

According to the survey participants, the most important features of project work for its use in HEIs are the ability to combine learning activities with other types of activities in the course of project implementation, as well as its interdisciplinary nature.

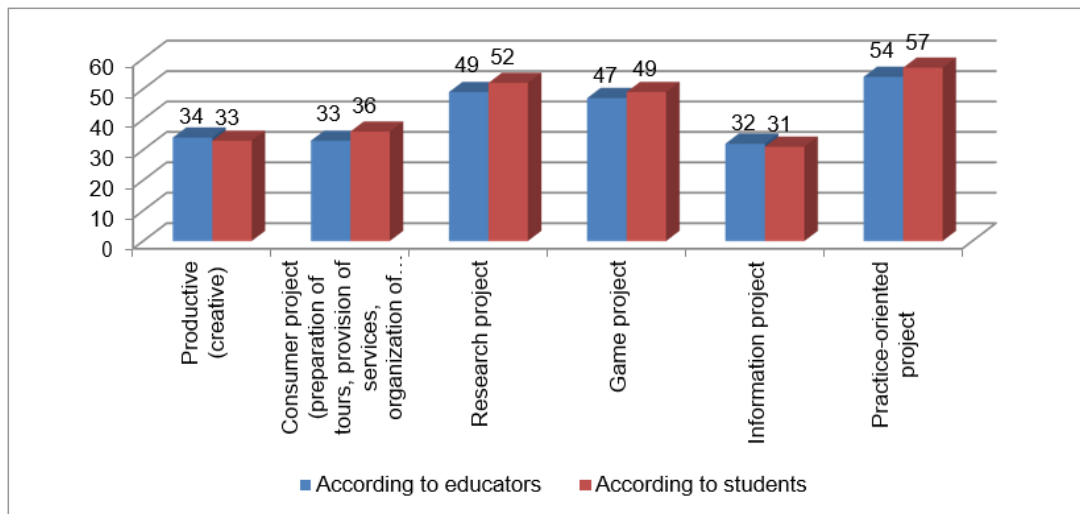
In the survey, respondents agreed that assessment criteria are the foundation for ensuring the quality of the project goals. In the learning process, they should be communicated to students in advance and determined individually for each task that students work on independently. To achieve the best possible result, the teacher should formulate clear criteria for evaluating the performance of each project participant, the most essential of which are (see Fig. 2)

- non-standard approaches to solving the tasks;
- full coverage of participation in all stages of the project;
- high-quality recording of information.



**Fig. 2.** The most important criteria for evaluating the performance of each project participant, %. Source: built by the authors

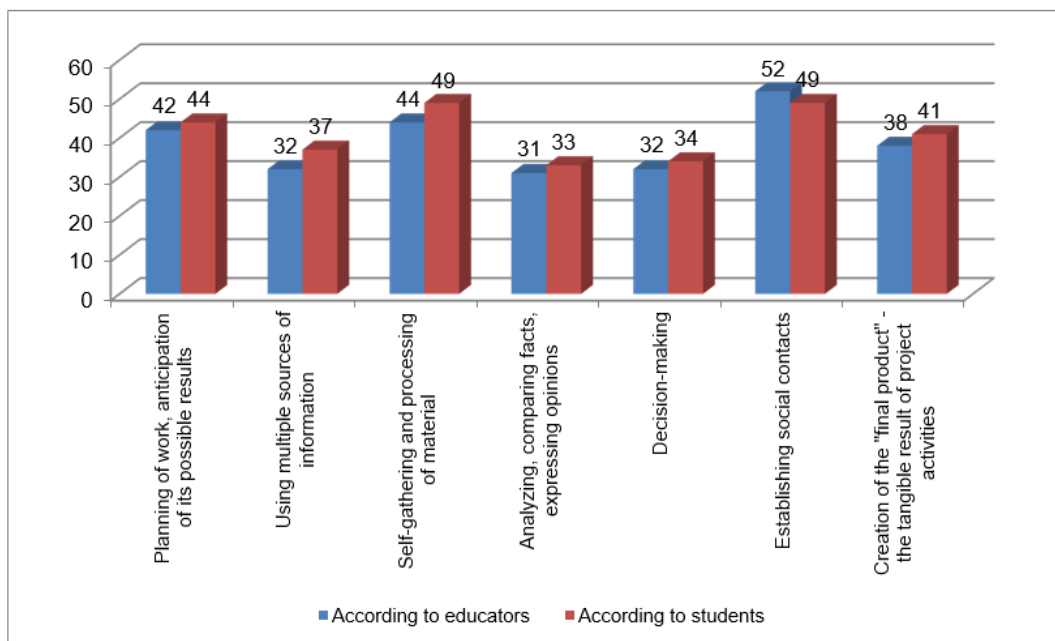
The survey helped to identify the types of projects that were most actively and successfully used during the educational process in HEIs (see Fig. 3).



**Fig. 3.** The types of projects that have been most actively and successfully used during the educational process in HEIs for students of historical specialties, %.

Source: built by the authors

As can be seen from Figure 3, these types are research, game, and practice-oriented projects. During the study, respondents were asked to assess the effectiveness of the project method in terms of its efficiency in developing the skills acquired by students during project activities (see Fig. 4).



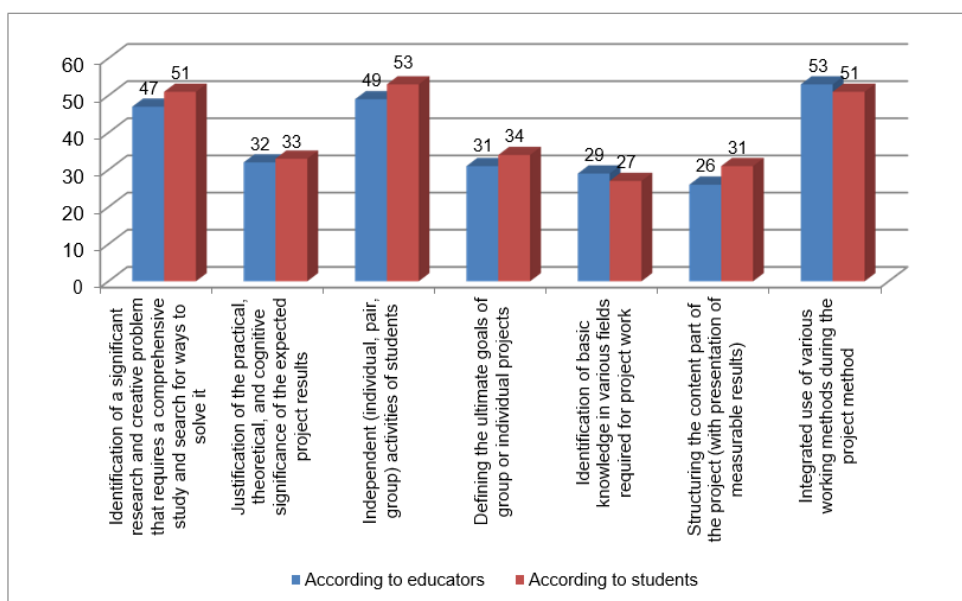
**Fig. 4.** Skills that students acquire in the course of project activities while studying in HEIs, %.

Source: built by the authors

The survey showed that these skills include planning work individually, anticipating its possible outcomes, collecting and processing material independently, and establishing social contacts.

An important result of the survey was the identification of areas that require special attention in terms of the need to research and consider them when developing project-based learning resources in HEIs (see Fig. 5):

- identification of a significant research and creative problem that requires a comprehensive study and search for ways to solve it when applying the project method;
- independent (individual, pair, group) activity of students;
- integrated use of various methods of work during the project method (brainstorming, round table, statistical methods, creative reports, website development, presentations, databases, etc.)



**Fig. 5.** Areas that require special attention in terms of the need to research and consider them when developing project-based learning resources in HEIs for students of historical specialties, %.

Source: built by the authors

## 5. Discussion

Scientists define the project method as an open pedagogical system that contains a certain set of interrelated tools, methods, and processes necessary for the implementation of an organized and purposeful pedagogical influence on the formation of the student's personality. (Lai, Saab & Admiraal, 2022).

The main principle of education - "learning through action" - is crucial for the development of the idea of the project method. According to this principle, the essence of the learning process is discovery, i.e. constant, genuine study and research of something new (Lim et al., 2022).

The project method is based on an idea that reflects the essence of the concept of "project" and its pragmatic focus on the result obtained by solving a practically or theoretically significant

problem. The most important thing is that this result can be seen, understood, and applied in real practice. To achieve such a result, it is necessary to be able to think independently as well as find and solve problems using knowledge from various fields. It is also important to be able to predict the results and possible consequences of different solutions to a problem, to establish cause-and-effect relationships (Røe, Wojniusz & Bjerke, 2022).

A comprehensive analysis of research in the field of project activity allows us to identify typical requirements for the use of project work. These include the existence of a technically significant research problem that requires research and integrated knowledge and planning of research results containing practical, theoretical, and scientific innovations (Ali, 2020).

The use of project technology contributes to the realization of the professional interests of higher education students, and the integration of a particular task into the context of future professional activity (Díaz-García<sup>1</sup> et al., 2022).

The project technology also contributes to the professional self-determination of the individual. As part of the curriculum, students are encouraged to solve true professional problems in which they develop professional skills (Calonge et al., 2022).

When evaluating the project, one should also consider the development of the student's personal qualities. Namely, the level of self-esteem, the ability to make an informed decision and realize its consequences; the ability to determine the importance and relevance of the problems raised. It is furthermore essential to consider the appropriateness of the research methods used and the processing of the results; activity during the project, the ability to argue their conclusions, and answer questions from opponents (Okoye et al., 2022), (Ertmer & Otterbreit-Leftwich, 2019).

It should be noted that as students complete project activities, their interest in particular subject increases, as well as their interest in learning. In the course of projects, students are involved in finding solutions to problems and methods of studying them. Equally important is that they have the opportunity to demonstrate measurable results in the process of working on a project (Tømte et al., 2019).

It is worth emphasizing that students learn not only to develop and implement a project per the task but also to present its results to a wide audience; get used to using approaches to rational time allocation and management, reveal the creative abilities and thinking of each participant in the educational project (Stathopoulou et al., 2019).

## 6. Conclusions

Thus, according to the analysis of the scientific literature on the research topic and the results of the survey, the project method as a form of productive learning makes it possible to provide additional opportunities for young people's professional search, based on practical life experience, to solve their social, educational, psychological and cultural problems. The use of the project method in the educational process of students of historical specialties increases the efficiency of learning and awareness of knowledge about the subject. It also helps to develop the ability to work with information, analyze, systematize, generalize, build associations with what has been previously studied, develop conclusions, put forward ideas, find ways to solve a problem, foresee possible consequences of decisions, argue opinions, find a compromise, and predict the results of their activities.



Thus, the introduction of the project method in the process of training future specialists will help to bring the learning process as close as possible to true professional activities and increase motivation for the chosen profession. Moreover, this method ensures the implementation of student-centered learning and promotes the development of professional skills and creativity of students. At the same time, the project method intensifies the learning process, strengthens its practical orientation, and helps to overcome destructive forms of behavior of the students. It is equally important that it contributes to their mastery of information technologies, optimally shapes theoretical, practical, and psychological ways of preparing for professional activities, and effectively forms the competence of students.

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