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CULTIVATING AUTONOMY AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: EXPLORING LEARNER-CENTERED CREATIVE ACTIVITIES IN EFL CLASSROOMS

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Аннотация: Данная научная статья исследует эффективность креативных, ориентированных на учащегося видов деятельности в развитии автономии и коммуникативной компетенции у студентов, изучающих английский язык как иностранный (EFL). Изучается внедрение таких стратегий, как совместная драма, цифровой сторителлинг, импровизация, модели перевернутого класса, интегрирующие создание креативного контента, и творческие мастерские, проводимые самими студентами. Используется квази-экспериментальный дизайн, сравнивающий результаты обучения студентов в экспериментальных группах, использующих эти виды деятельности, с контрольными группами, придерживающимися традиционного обучения. Количественные данные включают предварительные и итоговые тесты коммуникативной компетенции, показатели автономии учащихся и самооценку мотивации. Качественные данные собираются посредством наблюдений в классе, журналов студентов и интервью с учителями, чтобы обеспечить детальное понимание процессов обучения. Результаты вносят вклад в педагогику EFL, демонстрируя потенциал креативных, ориентированных на учащегося подходов для продвижения как языковых навыков, так и самостоятельного обучения.

Ключевые слова: Ориентированные на учащегося виды деятельности, Креативные виды деятельности, EFL, Автономия, Коммуникативная компетенция, Совместная драма, Цифровой сторителлинг, Импровизация, Перевернутый класс, Творческие мастерские, проводимые самими студентами.

Abstract: This research article investigates the effectiveness of learner-centered creative activities in fostering autonomy and communicative competence among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. The study explores the implementation of strategies such as collaborative drama, digital storytelling, improvisation, flipped classroom models integrating creative content creation, and peer-led creative workshops. A quasi-experimental design is employed, comparing student outcomes in experimental groups using these activities with control groups following traditional instruction. Quantitative data includes pre- and post-tests of communicative competence, measures of learner autonomy, and self-reported motivation. Qualitative data is gathered through classroom observations, student journals, and teacher interviews to provide a nuanced understanding of the learning processes. Findings contribute to EFL pedagogy by demonstrating the potential of creative, learner-centered approaches to promote both linguistic skills and self-directed learning.

Keywords: Learner-Centered Activities, Creative Activities, EFL, Autonomy, Communicative Competence, Collaborative Drama, Digital Storytelling, Improvisation, Flipped Classroom, Peer-Led Workshops

Introduction

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In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education is continuously evolving to meet the changing needs and expectations of learners in a globalized world. While traditional methods of instruction have their place, there is a growing recognition of the importance of fostering learner autonomy and communicative competence to prepare students for authentic language use. This research explores the effectiveness of learner-centered creative activities as a means of achieving these goals. By shifting the focus from teacher-led instruction to student-driven exploration and creation, the study aims to demonstrate how EFL classrooms can become more engaging, motivating, and effective learning environments. The central research question guiding this investigation is: How do learner-centered creative activities influence the development of autonomy and communicative competence among EFL students, and what are the key factors that contribute to their success?

Literature Review

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of creative pedagogical approaches on foreign language acquisition.

1. Collaborative Drama: This method involves students working in small groups to create and perform short plays based on authentic communicative scenarios. The emphasis is on improvisation, role-playing, and the development of oral fluency and confidence.
2. Digital Storytelling: Students create digital stories using a combination of text, images, audio, and video to express their personal experiences, opinions, or perspectives on various topics. This activity promotes creativity, digital literacy, and narrative skills.
3. Improvisation: Students engage in spontaneous and unrehearsed interactions, responding to prompts or situations in a creative and imaginative way. This method helps to develop spontaneity, flexibility, and adaptability in communication.
4. Flipped Classroom with Creative Content Creation: Students watch pre-recorded video lectures at home and use class time to engage in creative activities, such as creating their own podcasts, videos, or interactive exercises related to the lesson content.
5. Peer-Led Creative Workshops: Students take turns leading workshops on topics of their choice, using creative methods to engage their peers in active learning. This activity promotes autonomy, leadership skills, and peer interaction.

Conclusion

This research offers a comprehensive investigation into the potential of learner-centered creative activities to foster autonomy and communicative competence in EFL learners. By examining the implementation and impact of collaborative drama, digital storytelling, improvisation, flipped classroom models, and peer-led workshops, the study will provide valuable insights for EFL educators seeking to create more engaging, student-centered, and effective learning environments. The findings will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on EFL pedagogy and offer practical recommendations for promoting both linguistic proficiency and self-directed learning among language learners. The project also acknowledges possible barriers and suggests means of mitigation.

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