

NIS Experience in Implementing Concept-based Learning in English Language Classes



**BASED ON THE RESULTS OF MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE UPDATED "NIS-PROGRAMME" CURRICULUM IN THE SUBJECT
"ENGLISH" IN GRADE 12**

2018-19 ACADEMIC YEAR

ASSEL BATTALOVA

The aim and objectives of the study

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A - To identify the difficulties and factors hindering the introduction of the concept-based approach in the 12th grade

O 1 – *To determine* if teachers understand the specifics of the conceptual approach (for new teachers).

O 2 – *To identify* with which concepts teachers experience difficulties during the process.

O 3 – *To determine* the reasons for the difficulty in concept-based learning and in developing appropriate assignments in the 12th grade.

O 4 – *To identify* the methodological support that teachers need to effectively implement a concept-based program in high school.

Research questions

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1. What concepts (Term 1: **Identity**, Term 2: **Perception**, Term 3: **Time**, Term 4: **Perspective**) cause difficulties in teaching and developing appropriate tasks for the updated program?
2. What are the main reasons, causing difficulties in applying each concept and developing related tasks?
3. What methodological recommendations / support is required for English teachers to ensure the effective implementation of the educational program based on concepts in high school?

Research methods

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methods	data	+	-	recommendations
visits to schools – NIS Aktobe, Uralsk, Kostanay (schools that have not been monitored and newly arrived teachers, who need a methodological support)				
Observation of lessons	11 lessons 40 minutes observation sheet	natural learning environment all focus groups answers to monitoring questions additional data besides monitoring questions teacher feedback/reflection	insufficient number of schools limited data schedule	To rise the number of schools conduct on-site monitoring 2 times a year (autumn-spring)
Interviews	8 teachers 30 students 40 to 60 minutes mixed interview type	natural learning environment teachers and students answers to monitoring questions additional data besides monitoring questions	insufficient number of schools limited data schedule	
Analysis of documents	11 lesson plans and handouts documents of the department	analysis of what is planned and implemented by the teacher in the lesson planning practice additional data besides monitoring questions	-	include project team members in the field study
Meetings with teachers of the department	3 meetings	additional data besides monitoring questions providing methodological support while continuing educational process prospects for further development	schedule	

Analysis of documents

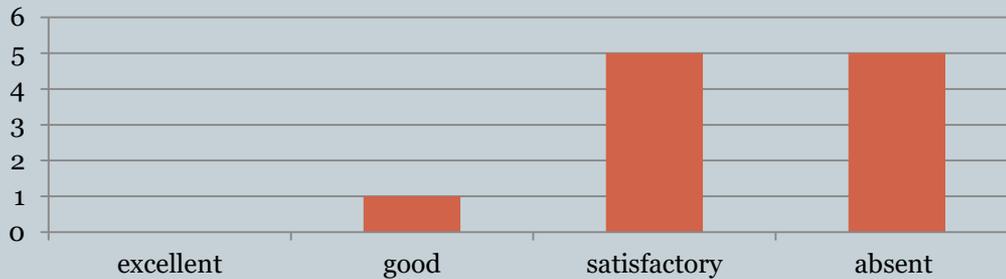
During the visits, official documents that guide teachers in their work were studied, including minutes of meetings of methodological associations, curricula and plans, and short-term lesson plans.

Despite the fact that the study of lesson plans is not directly the purpose of the research, however, according to how the plan was drawn up and how the lesson was conducted, it was possible to draw certain conclusions and use the data obtained in discussing the results of the research. For example, all teachers used plan templates that were included in the updated curriculum. All lesson plans included relevant concepts, but not all teachers conducted lessons by linking the teaching material to the specified concept in the lesson. A total of 11 short-term plans were examined while visiting classes.

Results of the research

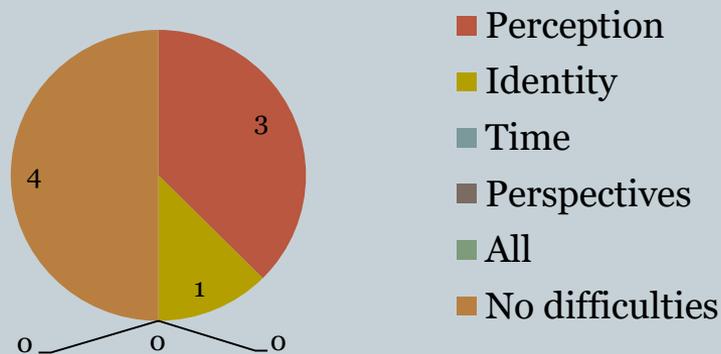
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learning materials are based on concepts and integrated through the whole lesson



In 10 lessons out of 11 – there is no concept-based learning. Teachers are limited to only a few of the resources provided in the curriculum. The questions are limited to the following - What...? How ...? What is your opinion? (observation of lessons)

what grade 12 concept was most difficult for you to implement?

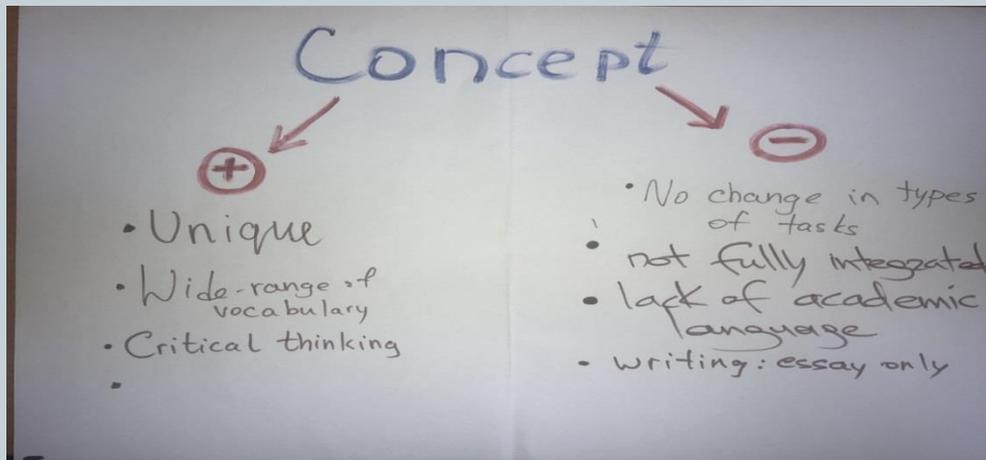
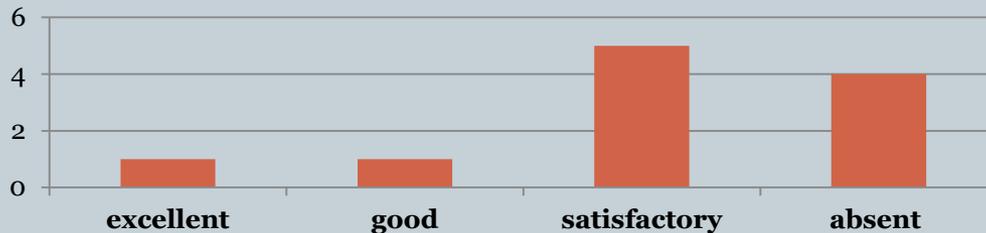


4 out of 8 teachers identify the concepts of Perception\Perspectives. 6 out of 8 teachers understand at the level of defining a concept. (interviews of teachers)

Results of the research

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teacher uses q-s for critical thinking and high order thinking skills development (learners analyse different perspectives, evaluate opinions, views and etc.)



In 9 out of 11 lessons attended, teachers poorly used tasks and questions that correspond to the level of high-order thinking, the development of critical thinking.

The tasks are of the same type.

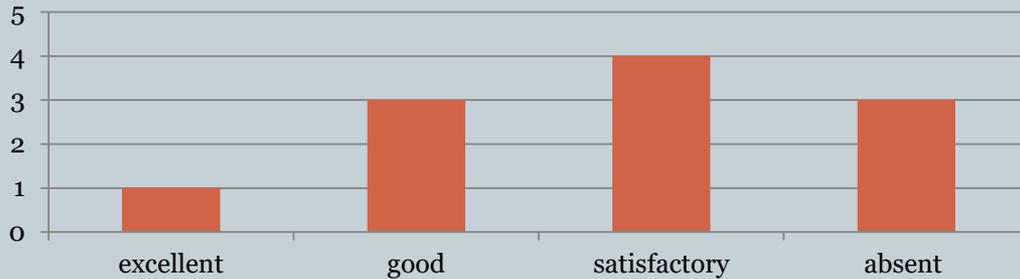
Questions are most often aimed at eliciting evidence. Discussion boils down to expressing your own point of view. (observation of lessons)

"Most often, we simply retell the content or give facts and events, do not exchange opinions and do not discuss different points of view." (interviews of students)

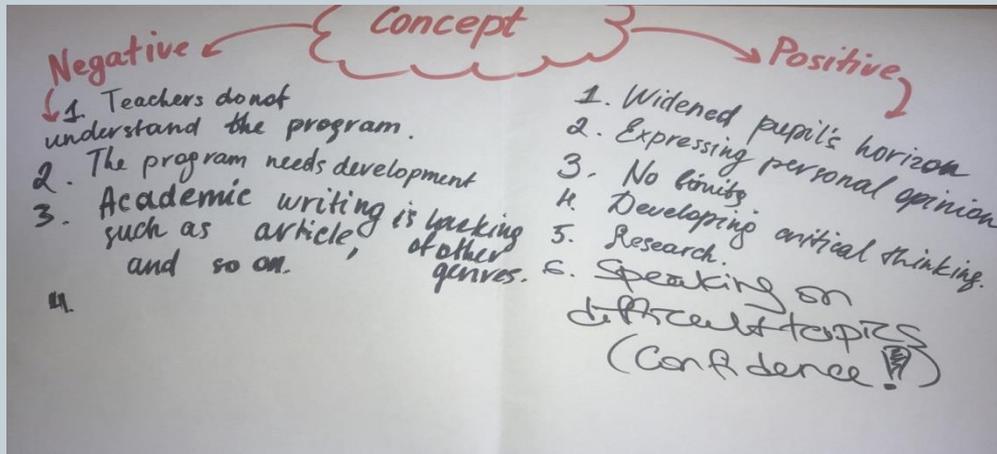
Results of the research

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**learners use subject terms,
phrases and academic vocabulary
fluently with accuracy**



In 7 of the 11 lessons, students used little or no academic language (observation of lessons)



Some groups noted that academic writing is underdeveloped (student interviews)

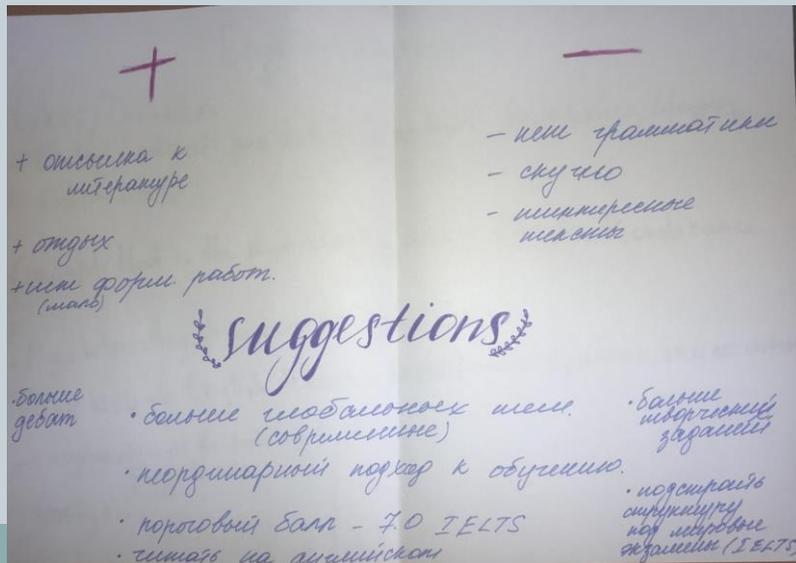
Results of the research

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What resources do you use while planning lessons?



Most teachers **do not use a variety of resources** when working with educational material, choosing only some resources from the curriculum. Teachers noted that the curriculum provided a significant help, which presented complete and accessible information on each concept

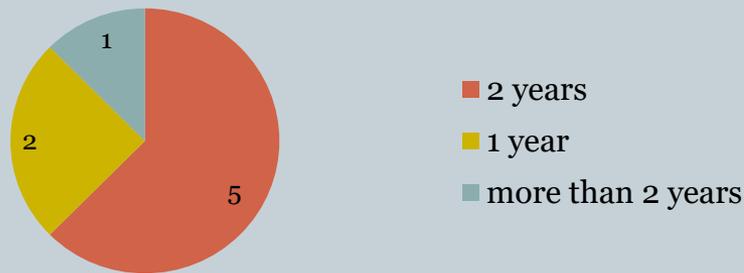


Some groups said they wanted more debate, discussion of global topics, and creative assignments.
(interviews of students)

Results of the research

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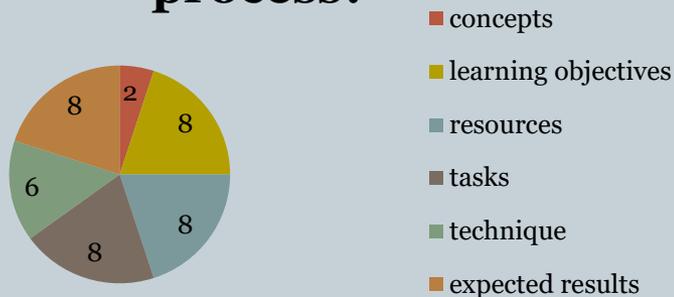
What is your experience of using CBL?



On this issue, it was revealed that teachers have little experience in teaching concepts (5 teachers 2 years, 2 teachers 1 year, 1 teacher had experience with the GPPW earlier)

Most teachers report that it is customary to teach on topics rather than concepts.
(teacher interview)

What do you pay attention to in the lesson planning process?



Teachers indicate a concept in the lesson plan, but not all teachers mentioned concepts during the interview. Teachers noted that it is important to achieve learning objectives and cover topics. 2 out of 8 teachers noted that concepts should not only be included in the lesson plan, but also there is a fact that all material is studied through the concepts (analysis of lesson plans and interviews)

The major difficulties

Thus, based on the results of observation of lessons and interviews, **the main difficulties** that teachers encountered during the implementation of the updated program in the 12th grade can be identified as follows:

1. Lack of time to read and study the features of the approach, as well as to select the necessary resources.
2. Lack of resources or difficulty in finding them.
3. Lack of knowledge and experience in concept-based learning.

Answers to research questions

What concepts cause difficulties in teaching and developing relevant tasks?

90% of teachers have a theoretical understanding of CBL. There is some identification of Perception \ Perspectives concepts. Tasks that do not require thinking, analysis and study of various points of view prevail. Most teachers find it difficult to develop differentiated assignments in terms of difficulty and tasks for developing high-order thinking skills across all concepts of the program.

What are the main reasons for the difficulties in understanding each concept and developing relevant tasks?

The main reason is the lack of a complete study of the program and teaching experience. Limited choice in the selection and use of resources. Focus on the implementation of learning objectives. The usual thematic study of educational material, it is difficult to see the bigger picture. It is difficult to “keep in mind” when planning learning from concepts, achieving learning objectives and selecting a variety of resources, since it takes more time to prepare.

What methodological support is needed to ensure the effective implementation of an educational program based on concepts in grade 12?

The main support, as noted by the teachers, is through educational trainings and seminars.
Collaborative planning with GPPW teachers.

Recommendations

1. Supplement guidelines / comments / resources on the application of concepts in the “Teacher Notes” section of the 12th grade curriculum as part of the 2019-20 Academic Year Curriculum Review Workshop and as part of the Summer 2019 workshop.
2. To review the Guide and include sections on the specifics of organizing work based on concepts within the program and in the instructional and methodological letter for the 2019-20 academic year.
3. To develop a methodological guide for English teachers on the peculiarities of the implementation of the conceptual approach in high school (grades 11-12) as part of the implementation of the NIS-Program in 2019.
4. Include sessions for planning and conducting practical sessions in the framework of summer trainings for high school English teachers on the features of the updated program with the participation of GPPW teachers, August 2019.

Completion of the curriculum

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Previous edition

Term 1: Identity

Term 2: Perception

Term 3: Time

Term 4: Perspective

New edition

Perspective

interpretation, influence,
audience, point of view

Identity

diversity, relationships,
values, beliefs

Change

development, transformation,
process, leadership

Opportunity

challenge, environment,
equality, success

Higher-order thinking questions

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Concept	Perspective
Microconcepts	-Interpretation, influence, audience, point of view
Factual Q-s	-What are your beliefs? -How to build persuasive arguments? -What are the perspectives of characters in the story \ novel?
Conceptual Q-s	-What is perspective? -How are perspectives shaped? -How does propaganda shape our perspective? -How do you think one's tendency or ability to take the perspective of another might influence the ways in which leaders and subordinates interact? -To achieve our perspectives how will we sustain our ability to change and improve?
Debatable Q-s	-If you were not scared, what would you do? -Why is it important to consider different perspectives? -Should you be focused on today or tomorrow? -Why is it important to voice your opinion \ perspective? -What is the quickest way to change your perspective?

Completion of the curriculum

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Differentiation strategies

Support - Allow less able students express their opinion in pairs or small groups before they share with the entire class.

Content/outcome - Some able students can read more complex written texts, whereas less able can read more straightforward ones/some students could be given more complex assignment while others could complete less challenging.

Process - Teacher may ask thought-provoking and creative questions from students that are more able.

Prospects for further development

1. It is planned to continue research on the development of high-order thinking skills within the framework of concept-based learning in the 2019-2020 academic year.
2. Reflection. Reflection as a means of professional development is widely used in teaching practice. It is necessary to find out what teachers mean by reflection, whether teachers use it with each student individually, or with the class. How do teachers carry out reflection?
3. Professional Development. Professional development, like self-education, plays an important role in the effectiveness of program implementation. In this regard, it is necessary to find out how teachers improve their qualifications. Do teachers have an individual developmental trajectory to improve their teaching practice?