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DEVELOPING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SKILLS IN STUDENTS IN ENGLISH LESSONS.

Amrilloyeva Charos Rahmatillo kizi

Polytechnical school No. 1 of Gijduvan district, Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Abstract: Integrating environmental education into English lessons offers a unique opportunity to develop students' environmental protection skills while enhancing language proficiency. This article explores strategies for embedding environmental themes in English curricula, focusing on secondary students (aged 13–17). A mixed-methods study involving 50 students showed that project-based learning activities, such as writing essays on climate change or debating sustainable practices, improved environmental awareness by 28% and English fluency by 15% (pre- and post-test scores). Challenges include teacher preparedness and curriculum constraints. The article proposes practical methods like thematic vocabulary, role-plays, and multimedia projects to foster eco-conscious behaviors and linguistic skills, contributing to interdisciplinary education.

Keywords: environmental education, English language teaching, environmental protection skills, interdisciplinary learning, student engagement, sustainability

Environmental degradation, including climate change and pollution, poses significant global challenges, necessitating education that equips students with environmental protection skills (UNESCO, 2020). English lessons, often focused on language acquisition, provide an untapped platform to integrate environmental themes, fostering both ecological awareness and communication skills. Research indicates that 67% of teachers believe interdisciplinary approaches enhance student engagement in environmental issues (Smith & Johnson, 2021). This article examines how English lessons can develop students' environmental protection skills, addressing strategies, outcomes, and challenges through an evidence-based lens.

English lessons offer a versatile medium for environmental education due to their emphasis on critical thinking, communication, and cultural exploration. By incorporating topics like deforestation, renewable energy, or plastic pollution, teachers can contextualize language learning within real-world issues. A 2022 study found that students exposed to environmental themes in language classes showed a 25% increase in eco-conscious behaviors, such as recycling. This approach aligns with Kolb's experiential learning theory, which emphasizes learning through concrete experiences and reflection (Kolb, 1984). English lessons provide opportunities for students to engage with environmental issues through writing, speaking, and listening activities, fostering both cognitive and affective learning outcomes.

A mixed-methods study was conducted with 50 secondary students (aged 13–17) in an urban school. The intervention group (n=25) participated in English lessons with environmental themes, while the control group (n=25) followed a standard English curriculum. The intervention spanned 12 weeks, with weekly 60-minute sessions.

The experimental group engaged in:

- Thematic vocabulary: Learning words like "sustainability," "carbon footprint," and "biodiversity" through context-rich texts.
- Project-based learning: Writing essays on climate change impacts or creating posters on waste

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reduction.
- Role-plays and debates: Simulating UN climate conferences or debating renewable energy policies.
- Multimedia projects: Analyzing environmental documentaries or creating podcasts on local conservation efforts.
The control group focused on general English topics (e.g., literature, grammar) without environmental content.
Pre- and post-tests assessed environmental knowledge (10 multiple-choice questions) and English proficiency (writing and speaking tasks, scored out of 100). A survey (Likert scale, 1–5) measured environmental attitudes and engagement. Qualitative data included teacher interviews and student reflections.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS v28. Paired t-tests compared pre- and post-test scores within groups, and independent t-tests compared outcomes between groups. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed to identify trends in attitudes and challenges.
The experimental group's environmental knowledge score increased from 62.3 (SD = 8.4) to 79.7 (SD = 7.1), a 28% improvement ($t(24) = 8.45$, $p < 0.001$). Their English proficiency score rose from 70.1 (SD = 9.2) to 80.6 (SD = 8.0), a 15% gain ($t(24) = 6.32$, $p < 0.001$). The control group showed no significant change in environmental knowledge ($M = 61.8$ to 63.2, $t(24) = 0.87$, $p = 0.39$) and a modest 5% improvement in English proficiency ($M = 69.5$ to 73.0, $t(24) = 2.14$, $p = 0.04$). An independent t-test confirmed the experimental group's superior outcomes (environmental: $t(48) = 5.67$, $p < 0.001$; English: $t(48) = 3.89$, $p = 0.002$). Effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.76$ for environmental knowledge, 0.62 for English) indicated moderate to large practical significance.
Students reported higher engagement with environmental topics, citing "relevance to real life" (e.g., discussing local pollution) and "interactive activities" like debates. Teachers noted increased student confidence in speaking but highlighted challenges, such as limited training in environmental education and time constraints within the curriculum.
Many English teachers lack expertise in environmental science. A 2020 survey found that 52% of language teachers felt unprepared to integrate cross-disciplinary content (Brown & Lee, 2020). Professional development is essential to bridge this gap.
Standardized curricula often prioritize language skills over thematic content, limiting time for environmental topics. Schools may need to align environmental education with existing standards to ensure feasibility.
Some students, particularly those with lower English proficiency, struggled with complex environmental texts. Scaffolding, such as simplified readings or glossaries, is necessary to support diverse learners.

Incorporate environmental themes into existing units, such as writing persuasive essays on conservation or reading articles on renewable energy. Align activities with language standards to maintain academic rigor.
Offer workshops on integrating environmental education, focusing on lesson planning and resource selection. A 2023 pilot program showed that trained teachers increased student engagement by 20% (Taylor & Green, 2023).

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Use project-based and collaborative tasks to foster ownership. For example, group projects on local environmental issues encourage critical thinking and civic engagement.
Integrating environmental protection skills into English lessons enhances both ecological awareness and language proficiency. The study's findings—28% improvement in environmental knowledge and 15% in English skills—demonstrate the efficacy of this interdisciplinary approach. Challenges like teacher preparedness and curriculum constraints can be addressed through targeted training and strategic planning. By embedding environmental themes in English lessons, educators can prepare students to be informed, eco-conscious global citizens. Future research should explore long-term impacts and scalability across diverse educational contexts.

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