



Enhancing Language Development through Project-Based Learning: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Project-based learning is a constructivist method of instruction that helps students develop their social skills, problem-solving abilities, and higher-level subject knowledge as they work through real-world problems. Language education could greatly benefit from project-based language learning since it could make language instruction interesting and relevant. Project-based learning has the potential to offer English language learners opportunities for both integrated language learning and comprehensible output. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effects of project-based learning on students' development of proficiency in the English language as well as their perceptions of it.

Keywords: Project-based Learning, Language Learning, Motivation, Comprehensible Input

Introduction

John Dewey's (1916) fundamental idea "doing is the key to understanding" serves as a foundation of project-based learning, and his claim that "doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results" (p. 98) emphasizes the role of learning by means of engaging in an investigation on a problem or question. A project is defined as a "long-term activity that involves a variety of individual or cooperative tasks" involving planning, research, and reporting (Beckett, 2002, p. 54). Project-based learning is "an instructional approach that contextualizes learning by presenting learners with problems to solve or products to develop" (Moss & Van Duzer, 1998, p.1). Project-based learning emphasises learning through student-centered, multidisciplinary, integrated activities in real-world circumstances, which sets it apart from traditional instruction. The use of authentic language, a focus on communicative skill, and the encouragement of language learner autonomy are characteristics of project-based language learning (Fried-Booth 2002). The shift from using English in the classroom to using it outside of it is facilitated by project-based learning. When students collaborate in groups, they discover that they require the ability to plan, arrange, negotiate, present their ideas, and reach an agreement to complete a task. This paper will try to explore the benefits of project-based learning for

the development of language proficiency.

Literature Review

The tenet of project-based learning is that students learn information and skills by engaging in an investigation into a question, problem, or challenge. Project-based learning's core idea is that students are encouraged to think by challenges that are presented in a real-world setting because they must explore, learn, and apply new information in this setting. With the help of a focused process of inquiry, knowledge construction, and problem solving, project-based learning relies on students creating their own understanding (Thomas, 2000). As indicated by Buck Institute (2013) the foundation of project-based learning is comprised of eight key components.

Key knowledge, Understanding, and Success Skills: The objectives of a project should be to further student learning. It should also have skills and material that adhere to standards. These abilities include teamwork, self-management, and critical thinking.

Challenging Problem or Question: The difficulty of the problem or question should be suitable for the student(s) attempting to resolve it. Additionally, it must have significance for students. It has been noted by Larmer and Mergendoller (2015) that a driving question should serve as the basis for the Project-based learning unit or curriculum. In other words, the fundamental tenets of project-based research design are driving questions.

Sustained Inquiry: A continuing process in which students ask questions, look for resources to address those issues, and then apply the newly learned knowledge.

Authenticity: There should be a link between a project and the outside world. If there is no link to the outside world, there should still be a connection to students' personal interests.

Student Voice and Choice: What and how students produce should be up for discussion.

Reflection: Teachers and students both consider their own efforts. What worked well? What challenges were faced and how were they resolved?

Critique and Revision: Students get feedback. The results of the project and process are then improved as a result of it.

Public Product: Presenting student work allows it to be available to the public. Darling-Hammond et al. (2008) argued that this public audience "can be highly motivating for students" (p. 215).

Each of these elements involves students in an active learning process that calls for greater depth of understanding and higher-level cognitive abilities. Essentially, project-based learning may be characterised as a synthesis of several instructional elements and methods, such as former models of instruction that include inquiry-based learning,

problem-based learning, cooperative learning, and authentic learning (Galvan & Coronado, 2014).

Stoller (2006) outlines the basic features of project-based learning as:

- has a process and an end product
- passes on some of the project's ownership to students
- lasts a length of time
- integrates skills
- increasing students' comprehension of a subject by incorporating language and content
- allows students to work both alone and in groups with other students
- makes students accountable for their own learning by requiring them to collect, process, and report data from resources in the target language
- gives teachers and students new roles and responsibilities
- offers a final product
- considers the process as well as the final product

Projects are essential to the curriculum. Projects are centred around issues or queries that force students to engage with the main ideas and principles of the field. The following are some characteristics of Project-based learning activities (Simpson, 2011):

- stresses learning content over specialised linguistic patterns
- is learner-centered, the teacher is a facilitator
- promotes cooperation among students
- results in the authentic integration of language skills and information processing from many sources
- links between the use of English in the classroom and the real world

Project-based learning is useful because it helps students to apply their knowledge in real-world situations and is linked to current events. In addition, it involves students in lengthy research projects and provides them the chance to take part in various activities in relevant contexts. According to Miller (2006), project-based instruction helps teachers accomplish a number of learning objectives, including fostering communication, incorporating language and culture studies, connecting language to content, and creating connections between students' first and second languages.

Project-based learning may be stimulating, empowering, and demanding for language learners, for that reason, it typically leads to an increase in learners' autonomy,

confidence, and self-worth in addition to enhancing their language proficiency, comprehension of the material, and cognitive capacities (Stoller, 1997). When students can organise, manage, and complete projects using their language and knowledge of the topic, their learning becomes fruitful.

Project-based learning is a flexible method in language learning that enables the development of various abilities in a cohesive, purposeful, continuing activity. According to Beckett (2002), projects are typically viewed as a lengthy activity that are a component of an educational approach that encourages the simultaneous learning of language, subject, and skills. Project-based learning can help learners develop their language skills (Levine, 2004). All four language skills; listening, writing, reading and speaking are integrated while working on a project. With this in mind, it goes without saying that projects give opportunities to students to “recycle known language and skills in a relatively natural context” (Haines, 1989, p.1).

Comprehensible output, which often happens while working on the project, is one of the main objectives of project-based learning. Students exhibit enhanced self-esteem and positive attitudes when project-based learning is employed. According to Skehan (1998), this method can improve students' autonomy, particularly if they are actively involved in project development. Students can use language in a relatively natural setting and take part in meaningful activities that call for the use of authentic language since they are engaged in intentional communication to complete authentic tasks (Haines, 1989). Authentic activities are tasks intended to improve students critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Projects have a greater significance for students as they may spark their interest, motivate them to engage, and advance their learning. Needless to say, student motivation is essential to student-centered learning. Dörnyei (1988) asserts that student motivation is a key asset while they are learning a language. Students gain metacognitive skills because a project is an activity that includes a range of individual or group tasks, like formulating research questions and plans and carrying them out through empirical or document research that entails gathering, evaluating, and summarising data verbally and/or in writing (Beckett, 2002). Project-based learning helps students learn languages for the reasons listed below:

It allows students to apply lessons learned in contexts that are similar to real-world situations to other contexts and situations as they begin to consider that language learning is relevant to their daily lives.

It encourages students to acquire new languages and to become more fluent in them also it provides students the opportunity to receive insightful feedback from their peers and materials that go beyond their current level of linguistic proficiency (Ellis, 1994).

It reinforces different demands and abilities of language learners in the cooperative setting of project work (Lawrence, 1997).

Conclusion

Foreign language and second language acquisition benefit from project-based learning. In contrast to traditional classrooms, where teachers impart knowledge from textbooks to students, PBL appears to be an effective method for students to improve their language, content, and communicative skills. Students can use and incorporate language and factual knowledge in their real lives while performing and creating the project. Project-based learning helps students with motivation, language proficiency, group dynamics, subject matter acquisition, self-assurance, autonomy, and decision-making skills.

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