PROJECT-BASED LEARNING (PBL) AND THE TEACHING OF BRITISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY AT THE USSH

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- This presentation reports on a teaching course of culture via a Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach employed during 7 weeks of the subject named *An Introduction to British Culture and Society* under the training program for in-service English majors of Second Degree Program at the USSH.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture and language teaching

- Culture and cultural elements
- Relationship between language learning and culture
- Aims of teaching British culture

LITERATURE REVIEW

Project-based learning (PBL)

Overview of PBL

- Project work is not a new methodology. Its benefits have been widely recognized for many years in the teaching of subjects like science, geography, and history, etc. So some teachers have been doing project work in their language lessons for a long time. Project-based learning (PBL) is a model that organizes learning around projects.

Overview of PBL

- PBL is a transformative method through which all learners can PARTICIPATE, gain the knowledge and skills by investigating and searching for answers to questions or complicated issues/ problems during a long period of study.

- PBL is a method of teaching in which learners have to perform an integrated learning task, combining both theories and practice during a long period of study with high degree of independence (in setting goals, developing plans, project implementation, adjustment, evaluation of process and learning outcomes)

- The product of PBL is visible, measurable, can be presented.

Overview of PBL

- Project-based learning involves completing complex tasks that typically result in a realistic product, event, or presentation to an audience. Thomas, 2000). Thomas also identified five components of effective project-based learning:

　　(1) It is central to the curriculum,

　　(2) It is organized around driving questions that lead students to encounter central concepts or principles,

　　(3) It is focused on a constructive investigation that involves inquiry and knowledge building,

　　(4) It is student-driven (students are responsible for designing and managing their work), and

　　(5) It is authentic, focusing on problems that occur in the real world which people care about.

Principles of PBL

- For a project to be meaningful to students, seven essentials needed to be fulfilled:

  + A Need to Know

  + A Driving Question

  + Student Voice and Choice

  + 21st Century Skills

  + Inquiry and Innovation

  + Feedback and Revision

  + A Publicly Presented Product

Overview of PBL

- PBL-based instruction was introduced to ESL education as one way to reflect the principles of student-centered learning (Hedge, 1993).

- Carrying out projects is considered as an effective way to teach language and content simultaneously (Stoller, 1997).

- The use of projects "establishes a direct links between language learning and its applications" as well as create opportunities which allow students to develop their abilities in the target language by interacting and cooperating with native speakers. It was also proved that teachers reported having various goals for implementing projects in their ESL classrooms, such as challenging students' creativity; fostering independence; enhancing cooperative learning skills; building decision-making, critical thinking and learning skills; and facilitating the language socialization of ESL students into local academic and social cultures. (Thomas , 1991)

Overview of PBL

Effective PBL has the following characteristics:

- Leads students to investigate important ideas and questions

- Is framed around an inquiry process

- Is differenced according to student's needs and interests

- Is driven by student independent production and presentation rather than teacher delivery of information

- Requires the use of creative thinking, critical thinking, and information skills to investigate, draw conclusion about, and create content

- Connect the real world with authentic problems and issues (Joel l.Klein; 2009)

Why Project-Based Learning?

- Help learners learn effectively with enjoyment to develop learning competencies essential for learning and life

- Provide learners with opportunities to participate actively

- Help learners with multi-modal texts/ materials

- Provide learners with practical experience

- Help learners with learning and long term memory

- Help learners to apply what they learnt in new situations

- Help learners better prepare for the careers in the 21st Century: mastery of language (knowledge and skills) and content

- Students also thrive on the greater flexibility of project learning.

- PBL is also an effective way to integrate technology into the curriculum. A typical project can easily accommodate computers and the Internet, as well as interactive whiteboards, global-positioning-system (GPS) devices, digital still cameras, video cameras, and associated editing equipment. Blumenfeld et al. (1991) advocate the ways that technology can support students and teachers as they work on projects, so that motivation and thoughts are sustained.

Essential skills for PBL learners

- Asking
- Researching
- Evaluating
- Feedback giving

PBL - Process

IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES/ SITUATIONS
Teachers/ Students refer to textbooks to identify problem/ issues and project's aims

DEVELOPMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION PLANS
Students develop plans for implementation

PERFORMANCE
Students have to work in groups, individually, combining theories and practice
Teachers monitor, supervise, and assist/ guide

PRESENTING THE PROJECT'S PRODUCTS
Students complete products and present the project's products

EVALUATION
Teachers and Students evaluate outcomes and process
Experience drawing

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1 How is PBL effective in enhancing students' knowledge of British culture and society?

2 What are the students' attitudes towards the employment of PBL in the course?

Participants

Two evening classes of in-service students (90) of Second Degree Program at the USSH were chosen.

+ One class was taught in a conventional way (control group/ class)

+ The other received PBL. (treatment group/ class)

The classes worked from the syllabus for Second Degree Program. They had one class meeting (5 periods) of English class each week. The amount of time that students spent studying outside class was a variable that could not be directly controlled during the investigational phase. The class received the PBL approach which was carefully designed by the teacher to integrate British culture and society through PBL.

Instruments

In order to investigate the effects of the program, the researcher collected both quantitative data and qualitative data.

- Pre-test and post-test:

The pre-test and post-test are of the same format and content which is of a typical final test of *An introduction to British culture and society* were taken in order to measure the students' improvement in their knowledge of British culture and society

- Questionnaire:

The questionnaire was administered right after the course in order to investigate students' attitudes towards the integration of PBL into the course.

Procedures of PBL in the study

The main procedures of PBL can be divided into 6 steps:

- choosing a topic

- making a plan for the project

- implementing the plan

- working on the product

- presenting the product and assessing the project

- Reflect on the project

Procedures of PBL in the study

- To be specific, the students in the treatment class were firstly placed into 6 groups of 7. Teams collaboratively chose their topics by brainstorming to make sure the topics were worth studying and then the project was structured and students were asked to create a one-page project information sheet using Microsoft Word, checking that the students have attainable objectives and a practical plan. According to their plan for the project, the teams began to gather, compile and analyze information, create a multimedia presentation describing their project, and then, the teams presented their final products to an audience of their peers and their teacher. Lastly, students were required to reflect on the processes used to complete their projects, the new skills they had learned, and the overall success of the product.

List of cultural topics in the program

WEEK	CONTENT
CHAPTER 1	The Physical Setting of British civilization Main division of Great Britain The English Climate – Rivers and Lake
CHAPTER 2	The Historical Setting of British civilization The British Monarchy: Tradition and Challenges The British Government and Politics Britain's Changing World Role
CHAPTER 3	The British Legacy and Court System Civic Liberties in Britain today British Military Today War and Social Change in British Culture
CHAPTER 4	Multicultural Britain Religion in Britain Arts and Culture Traditions and Festivals
CHAPTER 5	System of Education The Family and British Society Women and Social Change Young people in Britain
CHAPTER 6	Business and Culture The Power of the Media Sports Entertainment

Examples of project work

- collecting information from books, articles, magazines, etc.

- downloading photos (famous people, art, maps, diagrams, charts, etc.), videos, songs, films, etc. from the Internet

- interviewing native people living and working in Vietnam

- arranging texts, visuals, audio, etc.

- presenting information in a research paper, PPT, Websites, Web Quests, etc.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research question 1

How is PBL effective in enhancing students' and knowledge of British culture and society?

The pre-test scores of the two groups were analyzed by using two tailed T-test

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test Scores	Control Group	29.82	6.084	1.297
	Treatment Group	29.77	5.665	1.208

The mean score of the Control Group and that of the Treatment Group were roughly the same.

Comparison of the pre-test scores of the two groups

	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control Class Pre-test Treatment Class Pre-test	0.975

The null hypothesis "there is no difference between The mean scores of the two groups on pre-test" was accepted. In other words, the Treatment Group started at the same level of British cultural knowledge as that of the Control Group.

The post-test scores of the two groups

	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control Class Post-test Treatment Class Post-test	.003

As sig. (2-tailed) is 0.03 < 0.05, the null hypothesis "there is no difference between the mean scores of the Treatment Group and the Control Group on post-test" was rejected.

Comparison of the pre-test scores and post-test of the two classes

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control Class	**Pre-test**	29.82	6.084	1.297
	Post-test	35.32	7.479	1.595
Treatment Class	**Pre-test**	29.77	5.665	1.208
	Post-test	41.91	6.838	1.458

There was a statically significant difference between the means of the post-test of the two Groups. This indicates that the treatment was effective in improving 22 students in the Treatment Group in terms of knowledge of British culture and society.

Conclusion drawn out from the data analysis
of the pre-test and post-test:

The students in the Treatment Class, who were employed with PBL got much higher scores in the final test than those in the Control Class, who were without PBL.

Answer to Research Question 1:

The utilization of PBL is effective in improving students knowledge of British culture and society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research question 2

What are the students' attitudes towards the program with employment of PBL?

Most of the students had positive feedback to the PBL

- Enjoyable/ interesting/

- Become more highly-motivated, responsible, creative, curious

- Get in-depth knowledge of British culture

- Improve a lot of skills at the same time: Internet, communication, researching, presenting, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, group work, etc. => long life learning skills Blasszauer (2003)

- Develop social relationship

Some difficulties for some LEANERS

- Time management

- Choosing reliable sources from the Internet

- Challenging for initial implementation to promote their independence

PBL – Advantages for TEACHER

- See the visible products/ outcomes of PPT: helping learners achieve learning outcomes and perform tasks

- Save teaching energy and time

- Develop monitoring and supervising skills

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

PBL would be utilized in the whole course of *An introduction to British culture and society* in which many different approaches and techniques are integrated.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The age, gender of the students in the study
- The population sample
- The consideration of the amount of time spent outside the class by the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For English teachers at the USSH:

A formal discussion or seminar in faculty meeting on PBL and their integration in the teaching and learning of culture at the USSH is recommended.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further study:

- It is suggested that observing and comparing the different requirements and learning behaviour of males and females would be of interest.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further study:

- Further studies can be carried out among students of more different programs for English majors and wider range of age.