

Boosting 21st Century Skills through Project-Based Learning: A Case of Vietnamese ELF Learners

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ABSTRACT

Project-based learning has been widely recognized as an approach that emphasizes the authenticity of language use due to its requirement on learners to carry out meaningful tasks in the target language. This qualitative action research was conducted with a view to investigating the effectiveness of the simulation project, a form of the project-based learning, in an English class in Vietnam. The simulation project took the form of mock interviews and ran throughout the semester. Participants consisted of 21 sophomores, five males and sixteen females, all at whom are supposed to be at advanced level at the time this research was carried out. In this project, students had the chance to act as both recruiters and applicants, which entailed a range of duties such as designing recruitment posters, company website, and interview questions, as well as writing CVs and taking part in interviewing sessions. Their aims were to either recruit the most suitable candidates for their posts, if they were the recruiters, or to sell themselves successfully, if they were job-seekers. Data collected from post-project reflections and semi-structured interviews revealed that students had acquired a range of language skills and necessary 21st century skills such as critical thinking, graphic design, problem solving and time management. Several pedagogical implications were also include at the end of this study so that other language teachers can apply this form of project-based learning in their classrooms.