Boosting 21st Century Skills through Project-Based Learning:

A Case of Vietnamese ELF Learners

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1. Introduction
2. Key concepts
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I. INTRODUCTION

Activities implemented in EFL classroom

21st century skills

An activity to bridge such a gap?

II. KEY CONCEPTS

- Project-based learning (PBL)

A project = a complex task that

- *Involves students in designing, problem-solving, decision making or investigating activities*
- *Gives students opportunities to work relatively autonomously over a period of time*
- *Culminates in realistic products or presentations*

(Jones, Rasmussen, & Moffitt, 1997; Thomas, Mergendoller, & Michaelson, 1999)

II. KEY CONCEPTS

- Project-based learning (PBL)

PBL includes authentic content, authentic assessment, teacher facilitation but not direction, explicit educational goals, (Moursund, 1999), cooperative learning, reflection, and incorporation of adult skills (Diehl, Grobe, Lopez, & Cabral, 1999).

II. KEY CONCEPTS

- Concept of simulation

follows the interactional view in which language content may be specified and organized by patterns of exchange and interaction or may be left unspecified, to be shaped by the inclinations of learners as interactors

Richards and Rodgers (1986)

II. KEY CONCEPTS

- Concept of simulation

as a structured set of circumstances that *"mirror real life"* and participants act as instructed

(Dougill, 1987)

are designed to achieve communicative reality

*(*Bambrough, 1994, p.16, cited in Lyu, 2006, p.12)

II. KEY CONCEPTS

SIMULATION

=

an activity that reflects the real situation, "***mirror real life***", "***participants act as instructed***" in a "***simulated and structured environment***" to improve different skills of students.

II. KEY CONCEPTS

- Simulation in EFL context?

a "*reality of function in a simulated and structured environment*"

(Jones, 1982. p5)

II. KEY CONCEPTS

- Simulation in EFL context?

3 functions

(1) A reality of function which means the participants in a simulation must step inside the role they have accepted and act accordingly.

(2) A simulated environment where there is no contact with the real world.

(3) A structured environment where the participants have all the facts and information provided for them.

II. KEY CONCEPTS

- Simulation in EFL context?

  To fulfill the essential condition of being a simulated environment, students could ***create a simulated environment*** representing the office ***by arranging*** some desks with other props like a computer, office materials, and so on. There is one thing that needs keeping in mind is that only ***the environment is simulated***, but ***the behavior of a participant is real***.

(Jones, 1982)

II. KEY CONCEPTS

- Simulation in EFL context?

Advantages

(1) motivates learners;

(2)gives opportunity for meaningful practice of language learnt;

(3) injects a feeling of realism and relevance into the classroom;

(4) can be used as an assessment technique; and

(5) encourages creativity

(Lin, 2001)

- 21st century skills
  - Critical thinking and problem solving
  - Communication and collaboration
  - Information, media and technology skills
  - Media literacy skills
  - ICT literacy
  - Life and career skills
  - Leadership and resposibility

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills

- Research questions

1. What are students' perceptions of the simulation project?

2. What skills did the students gain/improve after conducting the project?

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants

- 2nd year students
- Major: International Business
- Level: upper-intermediate/advanced (CEFR B2+, C1)
- Course book: Market Leader, 3rd edition, upper-intermediate

III. METHODOLOGY

3.2. Setting

Simulation project – Mock job interview

- Objectives: help Ss
- practice the “Selling yourself” simulation;
- enhance writing CV skills;
- develop critical thinking skills;
- sharpen interviewing skills;
- develop their skills in searching appropriate materials from different sources to prepare for their talks; and
- be able to develop their autonomy in improving their English speaking skills.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.2. Setting

Simulation project – Mock job interview

- Guideline: Students work in **groups of 4-5** and play the role of **recruiters** who will carry out a one-hour simulation interview with **the rest of the class being job applicants.**

Simu

Stage	Procedure	Interviewer group	Interviewees	Teacher
Preparation	Step 1	• Decide type of business, company name* , job vacancies (including job descriptions) • Hand-in Simulation outline		Give comments and approval
	Step 2	Design ○ Company logo and website (Company name, logo and slogan from your Marketing plan project in semester 3 can be used.) Release ○ Job vacancy announcement letter ○ RECRUITMENT poster	• Study the announced job descriptions • Decide which job would suit you best • PREPARE CVs suitable for the jobs	Observe and give comments
	Step 3	• Finalize MARKING criteria (for CVs and each candidate), • Classify and comment on CVs • Prepare slides (for Company background, vacant jobs and the Interview Agenda) refreshment (during tea-break) and certificates (optional – for the selected employees)	Send CVs to the employers	Help the interviewers comment on CVs (if necessary)
	Step 4	Make a video clip to be shown during break time, after all interviews have been conducted. The break time is the time during which the employers will be finalizing the results. This video introduces the company together with the vacant posts and should NOT last for more than 7 minutes.	Prepare for the interview session	

Simulation project guideline

Interview session (45mns)	Step 5	**Recruiter group** • Set up/Arrange the classroom: Interview, waiting and tea-break areas • Have the Simulation Assessment printed out • Give the background information of the company together with the vacant jobs/positions • Announce the INTERVIEW AGENDA • Play the role of the RECRUITERS • Implement the interview session	**Applicant group** • Bring CVs • Wait in silence for their turn • Play the role of the INTERVIEWEES • Take part in the interview session	**Teacher** Observe the whole class, make notes

Sim

Result and reflection

Step 6	• **Discuss and decide on the chosen candidates** • **Announce the chosen candidates** • **Justify the results briefly** • **Listen to the comments and feedbacks from classmates and teachers**	• **Give comments and feedbacks to the interviewers** • **Listen to teacher's comments and draw lessons**	**Give comments and feedback for the whole class**
Step 7	In week 15, after all simulations have been conducted, EACH student will write a 250-word reflection on these following points: 1. What have you learnt/gained through Simulation project? 2. Did this activity help you learn more than others we've done? Why? 3. Did you give the best effort on this project? 4. Did your group encounter any difficulties when doing this project? If yes, how did you overcome the difficulties?		
Step 8	In week 15, EACH group will submit the Simulation package which include: 1. A cover page with Company name and logo 2. Final versions of - Job vacancy announcement letter - Recruitment posters (A4 size) - Marking criteria - Questions for interview session 1. Candidates' CVs 2. Members' reflection reports		

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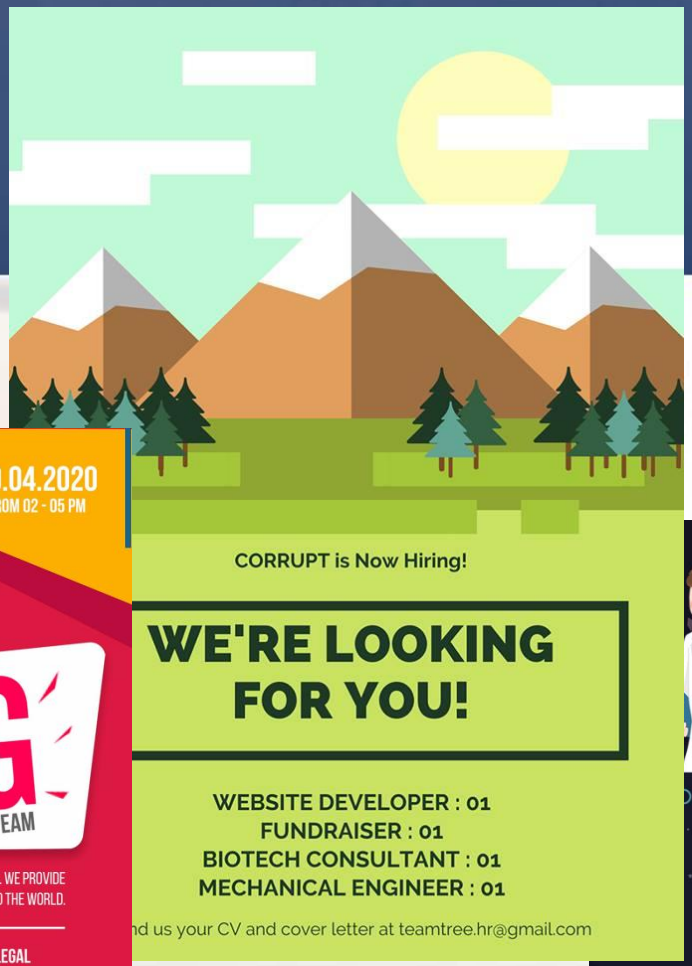
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3. Nguyen Phuc Luong
4. Nguyen Khanh Chuong
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1. Pham Dieu Quyen
2. Vu Thuy Linh
3. Dang Thi Nguyen
4. Khuc Phuong Anh
5. Tran Thi Thu
Pepsi

CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER

III. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative

- Student's written reflection
- Face to face semi-structured interview

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. What are students' perceptions of the simulation project?

1.1. Simulation process

Most of the students agreed that the process of simulation project was of practical benefits to them, given its similarity with the interview protocol in real life.

"as I have attended some of the real interview sessions so far, I find the procedure of carrying out the Simulation quite similar to them. This would be beneficial to us in the future" (SE19.1, 2020)

"To my observation, simulation is quite similar to the real interview." (SE19.4, 2020)

"Simulation project not only involves many skills needed in real life but also requires much knowledge related to our future career, which is International business" (SE20.4, 2020)

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2. What skills did the students gain after conducting the project?

2.1. Language skills

Most students agreed that their language skills have improved much through the project.

Listening skills

As the interviewer	As the interviewee
- *Somehow, my listening skills have improved since we have to both listen to the candidate's answer and take note at the same time. (SE19.2)* - *In terms of listening skills, we have to listen to the interviewee's answers, understand them, and summarize them. (SE20.4)*	- Not much

Speaking skills

As the interviewer	As the interviewee
- *My speaking skills did improve since we know how to adjust our voice better and speak more clearly when giving a presentation as well as when interviewing the candidates (SE19.1)* - *I find myself more confident when it comes to public speaking after this project. It is because we had to speak in front of our class, not only speak but also give comments to our friends. (SE19.2)* - *After the project, I am able to present my ideas in a more fluent and accurate ways. There were less "uhm, ah" in my speech as well. (SE20.6)*	- *When answering the questions from the interviewers, I could utilize more vocabulary related to business, especially those in Market Leader (SE20.1).* - *Through this project, I could give an answer in a more logical way in such a short prepared time. (SE19.5)* - *Since we had simulation every 3 weeks, we had to speak a lot. My speaking skills has enhanced accordingly. I feel more confident when speaking English. (SE19.4)*

Reading skills

As the interviewer	As the interviewee
- *Not much*	- *To best prepare for the interview session, I often go online, search for the job responsibilities in English, read them carefully, select the suitable information (SE20.1,2,3)*

Writing skills

As the interviewer	As the interviewee
- *We know how to write a job description as well as an announcement letter (SE19.1)* - *My skills in writing a job description have improved after my simulation (SE19.3)*	- *My CV writing skills have improved much. We know hot to organize our CV more logically and coherently; know how to choose the most suitable information to write in the CV. (SE19.1)* - *Since we have to write a CV every three weeks, with different jobs, my CV writing skills did enhance. (SE19.2)* - *I know how to avoid writing a cliché CV (SE20.5) and how to write a succinct but more impressive CV (SE20.6)*

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2. What skills did the students gain after conducting the project?

2.2. 21st-century skills

About 90% of the students said in their reflection that they had gained a wide range of skills after the project.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2. What skills did the students gain after conducting the project?

2.2. Soft skills

- Critical thinking skills

"As the interviewer, we had to choose the most suitable candidates and justify our choice satisfactorily. Therefore, our critical thinking skills somehow improve" (SE20.4)

"Being an interviewer required much critical thinking skills because we had to analyze candidates' strengths and weaknesses in order to choose the one who best suitable for the post." (SE20.5)

- Website designing skills

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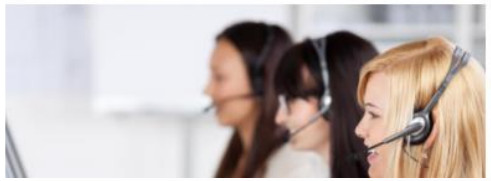

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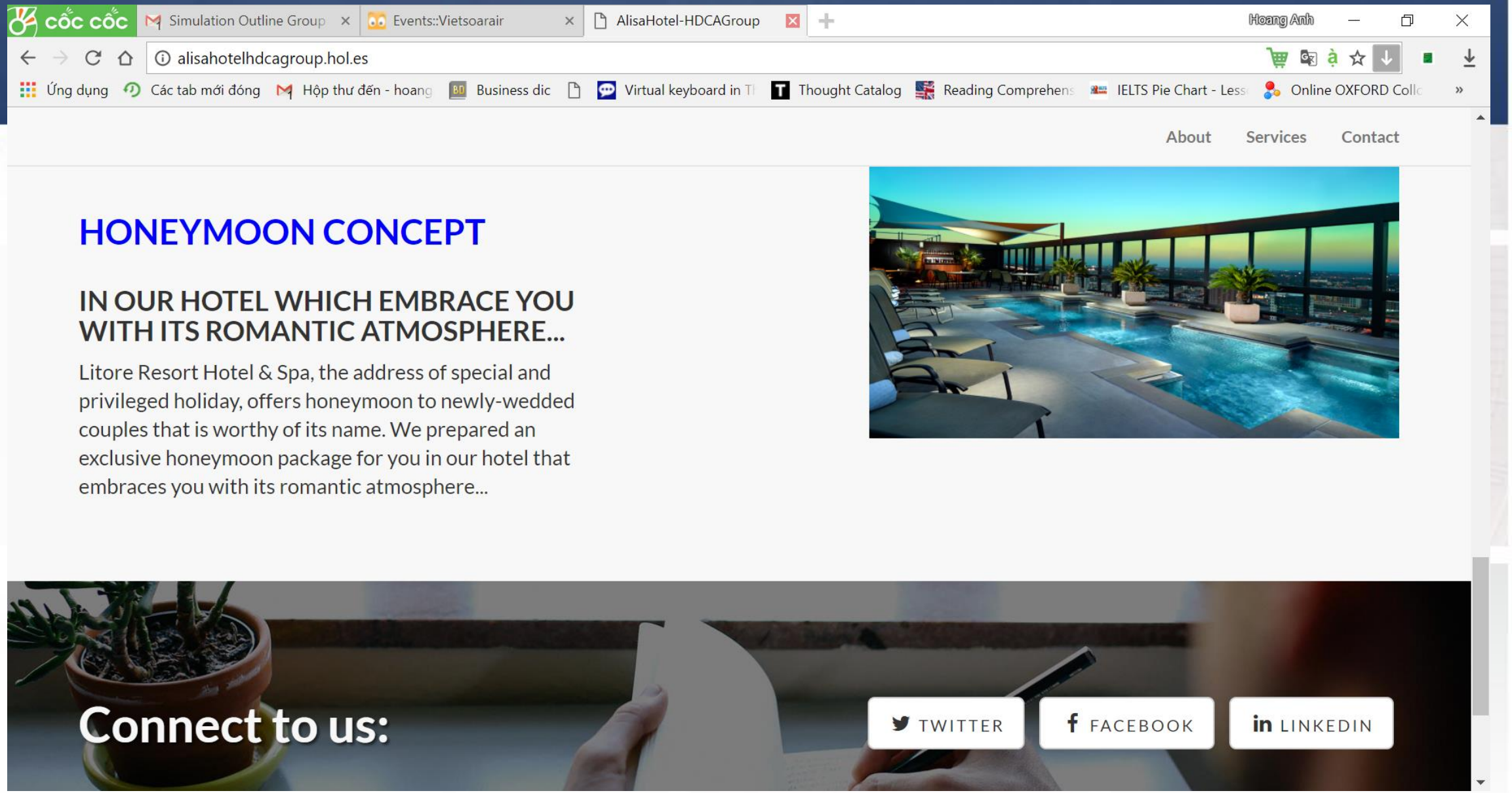
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IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2. What skills did the students gain after conducting the project?

2.2. Life and career skills (from Ss' written reflections)

"Working with my teammates also honed my skill of working in a team of distinct personalities and approaches to the assigned task. I learned to respect others' contradicting opinions and find ways to reach a consensus effectively" (R.VC19.2.S3)

"I also found the stimulation interesting when I could learn how to cooperate with other team members. We didn't assign a team leader but everything went smoothly. We discussed and then delegated work which can get the best out of each individual. We also discussed about some terrible technical problems that might happen during the stimulation in advance and proposed some solutions for them." (R.VC19.2.S1)

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2. What skills did the students gain after conducting the project?

2.2. Life and career skills (from Ss' written reflections)

"One aspect that was completely mind-blowing about this project is being taught how to create a personal, selling CV. I was quite amazed by some misconceptions that I have with making CV, and now I can be confident that I will be creating a more professional CV for future job applications." (R.VC19.1.S5)

"It's also important to be clear and audible when you're speaking in a Zoom meeting as the internet could be a little laggy. ... Although this was a Zoom interview, the way you present yourself's still of great significance." (R. VC19.5.S2)

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THANKS FOR LISTENING

Q&A