



RESEARCH ARTICLE

PROJECT BASED LEARNING: A LESSON WITH VIDEO MAKING

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ABSTRACT

With the advent of technology and the affordability of smartphones, more teenagers than ever use the Internet. These tech-savvy teenagers may also create their own original contents to share online on websites and social media platforms. Project-based learning is a good method to incorporate the current trend of online content sharing by taking advantage of the ubiquity of smartphones with video cameras. Students learn through collaboration and are also able to develop non-language related skills. The author observes four language courses in the department of translation and interpretation, which incorporated video creation as part of the curriculum. Through interviews and questionnaires, students have reported positive experience and their acquisition of skills in language and others useful for future career.

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INTRODUCTION

Today's students are most likely more tech-savvy than their instructors in the classroom. According to Pew Internet & American Life project (Lenhardt & Madden 2005, 2007), around 93% of teenagers in the US use the Internet in 2007, up from 57% in 2005. With the advent of technology and the affordability of powerful smartphones, more teenagers than ever use the Internet. These tech-savvy teenagers may also create their own original contents to share online on websites and social media platforms such as Vines, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. Teachers are also trying to design curricula to turn students from "consumer of technology to media producer and designer" (Vedantham and Hassen, 2011). Project-based learning is a good method to incorporate the current trend of online content sharing by taking advantage of the ubiquity of smartphones with video cameras. In foreign language classes, students can benefit from language related projects to help them utilize the target language in a more natural and authentic manner. They can learn to see languages not as a subject in school and more as a communication tool. As mentioned earlier, many of the young who take part in sharing their creative contents are involved in participatory culture where collaborative problem solving and creating online content are some forms of the culture. The International Society for Technology for Education (ISTE) stated in its 2016 standard for students that for students to be successful in the digital world, they should be able to create meaningful and creative contents for themselves and others by employing different digital tools. Moreover, students learn through collaboration

and are also able to develop non-language related skills in video editing software, video recording, and script writing. Therefore, integrating several skills in language learning projects allows students to use language as it should be, a communication tool, and learn skills that are needed today.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In language classrooms, teachers have been using new learning tools steeped in the latest technologies to appeal to students' interest and spark their motivations to learn. Currently, many students are encouraged to speak foreigner half way across the globe via Skype. In Taiwan, language instruction has long been form-focused instruction (FFI), concentrating on the minutiae of grammatical points. Majority of students in Taiwan are not able to effectively communicate in English after six years of instruction in school. Therefore, how languages are instructed must be changed to be more meaning-focused instruction (MFI). Activities in class must allow students to use the language to communicate ideas from the course and not be bogged down on perfecting the language. Celce-Murcia (2007) suggested that courses aiming for communication competence should incorporate "linguistics, cultural anthropology, sociolinguistics, and other relevant areas of the social sciences and humanities". Thus, teachers must employ different strategies and approaches in their teachings to allow students to access contents incorporating these different aspects. Blended learning, though not new, allows students to learn through combinations of self-learning methods, such as print, video, and TV, in addition to the face-to-face class time (Marsh, 2012).

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Problem-based learning is a good way for students to discover what they need to solve a real life problem posed by the teacher (Wood). Differing from business and medicine, in which problem-based learning is often used, real life language problems are difficult to construct and easily exhausted Larson (2001). Therefore, project-based learning allows learners to “connect what they learn in the classroom to real life” and develop their language skills in “an integrated and contextualized way” (Tims, 2009). Projects given to students can encompass the aforementioned aspects of social sciences and humanities for students to communicate their ideas and creativity. Projects can be designed for small groups to encourage cooperative and collaborative learning as “peer-to-peer exchange” facilitates language learning and the topic at the same time (NYC Department of Education). Through collaboration and exchanges, students will build skills on more than just traditional literacy, research and technical skills but also new skills in distributed cognition, collective intelligence, networking, and negotiation (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, Weigel, 2009).

**METHODOLOGY**

The author observes four language courses in the department of translation and interpretation, which incorporated video creation as part of the curriculum. Through interviews and questionnaires, students have reported positive experience and their acquisition of skills in language and others useful for future career. Students in four classes in the Department of Translation and Interpretation were assigned to make original videos. These are primarily courses emphasizing speaking and listening skills. One course is a sophomore English conversation class. Two third-year speaking and listening courses specialize in more specific fields, one focusing on the media while the other on science and technology. A senior level English class deals with global issues. Students in the conversation class upload their videos every six weeks with the group video being the last. For the semester-long projects, students are required to upload a sneak preview video on YouTube as part of a progress report. Upon the due dates of the projects, students are to post their videos on YouTube for everyone to view before class. Grades are given according to the fluency of the language and the content. To find out how and what students learned with creating videos, the author collected data through interviews and questionnaires through Google Forms.

**Table 1** English courses with video assignments

Courses	Year	Tasks
English Conversation 3, 4	Sophomore	Making 2 individual 1-2 minute videos on anything the student would like to share and 1 group video at least 4 minutes on whatever topic
English Speaking and Listening for Media 1, 2	Junior	Students choose to make either a 2 minute individual video or a group video of at least 5 minutes about a current event or news story
English Speaking and Listening for Science and Technology 1, 2	Junior	Students choose to make either a 2 minute individual video or a group video of at least 5 minutes regarding science or technology
Global Issues	Senior	Students choose to make either a 2 minute individual video or a group video of at least 5 minutes on current events or topical issues

Questions included: What did you learn from making the video besides the language? Do you see language more of a communication tool than before? What did you learn from others?

**RESULTS**

As the video projects are for language courses, students were asked whether they have found the projects to be beneficial to their language learning. They have learned how to express themselves more effectively as a result. As the projects require students to speak English in the videos, they have to write more authentic sounding dialogues and practice speaking more fluently and with better pronunciation. In the makings of the group videos, most students all take the approach of writing out a script relating an incident or a plot, especially in news and global issues. In foreign language learning, drama has often been employed as a method for students to view the language in a more communicative way (Belliveau & Kim, 2013; Boudreault, 2010; Rastelli, 2006). Students must write the script and say the dialogues fluently with the right emotions. In addition, students can acquire other skills such as communication and teamwork in drama. As a result, most students reported that they now view the language more as a communication tool than before, rather than just a school subject.

When the video assignment was given out, the majority of students viewed it with apprehension and showed their reluctance as it is not the usual type of assignment given out in Taiwan. They also voiced concerns regarding the lack of equipment, knowledge of video making, and unfamiliarity with editing software. However, when reminded of the ubiquity of smartphones and digital cameras and the numerous videos the students have uploaded to YouTube, students became more enthusiastic in accomplishing the assignment. They acquired new skills in video editing, voice-over, and subtitling. In fact, translation and subtitling is a required course for many students. Therefore, it is a good learning opportunity for some students and a review for others. One student utilized the newly learned video skills in his internship making product video.

In interviews and questionnaires, students indicated that from doing video projects they have learned skills in organization and teamwork necessary for group work. Many cited negotiation, managing team members, work delegation, communication, and choosing the right team members are the most valuable lessons they learned other than the language. They are now better equipped to resolve conflicts and deal with problems.

**CONCLUSION**

As the students become more tech-savvy, curricula must also keep pace to engage students’ attention and keep their interest. At the same time, universities try to create curricula that train students to be more desirable in the job markets. In a report from World Economic Forum, people management, coordinating with others, emotional intelligence, and negotiation are listed as skills necessary to thrive in job markets by 2020 in addition to technological literacy (Gray, 2016). Assigning video projects to students in a foreign language classroom not only allow students to learn and, at the same time, acquire the necessary skills for future job markets.

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