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Conference Proceedings

**INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ECONOMIC TOURISM SCIENCES TECHNOLOGY
HUMANITIES SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION RESEARCH CONFERENCE**

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5 – 7 April, 2017*

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INTRODUCTION

We would like to welcome our colleagues to the International Business Tourism Transport Technology Social Sciences Humanities Education Research Conference. It is the seven series in 2016 of Conference on Business Tourism and Apply Sciences was held in Amsterdam. As always many members of the ICBTS 2016 community look forward to meeting, sharing and exchanging their research ideas and results in both a formal and informal setting which the conference provides. Likewise, the concept of alternating the international conference every one month on April to November between Europe and the rest of the world is now well established. This year's event in London (UK) Paris (France) Munich (Germany) Amsterdam (Netherlands) Boston (USA) Toronto (Canada) London (United Kingdom) Zurich (Switzerland) Berlin (Germany) Tokyo (Japan) and another continues with the cultural following the very successful and productive event held in London-Zurich in August 2016 in the field of various types for international academic research conference on Business Economics Social Sciences Humanities Education and Apply Sciences. As usual The ICBTS 2016 brings together leading academics, researchers and practitioners to exchange ideas, views and the latest research in the field of Business Tourism and Apply Sciences.

The theme of this event The 2016 ICBTS International Business Tourism Social Sciences Humanities and Education Research Conference is "Opportunities and Development of Global Business Economics Social Sciences Humanities and Education" It is also represents an emerging and highly challenging area of research and practice for both academics and practitioners a like, The current industrial context is characterized by increasing global competition, decreasing product life cycles, Global Business, Tourism Development, Social Sciences Humanities Education Apply Sciences and Technology collaborative networked organizations, higher levels of uncertainties and, above all, and customers. In our view holding this event in Tokyo represents a timely opportunity for academics and researchers to explore pertinent issues surrounding Business Economics Tourism Social Sciences Humanities Education Sciences and Technology.

Potential authors were invited to submit an abstract to the International Conference Session Chairs. All abstracts were reviewed by two experts from the International review committee and final papers were further reviewed by this volume with 30 contributing authors coming from 18 countries. This book of proceedings has been organized according to following categories:

- Business
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- Marketing
- Accounting
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ESL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Owing to a resurgence of interest in the idea of Project-Based Learning and its consistent and successful application and management in classrooms, many ESL educators, schools, communities, and other organizations are exploring aspects of Project-Based Learning to facilitate learning in various fields. Some studies have shown project-based instruction as being capable to provide English language learners with opportunities for comprehensible output and integrated language learning. This study aimed to outline students' experience of Project-Based Learning. The study employed a questionnaire form and a semi-structured interview to gain a better understanding of the students' experiences of PBL in relation to their English language skills development. The population of the study consists of 3rd year English major students, Faculty of Education, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok. Data obtained from the questionnaire and interviews from the subjects show that several vital factors that enhances language skills development are indeed strengthened when using Project-Based Learning method. Most of the subjects concluded that PBL has improved their critical thinking ability, independent study skill, personal and social responsibility, strong communication skills, both for interpersonal and presentation needs, and visualizing and decision making abilities. The results of the study led the researcher to propose an urgent need for ESL educators to deploy Project-Based Learning as one of the tools to enhance ESL students learning abilities.

Keywords—ESL Students, Experience, Project-Based Learning

INTRODUCTION

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a student-centered instruction that encompasses a self-motivated classroom method in which students attain a deeper awareness through active investigation of real-world challenges and problems. It is a style of active learning and inquiry-based learning that is completely divergence from paper-based, rote memorization, or teacher-led instruction. As stated, "Project-Based Learning is a comprehensive perspective focused on teaching by engaging students in investigation. Within this framework, students pursue solutions to nontrivial problems by asking and refining questions, debating ideas, making predictions, designing plans and/or experiments, collecting and analyzing data, drawing conclusions, communicating their ideas and findings to others, asking new questions, and creating artifacts." (Blumenfeld, P., Soloway, E., Marx, R., Krajcik, J., Guzdial, M., & Palincsar, A. 1991)

The central idea of Project-Based Learning is that real-world problems capture students' interest and incite thoughtful discerning as the students attain and apply new knowledge in a problem-solving situation. The teacher plays the role of facilitator, working with students to frame worthwhile questions, structuring meaningful tasks, tutoring both knowledge growth and social skills, and carefully assessing what students have learned from the experience. Project-Based Learning creates opportunities for groups of students to investigate meaningful questions that require them to gather information and think critically.

Generally, Project-Based Learning helps prepare students for the thinking and collaboration skills required in the workplace. Project-Based Learning functions as a link between using English in class and using English in real life situations outside of class (Fried-Booth, 1997). PBL does this by placing learners in situations that require realistic use of language in order to communicate (e.g., being part of a team or interviewing others). When learners work in pairs or in teams, they find they need skills to plan, organize,

negotiate, make their points, and arrive at a consensus about issues such as what tasks to perform, who will be responsible for each task, and how information will be researched and presented. These skills have been identified by learners as important for living successful lives (Stein, 1995). Based on the collaborative nature of project work, development of these skills occurs even among learners at low levels of language proficiency. Within the group work integral to projects, individuals' strengths and preferred ways of learning (e.g., by reading, writing, listening, or speaking) strengthen the work of the team as a whole (Lawrence, 1997).

IMPORTANCE OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

1. Enhance Students Skills Development for 21st Century Workplace

When students engage in deep reasoning and problem solving situations, the process will in turn propel the students to practice how to solve highly complex problems which requires students to have both fundamental skills in English language and teamwork, problem solving, research gathering, time management, information synthesizing, and utilizing high tech tools. With this blend of skills, students become directors and managers of their learning process, with some guidance from a skilled teacher.

2. Opportunity for Students with Varying Learning Styles and Differences

Developments and challenges of 21st century workplace have given birth to new economy trends which are powered by technology, driven by information, and knowledge. It is a well-known fact that today's students have various learning styles that enable them to build their knowledge based on varying backgrounds and experiences. Traditional text-based teaching styles have been a stumbling block against students' ability to showcase their broader individual capabilities. Project-Based Learning addresses these differences, because students must use all modalities in the process of researching and solving a problem, then communicating the solutions. When students are interested in what they are doing and are able to use their areas of strength, they achieve at a higher level.

3. Enhance Students' Interpersonal Skills

Another benefit of Project-Based Learning is its effect on students' interpersonal skills. Because projects are often large and complex, students are grouped together to work, which fosters communication skills and encourages even students with diverse and possibly conflicting personalities to find a common ground, or at the very least a way to work together without constant tension. Part of this teamwork building helps introduce students to the specialization and delegation that are extremely prominent in the real world. Some students will naturally be more adept at some problem-solving methods than others, so students will figure out how to allocate resources (themselves) optimally by having part of the group work on one subset of tasks while another part works on another subset.

RELATED LITERATURE

Beckett (1999) investigated the implementation of project-based instruction in a Canadian secondary school ESL class. The main purpose of the study was to examine ESL teachers' goal for PBL, and ESL teachers' and students' evaluation of project-based instruction. The results of the data collected through observations and interviews of the subjects indicated that PBL is highly favored by the ESL teachers because it allowed them to take an integrated approach to language teaching. The subjects attested to the fact that PBL allowed them to foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills and promote independent as well as cooperative learning skills among the students. They evaluated project-based instruction favorably also because they thought it provided contexts for their students to learn English functionally. The teachers were delighted that project activities allowed for unexpected learning to take place.

Christiansen, and Skovsmose (1995) data of their project-based, technology-supported classroom study showed that students liked project-based instruction, especially because it gave them access to the World Wide

Web, educational CD-ROMS, and word-processing software. Students developed ownership of their learning, gathered around the computers, helped each other, and shared information about their projects.

Tretten and Zachariou (1995) piloted an assessment of Project-Based Learning in four elementary schools using teacher questionnaires, teacher interviews, and a survey of parents. A total of 64 across the four schools, were surveyed. The average percentage of instructional time devoted to Project-Based Learning across all schools and teachers was 37%. According to teachers' self-reports experience with Project-Based Learning activities, it had a variety of positive benefits for students including attitudes towards learning, work habits, problem-solving capabilities, and self-esteem.

Duangkamol Thitivesa and Abigail Melad Essien (2013) data from their research 'The Use of Project to Enhance Student Teachers' Writing Skills in a Rajabhat University' showed that, the English major students improved their writing. The achievement means of the group in regards of grammatical correctness at sentence level was 28.6053 points out of the 40 total scores, and standard deviation was 3.1153 points. Comparing to the 80% attainment target, it was found that there were significant differences at 0.05 ($t=101.699$, $P\text{-value}=0.000$).

METHODOLOGY

The study used a semi-structured interview, which is designed for "concrete and complex illustrations" (Wolcott, 1994, p. 364) with the aim to provide the participants with opportunities to talk about their experiences in their own words and a questionnaire form. All the items in the questionnaire were designed for a Likert scale response using a four-interval scale of "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree", and "strongly disagree".

1. Participants

The participants were 50 3rd year English major students from the Faculty of Education, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University Bangkok, Thailand.

2. Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through the use of semi-structured interview and a questionnaire form with all the participants (individually). The transcripts of the interviews were read, re-read, and marked with annotations. These annotations and specific descriptive phrases were afterwards grouped into broader ideological categories: 'thematic units' and 'core categories' respectively that captured recurring patterns in the data. (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Data obtained from the questionnaire form were analyzed and presented in the form of tables. The questionnaire form was designed to have students reveal on what they have gained from PBL.

RESULTS

1. Questionnaire Results

Table 1
Project-Based Learning Questionnaire Form

Questionnaire Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
1. I prefer PBL to traditional method of teaching.	16 (32%)	30 (60%)	3 (6%)	1 (2%)
2. I enhanced my communication ability in PBL.	23 (46%)	27 (54%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)
3. PBL increased my interest in learning English.	23 (46%)	24 (48%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)
4. The instructional methodology in this course suited the way I like to learn.	12 (24%)	33 (66%)	4 (8%)	1 (2%)
5. The instructional methodology provided me with enough scope to display my skills.	15 (30%)	31 (62%)	4 (8%)	0 (0%)

6. I achieved more in this course than I thought I initially would.	15 (30%)	33 (66%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
7. I enjoyed working on a project that was authentic.	17 (34%)	31 (62%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)
8. I found the course initially challenging but managed to satisfy the project requirements.	9 (18%)	39 (78%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)
9. I would have preferred to choose my own project.	16 (32%)	33 (66%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
10. I found being able to collaborate in my group in practical sessions very helpful.	31 (62%)	18 (36%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)

The results from the questionnaire form as shown in table one is a clearer indication that the students regard PBL as a viable teaching style capable of revitalizing students' English language and learning skills. 50 (100%) students indicated that PBL enhanced their communication ability in PBL.

Evidently, 46 (92%) students agree that the instructional methodology provided them enough scope to display their skills. And only 4 (8%) students disagree on it. Worthy of note, the majority of the students agree that they should have chosen their own project. This means that teachers should take the students along when deciding on a project.

2. Interview Results

2.1. Creativity Skill Improvement

All the participants in this study concluded that their engagement in PBL have really improved their creativity skill. "My ability to create new ways to communicate new ideas, and finding creative ways to achieve success in the project I was given have well positioned me to be even more creative in more complex processes and situations" (Participant).

2.2. Collaboration Skill Improvement

The skills for effective, collaborative teamwork is a necessary feature of today's and future workplace. The subjects of this study pinpoint how beneficial PBL is in improving their abilities to work with others during the process of their project. "I have learned a lot on how to listen and judge positively the views of others and work cooperatively to find solutions to some problems we encountered during the project we handled" (Participant).

2.3. Communication Skill Development

Today's and future workers will need the ability to effectively communicate in a variety of media for a variety of audiences. Workers will be perpetually faced with choosing the right medium for the right message for the right audience, and with the challenge of doing it all as effectively and efficiently as possible. During the interviews, all the participants made mention of how PBL is effective in improving their communication skills. "I have really learned a lot about how to effectively communicate to different audiences and how to use the right media in my presentation to address a particular audience" (Participant).

CONCLUSION

This study was primarily set out to outline ESL Students' Experience of Project-Based Learning. The data obtained from both the questionnaire form and the semi-structured interview of the students portrays PBL as a viable learning style capable of enhancing both the ESL students' English language skills and socio-cultural skills needed in the 21st century workplace. Other studies have also proven that when implemented well, Project-Based Learning (PBL) can increase retention of content and improve students' attitudes towards learning. "The design principles most commonly used in PBL align well with the goals of preparing students

for deeper learning, higher-level thinking skills, and intra/interpersonal skills" (Condliffe et al., 2016). Teachers can create real-world problem-solving situations by designing questions and tasks that correspond to two different frameworks of inquiry-based teaching: Problem-Based Learning, which tackles a problem but doesn't necessarily include a student project, and project-based learning, which involves a complex task and some form of student presentation, and/or creating an actual product or artifact.

The knowledge of human nature have innovated our understanding of how we learn, how we develop expertise, and how higher level thinking is achieved. Information from science and social psychology have added to our understanding of what settings create the best environment for learning. Culture, context, and the social nature of learning all have a role in influencing the learner's experience. PBL emphasizes active, student-directed learning which eventually lead to deeper understanding.

Project-Based Learning gives students a real-world context for learning, creating a strong need to know, and to personalizing the learning experience. Mere ability to read is no longer sufficient. Students need the ability to traverse and evaluate enormous collection of material. This calls for a better understanding of the use of available technology with regards to the development of critical-thinking skills. PBL class setting offers students opportunities to make sense of this information and also to expand on it with their own inputs.

The very fact that today's students will face complex tasks when they complete their education, calls for far-reaching measures to equip the students with the necessary abilities needed in the future workforce. Knowing how to solve problems, work collaboratively, and think creatively are becoming indispensable skills - not only for future livelihoods but also for dealing with difficult disputes locally and around the world. Therefore, PBL is a powerful method of preparing students for a better future.

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