A project-based HL class

Four-part *group* project

College level

Intermediate-Level Spanish HL Class

One semester (3 units)

Spanish 250

- <u>Learner-centered and genre-based</u> (King de Ramírez & Lafford, 2013; Dudley-Evans & St. Johns);

- <u>Teacher as facilitator of learning</u>, coach;

- <u>Skills-focused</u> – skills students need in college and beyond – long term learning.

- <u>Assessment</u>: focus in on linguistic skills, not knowledge;

  An evaluation of *skills* required to carry out different specific tasks associated with the profession in the target language (King de Ramírez and Lafford, 2013; Douglas, 2000).

Skills and Tasks

- Using the target language to learn about their field of study or intended career;

- Using their knowledge of their field of study to learn their HL;

- Acquiring skills needed to take advantage of their HL in the professional fields;

- Acquiring general academic skills that transfer to other classes.

Process: 4 steps

Students with a common major or career goal work in groups (3-4) on four interconnected projects:

(1) Guided reading about their field in the target language;

(2) Creating a glossary of key terms and expressions;

(3) Making a presentation to the class;

(4) Preparing a CV and cover letter, and engaging in a mock job interview

Step 1: Reading
(Duration 4 weeks)

- Each student
  - finds seven readings online pertaining to their field of study or career;
  - annotates the readings for content, as well as language;
  - creates word clouds for each reading;
- The group (under the supervision of one person)
  - makes a list of "top 10" concepts or ideas;
  - makes a list of 50 most important terms and phrases;
  - submits package of lists and reading for a grade.

A word cloud

Step 2: The glossary
(Duration: 3 weeks)

50-60 essential words (nouns, verbs, adjectives);

Contents of each entry:

- A definition;

- English equivalent;

- Five phrases that use the word (from BYU Corpus del español);

- Five most commonly used items with this word – collocational items (e.g. Family: home, parents, children);

- Two items with the same root (e.g. Family: familiar, familial).

- Termodinámica;

- Definición:[ing. thermodynamics] Parte de la física que estudia los intercambios de calor y de trabajo que se producen entre un sistema y su entorno y que origina variaciones en la energía interna del mismo;

- Palabras con la misma raíz (same roots): térmico, termómetro, dinámica;

- Palabras emparentadas (related words) (mínimo de 3): energía, turbina, generador, calor;

- Tres oraciones (sentences):
  - El tratamiento estadístico de la mecánica molecular se denomina mecánica estadística, y proporciona a la termodinámica una base mecánica.
  - La eficiencia termodinámica de una instalación de generación con vapor es mucho menor, dada la pérdida de energía del vapor que sale de la turbina.
  - El descubrimiento de que la energía no se crea ni se destruye debería disuadir a los inventores de máquinas de movimiento perpetuo, pero la segunda ley de la termodinámica supone un límite más complejo al rendimiento de cualquier motor de calor, ya sea una turbina o el motor de un automóvil.

Step 3: The PPt presentation (Duration 3 weeks)

Guidelines:

o Is well organized and coordinated;

o Uses appropriate language;

o Is level-appropriate for a general audience;

o PPt slides: Title, Overview, Vocabulary, Conclusion.

The presentation: Steps and products

- Each student:
  - Prepares a five minute presentation, including PowerPoint slides;

- The group (under the supervision of a student):
  - Prepares and delivers a coordinated presentation

Step 4: The CV, cover letter, and the mock interview
(Duration: 4 weeks)

Students

- Create a bank of CVs and cover letters in the target language and study the format and language of these documents;
- Prepare a CV and cover letter in the target language;
- Watch sample job interviews in the target language;
- Work together on strategies for answering a list of 30 interview questions;
- Interview each other in the target language.

THE PRODUCT

Discussion….

- What best practices and strategies of PBL are illustrated?

- How is this project responsive to the needs, goals, and preferences of individual learners? In other words, how is instruction differentiated?

- How can this project be adapted to different levels, teaching contexts, etc.?

PBL STRATEGIES?

- Students receive clear and detailed directions, which include the rationale behind the project, tools and resources that can help, and grading rubrics;

- The project is broken down into small steps and the objectives of each step are made explicit;

- The different components of the project are modeled by the instructor (provide good and bad examples);

- Students practice the various components and receive feedback before turning in the components for a grade. Exit cards are used to that end.

- Technology is an essential component.

Gradual release of responsibility model
(Pearson and Gallagher, 1983)

- I do, you watch;
- I do, you help;
- You do , I help;
- You do, I watch

From-to principles

- Reading -> writing

  Reading - > speaking;

  Reading to prepare a glossary

  Reading to give a presentation

  Reading to prepare for an interview

- Speaking -> writing;

  Speaking and preparing a written presentation

Differentiation?

Adaptations to different…

- Educational level?

- Proficiency levels?

- Contexts – mixed classes?

Advantages of this approach

- Promotes interaction and team work with peers and promote learner agency and a sense of ownership;
- Promotes student autonomy and fosters higher levels of creative and critical thinking;
- Involves working towards some meaningful end goal;
- Balances the relation between teaching grammar and teaching with a communicative, macro orientation.
- Is learner-centered – i.e. lends itself to being used in classes with multiple levels.

Brown & Brown, 2003; Osler & Starkey, 2005

POTENTIAL PROBLEM

Teaching and promoting positive student collaboration:

- Scenarios: Anticipate problems and prearrange options for dealing with them;

- Give a group grade + individual grade;

- Monitor students' progress closely.

Other uses of this approach: Native speakers

- Independent studies;

- Service learning.

References

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Pearson, P. D., & Gallagher, G. (1983). The gradual release of responsibility model of instruction. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 8*(3), 112-123.

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