**FACULTY LEARNING COMMUNITY: PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**

**FINAL REPORT**

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Members: Akiko Davis, Karen Graf, Luc Guglielmi, Ana Rodriguez Padial, Zaya Rustamova, Andrea Scapolo

*Calendar of live meetings (on Teams):*

10/22/2020  -Introduction

-Discussion of goals for FLC

-Establish modalities and expectations

-Schedule future meetings

11/18/2020  -Discussion of chapter readings

                       -Review of online discussion from previous content

12/15/2020  -Discussion of chapter readings

                -Begin work on Spring semester content, creation of course projects

2/2/2021 -Discussion of projects

    - Set calendar for book project presentation

3/16/2021  - Chapter presentations (3) and discussion of *PBL in Second Language Acquisition.*

* Discussion of next phase of project creation

4/15/2021        - Chapter presentations (3) and discussion of *PBL in Second Language Acquisition*

* Discussion of Projects

5/12/2021  - Chapter presentations (2) and discussion

-Sharing of finalized projects

The goal of this FLC was to assist faculty in building a theoretical framework for project-based learning in the Dept. of Foreign Languages, and to create a repository of projects for our colleagues for adaptation to their individual sections.  During the fall and spring semesters, we read and discussed two texts ordered through CETL (*Setting the Standard for Project-Based Learning* and *Project-Based Learning in Second Language Acquisition*), which provided the group with a solid guidance and modeling for the creation of original projects to be implemented in DFL classrooms. The work created will be shared with the rest of the DFL faculty during a brown bag discussion in the Fall semester and on our specially created D2L site, and presented at a conference in the academic year 2021-2022.

Each member of this FLC participated fully in the meetings, discussions, chapter presentation and project creation.  The group was composed of faculty members from Spanish, French, Italian, Japanese, and FLED.  Spanish project topics ranged from immigrant communities (SPAN 1002) to environmental challenges (SPAN 2002) to community outreach (SPAN 3302) and study abroad (SPAN 2002/03).  Italian and Japanese  topics involved creation of a website presenting KSU and environs (ITAL 1001, JPN 1002/2001).  French and Japanese projects both concentrated on study abroad (FREN 2002, JPN 2002).

The document linked below shows a chart of each member’s contributions, including titles of projects created, objectives, products, audiences, and targeted skills.  It also shows a chart of chapter presentations from our selected texts.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/183vyBOMsqi1hzaETYVbe-ze21aHEt4JHzfL5W3kJQiw/edit?usp=sharing>

**The following sections detail each FLC member’s narrative and reflection.**

**Renata Creekmur:**

Over the course of the past few semesters, the Italian Program at KSU has been restructuring its lower-level curriculum. One of the major innovations we introduced has been to move away from the textbook and traditional assessments in favor of project-based learning and teaching. The idea of co-organizing this FLC has come from the desire to give a solid pedagogical foundation to our projects by reading and discussing two textbooks on Project Based Learning, with a particular focus on the integration of projects in the language classroom. In addition to the book readings, the discussions and regular debriefing with the other FLC members as we were creating our own projects, has been a very enriching experience that has greatly added to my professionality and will certainly have a positive impact on my courses.

During the course of the FLC,  my colleague Andrea Scapolo and I collaborated on the creation of a semester-long project for our ITALIAN 1001 sections. For this project, the students will work together on the creation of a website to present KSU and the surrounding areas to prospective Italian students or visitors. This project will give students the opportunity to showcase a whole semester’s work beyond the classroom, in an authentic context. Given that this is a very large project, it was divided in different phases. Students will create a product at the end of each learning unit, which will ultimately become part of the website. At the beginning of the semester, the project idea will be presented to the students, and they will have the opportunity to provide their input on how to carry it out. For the first unit, students will focus their attention on the KSU campus. As they learn the basics of the language, they will gather information about KSU: buildings, curriculum, activities. Students will be divided into teams and they will collaborate on the creation of a campus tour. The second unit will be centered on jobs and civic-engagement opportunities on campus and the larger community. The students will have to create a mini-guide to present the information they gathered. Finally, with the third unit, students will explore foodscapes on campus and the larger community and create infographics or posters to display the results of the information they collected. At the end of the semester, the different products the students created throughout the year will be revised, selected and uploaded onto the website. At the end of each phase, students will be asked to reflect on the effectiveness of their project activities and the challenges encountered. The project will be implemented in two face-to-face Italian 1001 sections in the Fall 2021.

In addition to the creation of the above mentioned project, I began developing a new project idea for ITALIAN 2002. Since this is a course that revolves around the analysis of Italian movies, the project will see students involved in the organization of a film event at the end of the semester. While I did not have the time to design the project in detail, I look forward to working on this during the fall semester and possibly implementing it in the Spring of 2022.

**Akiko Davis:**

Project based learning (PBL) has gained popularity in recent years as one of the best teaching methods to help motivate students and deepen their understanding of content as well as develop the skills that they need for life success such as critical thinking, problem-solving, self-management, and collaboration. Through the Faculty Learning Community, I learned these benefits of PBL and how to build the framework of Gold Standard PBL. As a language educator, I understand the importance of a communication-based curriculum, and I believe that incorporating PBL in a foreign language class will promote authentic and meaningful language and cultural learning. I also hope that students will become independent and life-long learners through the experience of PBL.

Based on the best practices for PBL, I modified the “Welcome to KSU” project which I developed for the Intermediate Japanese I (JPN 2001) class in the past. In this project, students create an electrically shareable product introducing their own college and community to prospective exchange students in Japan. In order to understand what information to include in the final product, students interview current Japanese students and Japanese in the community, research the recommended activities and places, and then create a final product. The final products are sent to Japanese universities that we partner with through the KSU Intensive English Program and the Study Abroad Program. It is my hope that this PBL project will be the beginning of a friendship between the KSU students and the Japanese students, as these students are given an opportunity to work together as conversation partners once the prospective exchange students arrive at KSU.

In addition to the “Welcome to KSU” project, I created and implemented the “Travel Plan to Japan” project in the Intermediate Japanese II (JPN 2002) class this Spring semester. Students researched about the climate, transportation system, places to visit, and costs in Japan, and then created a travel itinerary and a promotional video for college students.  During the information gathering process, the students invited a Japanese student and a KSU graduate who have lived in Japan to our class and learned about their experiences traveling in Japan. In future semesters post- pandemic, my plan is to invite a Japanese travel agent to the class so that students can learn everything about traveling to Japan from an expert. In addition to providing opportunities to use the target language in a real and meaningful way, this project inspired the students to continue studying Japanese and visit Japan in the near future.

Students’ project reflections demonstrate that they have learned important 21st century skills such as creativity, collaboration, leadership, productivity, and technology through the PBL. The revised “Welcome to KSU” project will be implemented in all JPN 2001 classes in the Fall 2021, and both project materials will be shared with the faculty in the Japanese program for continuation of future implementation.

**Karen Graf:**

For the 2020-2021 academic year, the Faculty Learning Community (FLC) for the Department of Foreign Languages explored the topic of *Project-based Learning (PBL)*, specifically as it relates to integration into curriculum and instruction of the world language classroom. The FLC’s readings and discussions centered around the seven key elements of PBL, focusing on the theoretical background, deconstructed strategies and steps, and practical application of those elements in the various stages of implementing PBL specifically in language teaching. Ultimately, the FLC, both as a group and as individual instructors, produced a series of instructional units using PBL as basis and context for curricular approaches to teaching foreign languages.

For a SPAN 2002 course that I will be teaching this upcoming academic year 2021-2022, a PBL approach will be enacted in the planning and implementation of one curricular unit. For this unit, students will explore environmental challenges in their own and in Latin American communities, using the basis of inquiry about how where we live reflects the (environmental) challenges we face. The ultimate PBL outcomes of this unit will be that students will ***identify*** environmental challenges in their own and in target language communities, ***describe*** key environmental awareness campaigns, ***develop*** deeper understanding of the connection between where and how we live and our environmental challenges, and ***collaborate*** to create and ***present*** information to inform and explain using appropriate digital media. During the unit, students will gather information through peer questionnaires, social media curation, exploration of image collections, and analysis of environmental awareness campaigns. From this gathering of information, students, in collaboration, will ultimately select an environmental challenge and plan a campaign awareness video project. In this final phase of PBL, students will work together to plan their environmental campaign including a name, identification of a specific challenge in their community, and specific features of awareness campaigns. They then will record, edit, produce, and present their campaign video to a larger community on Flipgrid, where they will have the opportunity to view other video projects as well as compare approaches to environmental campaigns with peers in a Latin American university. Ultimately, this will allow students to reflect both on their own approaches to environmental issues, in the form of a campaign awareness video, as well as those of students in target language communities.

The specific changes that will be implemented as a result of the work and collaboration of the FLC, is that I will utilize the key elements and phases of PBL in the planning and instruction of this particular unit as well as other units in the future, specifically integrating a self-reflection tool both at the mid-project and post-project points in the unit, as well as providing an opportunity for students to present and publish their curricular projects to a wider audience, allowing for connections with target language communities in exploring similar global themes and issues.

**Luc Guglielmi:**

This FLC has had such a great impact on the concept I had on Project Based Learning. The readings and discussions we had showed me how wrong I was about that approach since I mainly thought to be themes that the instructor would pick and develop lessons around it. Obviously, I learned actually that it was students’ base projects on a short or long term period of time and to be guided (not developed) by the instructor.

The discussions among the participants were very helpful as we were asked to talk not only about our own project that we would develop in a specific course but also the presentation of the various chapters we covered in the book. All the participants added their personal approach and flair to it. The book was well chosen even if some of it did not speak directly to me. It was just helpful to see what could be done (which is basically anything as long as it is students driven). I also like the fact that the various participants came from the same department but different languages offering a different perspective on the project.

The project that I came to realize was developed with two other colleagues with whom we shared the same ideology which is our belief in study abroad programs. We decided to prompt the students on developing their own study abroad programs. Mine, obviously would be in a French speaking country which I would like the students to decide themselves what country they would rather visit for five weeks. My role would be just to guide the students in the right direction, assist when they are hitting an obstacle and help the focus to stay on the project. This project would be presented in a French 2001 fall class which would have all the necessary knowledge to conduct the various steps to achieve a successful project. The first step will be a lot of research on the country and city they would have picked. To make the project easier, students would be asked to develop a study abroad in the same city (no itinerant program). The research involve will be extensive since students will need to first look at the various options on how to get there (airlines but also trains), then researching the various cultural things to do in that city, a place to stay that they can afford, various dining options, looking at the closest hospital and police station in case of an emergency, a local pharmacy and family doctor for minor health issues, etc… Once the research is done, students will have to create a budget using the KSU template imposed on faculty. Then students will have to create a recruiting video (in English) that will be presented in other French classes to recruit students for that trip. Each step will be evaluated by their peers using rubrics that they will create. Each step will always involve a report written in the target language. Obviously, the faculty member will be responsible to formally apply with the study abroad office to make this project a reality.

**Ana Rodriguez Padial:**

The readings and discussions of this FLC about project-based learning have greatly impacted how I implement projects in my Spanish courses. Participating in this FLC has made me realize that my course projects were not well integrated with the course content. In other words, I was unconsciously understanding projects as a “side dish” to my course and as a research instrument instead of thoroughly thinking about the existing connection between the project and the course I was teaching. This FLC has helped me redesign my approach to project implementation in terms of aligning the linguistic and extralinguistic course objectives with an enriching project. The first book we read, *Setting the Standards for Project-Based Learning*, was extremely helpful in regard to understanding project-based learning and its stages, as well as its characteristics. This reading facilitated coming up with the objective and organization of the project proposed. The second reading, *Project-Based Learning in Second Language Acquisition*, was very interesting because its chapters described different projects implemented in foreign language courses. I really enjoyed reading about the project outcomes and learning about strategies that have facilitated an effective implementation of project-based learning. Finally, the discussions during the FLC meetings were very productive. This being my first year at Kennesaw State University, these discussions helped me better understand students’ characteristics and also learn about my colleagues’ experiences with the implementation of project-based learning in different courses. These discussions also served to reflect upon potential difficulties of project-based learning and how to face them in the future.

Given that Ms. Davis, Dr. Guglielmi, and I were interested in implementing a project related to study abroad, we decided to collaborate to create a project that could be implemented across different language courses. For this project, the goal is for students to design a study abroad program that would be interesting in terms of cost and content for college students with the final products being a travel itinerary and a promotional video that the Office of International Affairs could actually use to promote the study abroad program. In my case, students would collaborate in small groups to plan a trip to Spain. In order to achieve this, they would need to use Spanish while searching for and selecting information as well as to interview people that are familiar with the country or city to be visited. In addition to these opportunities to practice the target language, students would develop extralinguistic skills (e.g., selecting information, working in teams, choosing a target audience and adapting to their needs, etc.) that will be applicable in and outside their academic lives.

Given the pleasant experience I had with project-based learning thanks to this FLC, I applied to the Material Creation Program Award organized by the Foreign Language Resource Collection. In my proposal, I suggest implementing a project where students investigate the presence of Hispanic culture(s) in the metropolitan area of Atlanta and present their findings through a multimodal website.

 I plan to apply these projects in two different Spanish courses to align them with the course content as well as with students’ linguistic development. This will allow students to make the most of this project. In addition, it would be interesting to collect information about how these projects are perceived by the students and how they influence their motivation to learn Spanish.

**Zaya Rustamova:**

The FLC activities expanded my understanding of different methodologies for project-based learning, necessary scaffolding steps, and a variety of ways in which it can be implemented in language courses of different levels. Based on the acquired information, I have a better understanding of different stages necessary for a successful undertaking of projects and ways to assess students’ work in a meaningful way. At each stage of the project, I will design tasks to promote critical thinking, synthesis and analysis, as well as problem-solving, collaboration and reflection. The effectiveness of the project will also depend on students’ involvement in planning and setting goals. Celebrating students’ success has to become an integral component of the project-based learning, so their final products will be shared widely within the KSU community and Atlanta Metropolitan area.

Based on course readings and discussions, related to Hispanic societies, cultures, and languages, students will explore ATL Metropolitan area Hispanic organizations and NGOs and establish a contact with a representative there. Taking into consideration their interests and backgrounds, students will work in groups to choose which of the local Hispanic organizations they would like to communicate with. Students create interview questions to prepare for the interview on current research issues experienced by the Hispanic World and the organization in particular. They will record a short video interview with this representative during which they discuss the most urging issues experienced by this organization within the larger Atlanta Hispanic community. Afterwards, students will reflect on this experience and articulate a solution for one of the issues discussed. Finally, they will present their video blog and final reflections in class. Besides expanding their linguistic skills, students will acquire a deeper understanding of Hispanic cultures and establish connections with their experiences. The project will also promote a more diverse and inclusive learning experience.

An immediate application of the project will take place in my Spanish 3302- a conversation course for students with a major and minor in Modern Languages and Cultures. The project will be undertaken starting the second quarter of the semester and culminate in creation of a video presentation for peers. Students will inform peers on their process and findings, including a previously conducted interview with a representative of the chosen Hispanic non-profit organization over a current state of affairs related to socio-economic, gender, race/ethnicity and/or ideology issues experienced by the population served by this organization. They will articulate a solution for the discussed issue and justify it in the target language.

**Alan Watts:**

This FLC was instrumental in helping me to expand my PBL approach in my courses, which I have been attempting to cultivate over the past two years.  While I had a general, intuitive understanding of how to design an effective, comprehensive semester project, the texts and meetings helped me to couch my project design in more established pedagogy, as well as modify any aspects of those projects that run counter to that pedagogy.  Serving as co-coordinator of this FLC also gave me great experience in organizing faculty discussions and groups, which will aid me in any future committees I may chair.

For this FLC my co-coordinator and I decided that we would create a repository of project ideas for use by any Foreign Language faculty member.  We created a D2L shell for accessibility and it will be open to all DFL faculty.  For my contribution, I selected Spanish 1002.  As this is a GenEd course, we offer more sections of it than any other course in our curriculum.  I reasoned that it was also the first course in the sequence where faculty could have reasonable expectations of more thorough and varied use of the target language.

I set out to design a project that would assess students’ understanding of the preterit (past) tense - the key grammatical concept introduced in Spanish 1002 - as well as foster an understanding of Latin America as a culturally diverse melting pot.  To that end, students are tasked with researching an immigrant community in Latin America (i.e. Italian-Argentines, Japanese-Peruvians, Lebanese-Mexicans, and African diaspora communities in the Caribbean and Central America, among others).  Culturally authentic readings on a few selected communities are first presented, in the target language.

Once students select an immigrant community to profile, they must find an article, song, work of art, or other authentic related text, and explain to the class how it conveys that community’s identity.  Students then write a short, grammatically relevant testimonial, pretending they are a member of that community and are sharing their family’s history.  The final, main phase of this project is a creative project, in which students create a digital timeline of that community’s history, using the preterit tense in Spanish and appropriate imagery.  The timelines are then posted to our class Padlet site.  Some are then shared to the Department of Foreign Languages website or may even be published externally.

I actually implemented this project in my Spanish 1002 class in Spring 2021.  I was very pleased with the results, some of which can be seen on the DFL website.  I believe the students took this assignment very seriously and treated it with deserved respect; after all, it’s likely the first time *ever* that some of these histories had been recorded in this fashion.  In addition to assessing students’ use of this key grammatical concept, this project also teaches a valuable digital skill which students can apply to other courses.  Finally, though less measurably, students will gain an appreciation of Latin America not as a cultural monolith but a rich tapestry of diverse communities.