

Title: Project-Based Learning: Curricular Modifications for a Changed World
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Project-Based Learning (PBL) was introduced in the educational field and pioneered by John Dewey and William Heard Kilpatrick in the first half of the last century. Since its inception, PBL has taken many different forms and has been applied in a variety of disciplines and settings. However, it has only recently started entering into mainstream practice within the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Both SLA theoreticians and practitioners claim that PBL has the potential to make a significant impact on learning. What the impact is or could be is precisely the matter in question. The goals of this presentation are twofold: first, to introduce PBL; second, to describe possible benefits of this approach in the context of the call made by the Modern Language Association Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages in their report “Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World” that expressed a serious need for implementing an interdisciplinary component into traditional language courses. Throughout the presentation, a running case will be made for PBL implementation as a partial solution to calls for curricular reform in the 2007 MLA report. This paper: a) provides a brief overview of PBL and the theoretical framework behind this approach including its basic tenets and characteristics; b) offers examples of successful project implementation in language classrooms; and c) addresses potential benefits and challenges of this methodology.

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