



Students' attitudes toward project-based learning in an intermediate Spanish course

Jerry L. Parker

Southeastern Louisiana University, Department of World Languages and Cultures, Hammond, Louisiana, USA

Abstract

The result of continuous advancements in technology is a constant questioning of proper methods for the academic teaching of foreign languages in k-12 and higher education. Using Culturally Relevant Andragogy (Parker, 2019) as a framework, this study sought to understand students' attitudes toward project-based learning in an intermediate Spanish as a second language course. After experiencing such a curriculum, students were surveyed. Results of the survey indicated that students generally liked project-based learning but felt that there were certain drawbacks with its implementation and measuring of their success.

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1. Introduction

Contemporary foreign language education is in a state of change (Berman, 2011). Long gone are the days where traditional teaching styles such lecture, vocabulary and grammar memorization, and paper testing were seen as the most effective methods for guiding students to fluency in the target language. Current day foreign language classrooms do not have the capacity for such archaic methodology because of the increasing course sizes and more elaborate scheduling at both the k-12 and university levels. As a result, today's beginner and intermediate foreign language students are not given access to enough individualized attention to facilitate significant language acquisition as in the past.

At the university level, the common response to the aforementioned issue has commonly been study abroad programs. Although there are various types of study abroad programs offered to students at most universities, the majority of students do not have the available time and additional funding to participate. Thus, for higher education foreign language faculty, one on-going question has been how can they better guide students to advanced fluency in the target language while working within various physical, financial, and administrative constraints?

While recent literature (Parker, 2019a, 2019b) has suggested that multicultural education as an approach to curriculum design and instructional practice in foreign language courses is the answer, more research is needed. Because multicultural education is so dynamic, the scope of this study focused on understanding the value of equity pedagogies in foreign language education. Specifically, project-based learning as a form of experiential learning.

Previous literature (Lee, 2015; Maida, 2011; Park & Hiver, 2017; Petersen, C. & Nassaji 2016) has mainly suggested that students gain more knowledge through experiential learning than through passive classroom environments. More specifically, project-based learning, which is one form of experiential learning, has become very popular among those teaching skill-based courses such as foreign languages. Whereas a large amount of previous research focuses on English as a Second or Foreign Language, there is a need for research on its inclusion in the teaching of other second languages. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate students' attitudes toward project-based learning in an intermediate, level two Spanish as a foreign language course. The following section will review the previous literature that guided this study.

1.1. Literature review

There were various theoretical underpinnings guiding the undertaken study. The overarching theoretical framework was curriculum theory. Within curriculum theory, multicultural education served as the primary perspective on teaching and learning. Equity pedagogy is one dimension of critical multicultural education and focuses on instructional practices that consider diverse groups of learners (Banks, 2019). This study was structured around instructional practices as dictated by Culturally Relevant Andragogy (Parker, 2019). Likewise, this study centered on project-based learning as the main basis for guiding curricular and instructional decisions.

1.1.1. Equity Pedagogy

Equity pedagogy is a critical multicultural perspective on classroom instruction. In order to properly engage this instructional approach, teachers use techniques and methods in combination with a positive classroom environment to facilitate academic achievement for

students from diverse racial, ethnic, gender, exceptionality, sexuality, and social-class backgrounds. These instructional techniques are matched to the specific cultural groups of learners and their needs. These techniques are responsive to and take into account varying degrees of learning styles, skills for acquiring knowledge, attitudes toward what is needed to function in a democratic society, backgrounds, and the cultural characteristics of each student (Banks, 2016, 2019; McGee-Banks & Banks, 1995).

Through equity pedagogy students are taught to generate multiple solutions and perspectives on the course content. Equity pedagogy is opposite of pedagogy that teaches students to fit within society for the purpose of social mobility. When engaging with an equity pedagogy, students are actively involved in the knowledge construction process. Such pedagogy provides an environment that allows students to be able to critique and evaluate existing knowledge and produce new ideas.

Equity pedagogy helps in addressing the larger issue of transforming the curriculum and is thus closely intertwined with it. Equity pedagogy is usually implemented via strategies such as Cooperative Learning and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. For this study, Culturally Relevant Andragogy was adopted.

1.1.2. Culturally Relevant Andragogy

In the contemporary state of higher education, a transition from pedagogy (the theory of teaching children) to andragogy (the theory of teaching adults) is necessary in program and course design. Because most k-12 students have experienced standardized testing throughout all of their academic career, many college students are accustomed to a process of “tell me what I need to know”. They consistently enter the classroom with this mentality and usually later shift to a “give me the tools necessary to pass the test” attitude. Andragogy seeks to drive learning from the perspective of “let’s explore this topic to better understand our individual worlds”. Thus, course instructors are considered to be the knowledge-facilitator rather than the knowledge holder.

The term “adult” in the educational sense means an individual who is around age 15 or 16 and his or her brain is reaching or has reached its last stage of development (Knowles & Associates, 1984; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). This is not to be confused with the legal connotation of adult which means that an individual is 18 years of age or older. Because the typical post-secondary student is 16+, Culturally Relevant Andragogy (CRA) provides a critical lens for guiding instruction within the paradigm of multicultural education in the university setting.

CRA is an offshoot of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and is considered to be a resource pedagogy. Such pedagogies are a response to perceived deficits in current approaches to

the teaching and learning process (Kumar, 2018). They aim to use student cultural practices as tools to help everyone in the course succeed via critical engagement with course content and each other.

As shown in figure 1.1., higher education faculty members who engage in CRA understand that the core of student learning is based on what the student brings to the classroom.

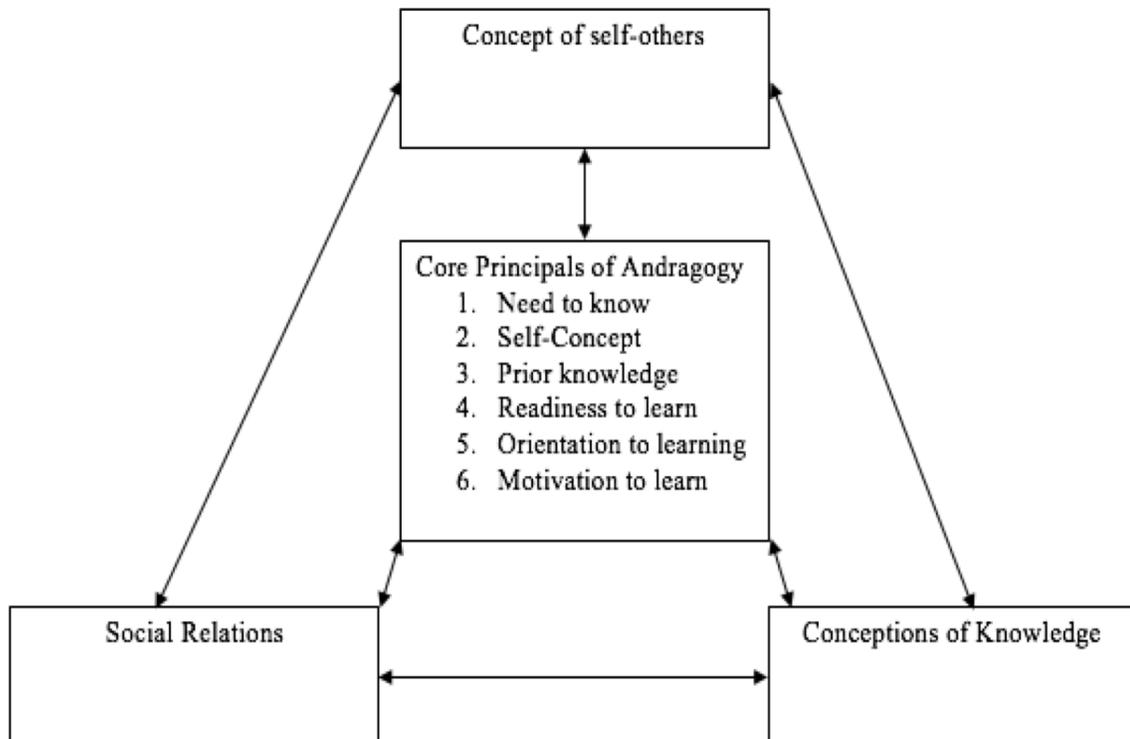


Figure 1.1. Parker, 2019. Culturally Relevant Andragogy.

Adult learners are self-directed (Knowles & Associates, 1984; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). Traditionally, once they enter into educational situations they automatically switch back to their k-12 schooling where they depend on the teacher for knowledge. Interestingly, they do not expect to be treated like children, but rather anticipate being guided through their educational experience.

Adults enter into educational activities with previous knowledge. This knowledge shapes their identity and their attitude toward what will be learned. In classrooms, this previous knowledge varies. For this reason, adults learn best when they are engaged in group discussions, simulations, field experiences, and problem-solving projects. Controversially,

adult educators must also consider that adults have already formed their habits. There is always the possibility that they might become defensive, be prejudice, and/or think or act a certain way.

Adults are only ready to learn when they experience a need to know the information in order to accomplish a task or to perform more effectively in some aspect of their lives. In other words, traditionally, adults seek to learn new information when there has been a change in their life (e.g. births, deaths, divorce, job loss, seeking new employment).

Adults do not learn for the sake of learning. They come into the situation with a life-centered, task-centered, or problem-centered thought process. Everything they do and learn is viewed from one of these perspectives. The ultimate goal of their learning is to perform a task, solve a problem, or live a more satisfying life.

Adults learners have internal & external motivators for learning (i.e. self-esteem, recognition, better quality of life, better job, salary increase). Andragogy assumes that the teacher is not the end-all be-all of learning. There are other resources such as peers, other specialists, media resources, and field experiences that assist in the student's learning.

CRA views learning as student-centered. Practitioners take into consideration that college students come to the classroom in a transition period. They are expecting their professor to move them from pedagogical, guided learning to more andragogically-based, self-directed learning. While structuring instruction around the aforementioned six ideas, faculty members who engage in CRA also comprehend that there is a need for them to transgress the traditional teacher-student relationship. These faculty members focus their efforts on both teaching content and empowering their students.

Transgression while engaging CRA is guided by instructional practices that present course content in ways that teach students three main things (hooks, 1994; Parker, 2019). First, they learn new conceptions of self and others; thus, validating their home cultures and teaching them to accept others. Second, students learn the value of social relations which empowers them in the learning process and transgresses the notion that the professor is the sole knowledge constructor. Third, they learn new conceptions of knowledge which guides them to understand the dynamics of knowledge, its social construction, and how to critique its value.

In essence, CRA guides student to reconceptualize what it means to learn and be a student. It guides them to take control of their learning and build new knowledge with their professor. Within recent years, experiential learning in higher education has emerged as a useful equity pedagogy for also guiding students to take control of their learning. Particularly, project-based learning has offered many insights into ways that higher

education faculty can better provide students with an equal and equitable curricular experience in the classroom.

1.1.3. Project-based Learning

Project based learning is rooted in 20th century progressive education (Maida, 2011; Petersen, C. & Nassaji 2016). Progressives advocated for a pedagogy that emphasized flexible critical thinking and looked at schools as an important place for social and political change. John Dewey was the first to produce research on project-based learning with his experimental schools. He envisioned a school that had features of a workshop-like laboratory (Maida, 2011). This laboratory included all of the materials and tools that a child needed to construct, create, and inquire. Dewey viewed the classroom as a miniature community where play was integral to learning social roles and engaging with the physical environment.

Theoretically, project-based learning has roots in constructivist pedagogy and places importance on experiential learning and interaction (Park & Hiver, 2017). It views learning as an active social experience in a community that mediates development rather than consumerism. It is focused on experiential, hands-on, student-directed learning (Lee, 2015). This can be done via field trips, laboratory investigations, and interdisciplinary activities that extend the curriculum beyond the classroom.

The defining characteristic of project-based learning is that it takes a more student-centered approach to learning (Lee, 2015). The projects themselves are focused on questions or problems that drive students to encounter and address central concepts and principals of a discipline. Project-based learning engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process that is structured on complex, authentic questions and a careful design of products and tasks (Maida, 2011).

Project-based learning helps to develop habits associated with personal and occupational success in the global economy and is underpinned by the notion of quality-driven work (Maida, 2011). In project-based learning activities, students are asked to explore, negotiate, interpret, and create in an attempt to construct solutions (Lee, 2015). There is also a focus on the practice of community (Maida, 2011). This allows for the exchange of data, information, and knowledge in a more open, informal manner. Students are pushed to develop critical thinking skills or higher order thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis (Lee, 2015). Students are ideally supposed to change their attitudes and behaviors toward the knowledge as a result of the project.

In project-based learning aligned classrooms, both learners and teachers focus on the process of learning which involves developing language and content knowledge or

completing the actual project work (Park & Hiver, 2017). In essence, the focus is more on what is learned through completing the project rather than the project itself. There is no limit to the forms that a project may take as long as it includes multiple products that can provide students with continuous feedback and learning opportunities.

With such a high level of variance offered, project-based learning can look very different from classroom to classroom and from subject to subject. Likewise, there is a clear division between project and problem-based learning (Roberts, 2016). Project-based learning takes more of a Socratic, dialogic approach to teaching and learning while problem-based learning takes a more technical, rationalist approach (Hanney & Savin-Baden, 2013). The issue with both approaches is that it is hard for teachers to measure what is learned and how it is learned. Because of the simultaneous learning and usage of the target language that is required, project-based learning can take on a very unique style in foreign language classrooms.

1.1.4. Foreign Language Education

University-level foreign language education has reached a turning point (MLA, 2007; Swaffar, 2003). In reaction to the major accountability-based budget cuts seen across the country, university departments have had to create a new perception of what it means to study a foreign language. The goal of literacy is now the core of the curriculum. University courses at all levels are being structured for students to discover how a specific culture is mediated through the use of language in lieu of rote memorization of grammar rules and lists of vocabulary words.

Berman (2011) argued that, while great strides have been made, there is still more work to be done. Foreign language education is still in a diminishing state because of the social forces surrounding its support and implementation. A contributory factor to the lack of consistency is the lack of a clear purpose of foreign language education. Teachers and stakeholders still are not clear on whether foreign language study is for communication purposes (the instrumentalist perspective) or for understanding different people, practices, and perspectives (the constitutivist perspective) (MLA, 2007).

While k-12 faculty are normally instrumentalist, higher education faculty and administration have habitually viewed languages from the constitutivist viewpoint. Ideally, all programs should strive for both. In university programs, lower level students need more culture and varying perspectives while upper level students need more cross-disciplinary language acquisition-based courses. This usually has been accomplished via the study of literature, but more approaches are still needed.

Durden (2015) argued that students these days see everything as transcultural and transnational and want practice to have all the skills necessary to participate in solving the world's problems. They favor interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, experiential, and discovery-based learning courses. He believed that contemporary university foreign language course curricula need to be redesigned apart from literature. These curricula should serve to teach students from an interdisciplinary perspective. Students should be learning about how the language applies to various cultural contexts. It is through the usage of diverse approaches to curriculum and instruction that best practices in foreign language education can be established.

1.1.5. Project-based Learning in Foreign Language Courses

Foreign language teachers, stakeholders, and advocates, and mainly the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, suggest task-based learning (another form of problem-based learning) as the most effective approach to teaching foreign languages utilizing experiential learning (ACTFL, 2017, Park & Hiver, 2017; Petersen & Nassaji, 2016). This is the rationale behind thematic units such as shopping, food, and school where all grammar and vocabulary relate back to the theme. However, project-based learning is more long term and intensive, requiring more elaborate uses of the language. There also exists various documents such as the ACTFL 21st century skills map that assist in better guiding project-based learning and dictating what it should look like in the classroom.

Previous research (Petersen & Nassaji, 2016) has suggested that foreign language teachers show a more positive attitude toward project-based learning than students. They feel that it exposes students to the language and the different ways of using it. However, most teachers do not implement it in the classroom because of the amount of time that it takes to properly create, design, and grade the assignments. Additionally, there is little variance in the style of the projects. Most teachers rely on student presentations. Teachers do this because of time restraints and not having the ability to control students' work habits outside of class. Students also have expressed a positive attitude toward project-based learning in foreign language courses. Generally, they have only disliked the ways in which the teacher implemented it as part of the course curriculum. Mainly, they disliked cooperative learning-based projects. They preferred single-person projects because of the intellectual independence.

Overall, there exists a wide variance in the purpose and use of project-based learning in foreign language education. This study aimed to further understand university students' attitudes toward project-based learning and what is needed on the part of faculty to better integrate it into courses as standard practice. The unique factors of this study were that curricular and instructional practices were guided by Culturally Relevant Andragogy. The

following sections will present the methodology used to conduct this study along with the procedures, findings, analysis of results, and implications for future practice.

1.2. Methods

For this study, Critical Action Research methodology, as established by Mills (2017), was used. Action research is a style of research undertaken by teachers and/or teaching professors to gather information about school operations, teaching practices, and student learning. The goal of action research is to provide a better understanding of the school and its students, to create reflective teaching practices, to create change in the school, and to provide better outcomes for students.

A modified version of the Dialectic Action Research Spiral model was adapted for this study. As shown in figure 1.2, foreign language education was identified as the area of focus for this research.

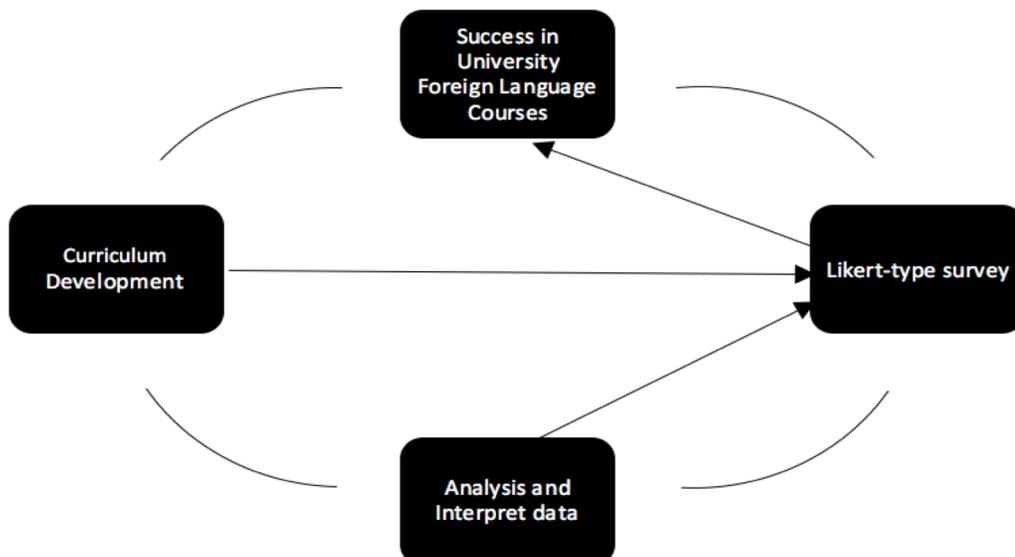


Figure 1.2. Dialectic Action Research Spiral model (Mills, 2017)

The data collection tool used in this study was a Likert-type scale survey. This survey included both pure Likert-scale attitudinal questions and qualitative, open-ended style questions. The survey results were analyzed and interpreted. From this, a series of suggestions for foreign language course curriculum development was provided (see conclusion section).

1.3. Course Demographics

This study was conducted at a rural, public university in the deep south with a student population of about 15,000 students. The intermediate Spanish II (Spanish 202) course started with an enrollment of 26 students. None of the students had previously taken and/or withdrawn from Spanish 202 in previous semesters. None of these students knew before registering for this course that project-based learning would be used. All of the students were informed that this course would be based on a form of experiential learning and include projects in lieu of traditional pen and paper testing on the first day of class. All students were either at junior or senior standing. None of these students were majoring in Spanish and only one was minoring in Spanish. The majority of these students were majoring in Communication or Psychology. Some of these students had previously taken either Spanish 101, Spanish 102, or both with me. The current methodology/approach had not been used in those courses. Two students withdrew from this course before the completion of the first project.

Of the remaining students, 19 identified as female and five identified as male. 12 of the students identified as white or Caucasian, seven identified as black or African American, two identified as biracial with South American heritage, one identified as biracial with South African heritage, one identified as Jamaican, and one identified as Asian.

This was a three-hour lecture course. It was scheduled for two, one-hour and fifteen-minute, face-to-face meetings per week. The semester was sixteen weeks long.

1.4. Course Information

At the university where this study was conducted, Spanish 202 is classified as an intermediate level, second sequence course. This course is traditionally a three-credit hour lecture with a prerequisite of Spanish 101, 102, 201 or the equivalent. This course is taught with an emphasis on proficiency in reading and a continuation of grammar review.

To do curriculum alignment among the course goals, department mission, and institutional purpose, each project was designed based on an interpretation of the appropriate grammar points that would most likely be used for communication in certain contexts. Each project was assigned as a summative assessment at the end of each unit. No official formative assessments were given during each unit. Formative assessments were integrated into each lesson, but no official grades were given.

The grammar of each unit was taught using the Communicative Approach to language teaching also known as Communicative Language Teaching. Each lesson followed the

PACE lesson plan model (Shrum & Glisan, 2016). Students were presented with the information, their attention was drawn to the grammar point, they were allowed time to co-construct an explanation of the grammar. This was typically done as a group, aloud. They were then given an extension activity to practice the grammar. This extension activity served as the formative assessment.

During each lecture, grammar and vocabulary activities used included clozed activities, group activities, matching, translations, and many others depending on the topic. Culture was taught via two in-class lectures and one online assignment. The first lecture addressed how the Spanish language is being used in various job fields. The second lecture addressed immigration from Latin America and the Caribbean to the United States of America and how Spanish usage has grown throughout the country. The online assignment required students to watch two videos about the indigenous of Central America. Students were to incorporate the knowledge that they gained from all three cultural activities into their projects as best as possible.

Each project was based on Culturally Relevant Andragogy and in some way related back to the students' cultural framework upon entering the class. Each project was based within the context of usage in the immediate community, around the university, and/or for their own personal usage after this course. Likewise, each project shared some type of reference to the university's mascot, colors, and other common cultural references from around campus.

The first project was a children's book. The grammar covered in this unit included: (1) the differences between the verbs *ser* and *estar* (2) the comparative and superlative (3) the present tense conjugation of –Ar, –Er, and –Ir verbs (4) the conjugation of the –Ar, –Er, and –Ir verbs in the preterite, imperfect, past perfect, and pluperfect tenses and (5) the usage of *hace...que*. The second project was a recruitment video. The grammar covered in this unit included (1) the present subjunctive (2) the past subjunctive (3) negative and affirmative formal commands (4) negative and affirmative informal commands (5) the future tense and (6) the conditional mood. The third unit required students to complete a comprehensive grammar guide entitled the "Language Learner Manual" which was assigned at the beginning of the course. For this unit, the grammar covered included all grammar previously taught in the course along with (1) direct and indirect object pronouns, (2) *por* vs *para*, (3) verbs like *gustar*, and (4) *saber* vs *conocer*. The following sections will give a detailed description of each project and observations of student behaviors during each project.

1.5. Project One: *Cuentos infantiles*

The first project was a children's book entitled *Cuentos infantiles*. The 24 students were divided into 12 groups of two. Groups were pre-chosen based on perceived pre-existing relationships depending on where they typically sat in class and with whom they normally associated. Students who usually sat by each other were grouped with students on the other side of the room thus forcing them to meet new people.

Each group was directed to create a short children's story in Spanish using mainly the Spanish grammar that we had studied in the first unit. Each story made up a chapter of the larger children's book. Each story was designed around a specific theme (*Todo sobre yo, un(a) estudiante a Southeastern; Autobiografía ; Tú sabes (sobre Hammond)?; La familia de Luisiana; Los amigos en Luisiana; En la escuela secundaria, yo era la persona...; Mi familia y yo; Mi libro favorito; Me llamo....y soy de Luisiana; Todo sobre Southeastern; Mi querida Luisiana; Mi querido Hammond; ¿Quién soy?; Yo Soy...; Lo que yo aprendí en la escuela secundaria*). Each group was allowed to freely interpret their theme and design their chapter of the book on their own including characters, plots, and illustrations. The only thing that was instructor controlled was the title of the book and the title of each group's chapter.

While groups were provided with detailed instructions in the course learning management system, students were allowed to match their interpretation of the title to the design, plot, and illustrations of their story. Students were required to submit a brainstorm of ideas, rough draft, second draft, and final copy. Each was graded for completion only. The final book chapter was graded using a rubric that assessed the students on grammar, spelling, vocabulary, content, and appropriateness. Each category equated to a specific number of points.

Students were given two class days to work on this assignment and two days outside of class to complete the assignment and turn in the final product. During the in-class time, I served as a facilitator and editor. I provided students with information on multicultural children's literature to serve as a model. I edited students work, asked them questions, and gave them advice about their story and plot progression. Mostly, I aimed to make sure that students were using their time wisely and not using social media, completing assignments for other courses, or engaging in irrelevant conversation. Students were consistently advised to not use online translators, but rather online and paper dictionaries.

This project was chosen as a way to have the students get to know each other. Additionally, the focus of this project was to have students work on their writing skills by recounting a story in the past tense. Students were guided to focus on the past vs present tense and the inclusion of details to relay a message.

1.6. Project Two: Recruitment Video

The second project was a recruitment video. Students created a four to seven-minute video, in Spanish, designed to recruit Spanish-speaking students to enroll at our university. Students were allowed to choose their group members with a maximum number of four people. All students were provided detailed instructions in the course learning management system. Each group was allowed to come up with their own theme and script. Each group independently obtained all of the technology needed to successfully shoot and edit the video.

Each group submitted their script to me for editing before recording the video. Students were required to follow a specific structure as designed by me. They had to (1) introduce themselves (2) introduce and discuss various aspects of the university (3) discuss various aspects of the foreign language department (4) give a little information about their home department and (5) give a conclusion to the video. Grammatically, students were required to use commands and the various forms of the present subjunctive. Students were given bonus points if they could get someone from outside the class to say a phrase in Spanish. Students were graded on a rubric that assessed their (1) fulfillment of assignment (2) development of content (3) language skills and (4) time management.

The rationale behind this project was based on the idea that recruitment videos traditionally used a lot of grammar that requires the subjunctive and commands. Additionally, students had enough grammar review from both unit one and two that this project was manageable. Lastly, because this course included a large majority of communication majors, each group had a student that was able to take charge if necessary to acquire the equipment, write a script, and produce a high-quality video.

1.7. Project Three: Language Learner Manual

The final and largest project of this course was the Language Learner Manual. Students were given this assignment at the beginning of the semester and were required to work on it outside of class throughout the semester. This project required students to create a textbook-like manual that was specific to their future career. Students were allowed to choose the theme, layout, design, and content of their manual. I created a pre-made template of all of the information that was required (i.e. title page, dedication page, table of contents, the specific grammar points), but students filled the manual with their own content (i.e. explanations of the grammar, examples of its usage, tables, charts, pictures). I also provided further detailed instructions via the course learning management system.

After the completion of each unit, students were required to submit a draft of what they had completed thus far. The only requirement of the draft was that the grammar of that

unit be thoroughly explained. With each draft, students were required to provide a concise interpretation of the grammar points presented in the unit, all of the appropriate rules, and an example of their usage in context. Students were allowed creative freedom to present their content in various ways (bullet points, a text summary, a narrative chart, or a combination of all three or other methods of presentation). For the manual layout and overall design, students were encouraged to be creative and thorough. They were graded via a modified version of the Value Rubrics created by the American Association of Universities and Colleges. Because students were to complete this project individually, no two manuals were the exact same.

The rationale behind this assignment was to have students create a physical document showing their understanding of the grammar presented in this course. Additionally, this project aimed to take an interdisciplinary perspective on the course by allowing students to tailor the manual toward their future career via the design and inclusion of career specific culture and grammar. This project also allowed students to metacognitively think about the Spanish language by having them to think about how to explain it to others in a written format.

To end the course, students we also required to complete an oral interview with a native speaker using an online software. Students were allowed to use their manual as a reference guide if they felt it was appropriate. The native speaker was given information about the student's competency level and told to gear the conversation toward the student's past experiences, his/her daily life, and his/her future plans upon graduation. On the last teaching day of class, students were given a survey to gauge their attitude toward their experience with experiential learning during the semester. The following section presents the finding of the survey.

2. Results

Upon completion of the course, students were required to complete a survey designed to measure their attitudes toward project-based learning as used in this course. The following section is an analysis of the results of student responses to the survey. The majority of students (86.36%) generally agreed that they gained a better comprehension of the Spanish language as a result of project-based learning. The lesser minority (4.55%) felt neutral, and the greater minority felt that they did not gain better comprehension of the Spanish language as a result of a project-based learning approach.

The vast majority of students felt that their listening skills (59.09%) and speaking skills (50.00%) were strengthened because of the project-based learning approach used in this class. The greater majority of students (31.82%) felt that their writing skills were

strengthened while the lesser majority of students (13.64%) felt that their reading skills in Spanish were strengthened as a result of the project-based learning approach.

The overall majority of students (86.37%) felt some level of comfortability with applying the grammar being taught in the course to complete a project; dually, the minority of students (13.64%) felt not so comfortable. Additionally, the majority of students (40.91%) felt somewhat concerned about the projects not accurately measuring their comprehension and/or ability to use the language. While the greater minority felt either extremely concerned (9.09%) or very concerned (9.09%), the lesser minority (13.64%) felt not concerned at all.

Considering that the students in this course had only completed three semesters of Spanish (101, 102, and 201) before this course, the majority (54.55%) felt that it was neither easy nor difficult to complete the projects that were assigned in the course. Likewise, the larger minority (27.27%) felt that, with their limited knowledge of Spanish, the projects were easy to complete. The lesser minority (18.18%) felt that the projects were difficult to complete with only intermediate fluency in the language.

Half of students felt that they were very likely (50.00%) to recommend an intermediate Spanish II course (202) that was designed based on project-based learning rather than the traditional lecture style. The greater minority (27.73%) felt that they were neutral on making such a recommendation. The lesser minority (22.73%) felt that they were just likely to make this recommendation, and no one felt that they were not likely at all to recommend such a course.

Students' overall opinion of the positive aspects of project-based learning was that it was hands on and allowed for real-world application and creativity. It was also a change from traditional testing and prepared them for actual two-way conversation. Likewise, students' overall opinion of the negative aspects of project-based learning was that there was a lack of advanced grammar skills necessary to complete the projects, there was not enough time to complete the projects, the directions of the assignments were not clear, and the students felt they had a misconception of what project-based learning was. The majority said their favorite assignment was the children's book and their least favorite was the recruitment video.

3. Discussion

The results of the student survey suggest that generally students felt that they better comprehended the Spanish language because of the project-based approach used in this class. Students felt that their listening and speaking skills mainly improved because of the use of project-based learning. Students mostly felt comfortable with having to apply the

grammar to complete a task. They were not very concerned with the projects not reflecting their understanding of the language. In other words, the projects had fidelity in measuring their ability to comprehend and use Spanish. Students mainly felt that they had the adequate level of Spanish necessary to complete each project.

Overall, the majority of students would recommend project-based learning in foreign language courses to other students. Students overall liked project-based learning because it was hands-on and allowed them to be creative and apply their knowledge. The negative aspect of project-based learning was that some students felt that they did not have the advanced grammar skills to truly express themselves the way that they would have liked. Likewise, students felt that the design and timing of the projects needed improvement. Also, most students had never heard of project-based learning and thus felt like they had a misconception of what they were expected to do in the course.

4. Conclusions

As shown in the present research, university students generally liked project-based learning because they are able to immediately apply what they were learning to complete a task which aligns with the immediacy of Culturally Relevant Andragogy. Through this research, it is evident that project-based learning is a valuable approach for university students to have a better understanding of and ability to listen, to speak, to read, and to write in the target language at the intermediate level. The structure of the university and the projects allows for students to experience everything necessary for adult learning to take place.

In the future, it would be best for all university professors teaching intermediate courses to start to include more project-based learning approaches in lieu of pen and paper evaluations & assessments to gauge students' ability to use and understand the target language. Likewise, project-based learning is the first step in pushing foreign language departments to a more progressive approach to language education. However, there is still more research needed on aspects of project-based learning, its usage in foreign language courses, effective structure and execution, students' attitudes towards it, and the measuring of student achievement.

Specifically, there is a lot more research needed in student achievement. Project based learning does not necessarily equate to advanced fluency in the target language. Consequently, there is a need to understand how beneficial the projects are to guiding students to advanced fluency which is one of the ultimate goals of foreign language education. Additionally, the way that culture can be better infused into the projects is still a necessary question that needs to be answered.

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