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Using a Project-Based Language Learning Approach in the High School Spanish Classroom: Perceived Challenges and Benefits

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Using a Project-Based Language Learning Approach

in the High School Spanish Classroom:

Perceived Challenges and Benefits

Lisa D. Collier

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Using a Project-Based Language Learning Approach in the High School Spanish Classroom: Perceived Challenges and Benefits

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Master of Arts

This thesis documents the action research study done to investigate the perceived challenges and benefits of a project-based language learning (PBLL) approach in a high school Spanish classroom. The research involved four high school Spanish 3 classes taught by the same teacher. Two classes formed an experimental group and were taught one thematic unit using a PBLL approach, while the other two classes formed the control group and were taught by the same approach that had been used the rest of the year. Two of the objectives of the study were to see how the PBLL approach affected the achievement and writing performance of the experimental group and how the students liked it in comparison to the teaching approach that had been used in the other units during the school year. The third objective was to identify effective steps in setting up project-based language learning in a high school classroom and its possible obstacles.

The results from this study found that a PBLL approach possibly affected achievement in grammar in vocabulary from the pre-test to the post-test, but that the writing performance was unaffected. In this thesis, steps to setting up a PBLL unit are documented as well as possible obstacles. The thesis concludes with suggestions for overcoming these obstacles and for further research and collaboration in setting up PBLL units.

Keywords: project-based learning, project-based language learning, achievement test, performance test
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Each school year a new group of students walks through my Spanish classroom door bringing with them the bundles of experiences they have accumulated in their previous Spanish classes and life experiences, and might include language skills, cultural experiences, and attitudes. Some carry tiny packages that could fit in one hand because of the things they have dropped and spilled, while others can barely squeeze through the door with their packed bundles because they have retained so much along the way. Despite the amount of knowledge and ability they arrive with, most students have the goal to add to their bundles. They want more.

As facilitators in their accumulation of language abilities, teachers have a challenging, yet exciting task of helping the students increase in their skills so that they leave with more than they arrived with. Teachers want to help them be more proficient so that they can be creative and express themselves freely in various situations in the second language and also understand the various inputs presented to them. In addition to the communicative aspect, teachers also want students to grow in cultural understanding, not as a separate entity, but as an integral part of the language-learning journey. In other words, language teachers want students to reach high levels of linguistic proficiency and cultural competency. There are numerous ways that teachers do this, each having varied success with what students learn. One such teaching approach is project-based language learning (PBLL), which is tightly connected to project-based learning (PBL).

Project-based learning has existed in education, as well as in theory, for decades, beginning with ideas from John Dewey in the late nineteenth century (Dewey, 1938). He believed that students learned by doing rather than by only listening to information given by a teacher, moving the student to the center, rather than the teacher. In the later part of the 20th
century, PBL could be defined as “a comprehensive approach to classroom learning and teaching that is designed to engage students in investigation of authentic problems” (Blumenfeld, et.al., 1991, p. 369). Dewey’s ideas have evolved throughout the years to become 21st century project-based learning.

More recently, PBL has become even more refined in its characteristics by some educators. The Buck Institute for Education (BIE) is a leader in PBL and has been instrumental in defining high-quality PBL. They define project-based learning as a “teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge” (“What is project based learning,” n.d.).

Approximately three years ago, the BIE adopted what they call gold standard PBL in order to help educators realize that just because the students do a project in the classroom, it does not mean that true project-based learning is occurring. They claim that there are essential components for effective, gold-standard, project-based learning, which include the following: 1) student-oriented goals, 2) a challenging problem or question to solve, 3) sustained student inquiry, 4) authenticity, 5) student voice and choice, 6) reflection, 7) critique and revision, and 8) a public product. When a project includes those essential pieces, engaged learning becomes optimal” (“What is project based learning,” n.d.).

Project-based language learning has several additional components that are added to PBL, such as developing intercultural competence and completing all the PBL steps in the target language. Soleimani, Rahimi, and Sadeghi (2015) state that “PBLL is a means of using language to learn, rather than learning language. However, when learners listen, speak, read, and
write the target language in finding information, discussing, consulting experts or reference and presenting findings, they learn language in real-world context” (p. 3).

The National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) gives a definition for project-based language learning and states,

We define PBLL as an articulated series of activities, motivated by real-world needs and driven by the learners' interest, whose common goal is to improve language learners’ communicative competence in the target language through the construction of products. PBLL should provide a high level of learner autonomy; invite critique and revision; promote the use of skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and intercultural communication (also described as 21st Century Skills, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2014); and include the sharing of the constructed product with a target audience (Project-Based learning, 2014).

They continue to say that effective PBLL contains the following components: 1) a central, motivating question focused on a real world issue, 2) curriculum that is learner centered, 3) collaboration with peers and teachers, 4) feedback during the project process, 5) a teacher that is a facilitator and knowledgeable participant, and 6) the creation of a real world project made for a real audience (Project-Based learning, 2014).

With these definitions in mind, project-based language learning can be summarized as a student-centered learning approach where students have a central question, they investigate with a collaborative team, and they choose a way to share their findings with an authentic audience—all in the target language.

When I first heard about project-based language learning, I wondered what specific lessons consisted of and if it would be a more individualized way of teaching in my classroom of
35-40 students. What would I need to do in order to make a language unit that was project based? Would my students like it? Would it engage them in the topic? Would they accumulate vocabulary and grammar principles along the way? Would project-based teaching help them learn and use more Spanish and help them understand the culture more than how I had been teaching?

This study is one teacher’s reflection of trying a different teaching approach, project-based language learning, in an attempt to help each student learn at high levels and aid in increasing what the students take with them when they exit the language classroom at the end of the year.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Project-based learning has been promoted by educational institutions as an extremely effective learning approach in the teaching profession in general. For example, the Buck Institution of Education (BIE) states, “The experience of thousands of teachers across all grade levels and subject areas, backed by research, confirms that PBL is an effective and enjoyable way to learn - and develop deeper learning competencies required for success in college, career, and civic life” (“Why project based learning,” n.d.). One study reviewed 768 articles regarding the effectiveness of project-based learning from 2000 to 2011. Those were manually sorted to find only those related to kindergarten through 12th grade, which ended with a total 17 eligible articles. The author concluded the review by saying that according to the studies analyzed on the effectiveness of PBL, this teaching approach is beneficial in increasing enthusiasm for the content area and in aiding in content understanding, and helping students reach a greater depth of learning (Holms, 2011).
In addition to support for PBL cited by the BIE, the George Lucas Education Foundation/Edutopia states, “A growing body of research supports the use of PBL. Schools where PBL is practiced find a decline in absenteeism, an increase in cooperative learning skills, and improvement in student achievement” (Why is project-based learning, 2017). Although research exists that demonstrates successful outcomes with project-based learning, does that mean that that PBL is highly effective in language classrooms (PBLL)? What are the experiences that other teachers and students have had using it? What are the benefits and challenges? One obstacle in answering these questions more thoroughly lies in that a majority of project-based learning research is done at the university level, as shown in the research analysis done by Holm (2011). Because of this, research done with younger students is lacking.

A second problem is that most project-based learning ideas that are shared in the educational arena are done for projects carried out in the native language and not in a second language. The obstacle of doing project-based learning in the target language (TL) changes the nature of setting up a project-based unit and research with PBL in second language education is lacking. Both the BIE and George Lucas Educational Foundations have several project-based lesson examples on their websites, but the second-language lesson ideas mentioned do not contain details. Additionally, in the PBLL studies that will be listed in the literature review, only partial details are shared. It would be helpful for teachers to see detailed information about how to set up a language classroom that is project-centered.

A third problem that needs investigation is to see if project-based language learning might help the students learn and perform tasks in the target language at the high school level. Is it beneficial in helping them progress in the language? It would be valuable to see more studies
done to see if project-based learning in a second language affects performance and achievement.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The objective of this study is threefold: 1) identify effective steps in setting up project-based language learning in a high school classroom and its possible obstacles, 2) determine possible effects of project-based learning in student performance and achievement, and 3) identify both positive and negative reactions of the students after doing a project-based unit.

By doing this study, it is hoped that other high school teachers interested in doing project-based learning in a language classroom will be able to see the steps that one teacher took in setting up a project-based learning language unit. It is hoped also that this study will show how students react to this type of learning and if it affects their language learning and performance.

1.4 Research Questions

RQ1: Does PBLL seem to affect student learning in terms of achievement and performance?

RQ 2: How do students’ perceptions of effectiveness and enjoyment differ between PBLL and existing curriculum?

RQ 3: How might PBLL affect student engagement in high school Spanish classes?

RQ4: What are the challenges in implementing PBLL in a high school Spanish classroom?

It is hoped that this study will help provide insight to these questions and in so doing will help teachers, parents, and administrators understand if PBLL is a teaching approach that might be viable and beneficial to their language programs.
2.1 Introduction

In effective 21st century classrooms, teachers want their students to be engaged and become owners of their learning (Why is project-based learning, 2017). They hope that they are empowering students with not only information, but with the ability to become lifelong learners. One teaching approach to guiding students is called project-based learning, whose focus centers on students creating products based on a driving question and quest (What is project based learning, 2017). Project-based language learning follows the principles of project-based learning, but is specifically a teaching approach for the second language classroom.

After understanding what the overall idea of PBLL is, it will be of value to tie this knowledge back to some of the challenges that language teachers and learners face in the classroom and ask if a PBLL approach would be beneficial. Many proponents of PBL and PBLL suggest that this type of learning approach has numerous benefits, such as, motivating students and increasing student interest (Fougler & Jimenez-Silva, 2007; Fragoulis, 2007; Levine, 2004; Peterson & Nassaji, 2016), improving language proficiency (Fragoulis, 2007; Li, 2010), and increasing student achievement (Li, 2010; Sadeghi, Biniaz & Soleimani, 2016; Soleimani, Rihimi & Sadeghi, 2015; Tuncay & Ekizoglu, 2010). The following section reviews various studies that discuss these possible benefits, which could aid in combating some of the obstacles, leading to greater language proficiency growth and cultural understanding.

In reviewing the various studies done with PBL and PBLL, it must be kept in mind that different researchers use the terms project-based learning and project-based language learning with different standards. Some educators have used all components of the gold standard PBL,
while others only incorporate some or do not mention them in their studies, which causes variation in research results.

This literature review will discuss several studies regarding both project-based and project-based language learning and their possible connections to the following areas: student motivation, student performance in the target language, student achievement and learning, and challenges in implementing PBL/PBLL.

2.2 PBL, PBLL, and Possible Increase in Student Motivation

One of the most common benefits listed by both PBL and PBLL advocates is increased motivation among the students. One study of fifteen 11-12 year old students in an elementary school in Greece found that the students’ intrinsic motivation seemed to increase, even among the lower achieving students (Fragaulis, 2007). These English as-a-Foreign-Language learners were guided to create projects having to do with their local history. They were divided into learning groups based on student interest and did their research and communication in the L2. The students were given group roles to aid in carrying out certain tasks and to also aid the teachers in the students’ formative assessments during the six-month project development. The author added that the students “were more eager to experiment with the new language since they were less concerned with sounding silly” (p. 116). The eagerness of the students to participate in the project despite their imperfect English shows the power that PBLL can have in student learning and engagement.

In an additional study of 38 high school students, researchers wanted to find out what their students thought about a PBL teaching approach (Tuncay & Ekizoglu, 2010). Of the total students, 19 used a PBL approach for a web design project (the experimental group), while the other class of 19 students used what the teachers termed a teacher-centered approach and were
used as the control group. Both groups were given instruction in web design and were given the assignment to create web projects. The experimental group was instructed to form groups based on interests and perceived talents. They were also allowed freedom to choose their projects rather than being dictated what to do by the teacher. At the end of the unit, the researchers gave questionnaires to help assess student opinion. The results showed that in comparison to how they had previously been taught, the students found the PBL approach more enjoyable. They also found that it increased student collaboration, helped them retain what they had learned, and increased motivation. Although this PBL approach did not contain all PBL elements listed by the BIE, such as a public audience, the researchers suggested that because the PBL approach was “filled with active and engaged learning, it inspired students to obtain a deeper knowledge of the subjects they're studying” and “encouraged [them] to explore their own interests and to make connections to the world beyond school” (p. 6). When the students become owners of their learning, their desire to learn increases.

An additional factor that might lead to increased student motivation is having an authentic audience for the finished project. This element can be seen in a collective case study in which researchers gathered teacher observations and anecdotes as the students used a PBLL approach. In this year-long study that involved 14 teachers in K-8 schools in Arizona, ELL classes used PBLL-based environments for writing projects. Researchers found that when students wrote for a real audience for a real purpose, they were more engaged and motivated. This collective case study gathered teacher observations and anecdotes as the students used a PBLL approach. As the students created websites and wrote for audiences beyond the classroom, their motivation to produce quality projects increased and their enthusiasm skyrocketed, according to teacher reflections (Fougler & Jimenez-Silva, 2007).
2.3 PBL/PBLL and Possible Increase in Language Performance

In addition to increasing student motivation and interest, PBL/PBLL can possibly help with language performance and proficiency. In the previously mentioned study with Greek school children, the Fragaulis states, “At the end of the school term, most students showed an improvement in all four language skills. Their speaking and listening skills, in particular, had the greatest improvement” (p. 116). He also states that the students’ communicative ability increased, as they were able to string sentences into whole ideas, which they could not do before (Fragaulis, 2007). He also said that student interest, enthusiasm, and language skills increased as they “experimented with the language” because they were not afraid to make mistakes (p. 116). Although this study was based mostly on the researcher’s observations and qualitative data collected through student comments, the details the author included about setting up the project are valuable to educators looking for ways to implement PBLL. There is no concrete evidence indicating that the PBLL approach the researchers used was more effective than other teaching methods, but the anecdotal descriptions indicate that it is a possibility.

Another study that shows a possible connection between PBLL and increased language proficiency is a study done with 21 EFL students at a university in Thailand (Kettanun, 2014). The students were allowed to work individually, with a partner, or in a group of four. They were introduced to the PBLL approach and given a syllabus containing the four projects they would be working on: an investigative report on a social issue, a feature story, a sales message, and a situation comedy. After 12-weeks of working and assessing, the final two projects were presented to the class. The students also took a pre- and post-test in order to assess their English levels before and after the course. The students also wrote in reflective journals and were interviewed to gather qualitative data. The author said the following in the summary,
Findings indicated that the project-based EFL classroom yielded not only positive learning outcomes, but also helped the students to improve their cognition, work ethics, and interpersonal skills. Project-based learning, if implemented right, will allow students to have a chance to actually use integrated language skills to accomplish tasks. This will make language learning more fruitful as it encourages authentic learning experience that will help to motivate students to independently seek knowledge and continuously improve their language ability; it stimulates autonomy and life-long learning in addition to increasing English language competency (p. 569).

The results from this study show that PBLL was a possible vehicle for students to improve their language proficiency, although the lack of a control group, the low number of participants, and missing PBLL criteria might have affected the outcome. Additional research involving studies that include all PBLL elements would be beneficial to show a connection between PBLL and proficiency.

2.4 PBL/PBLL and Possible Increase in Student Achievement and Learning

Another area that some PBL/PBLL advocates tend not to focus on, yet nonetheless is important in the educational world, is possible academic gains in student achievement and learning. According to The National Board for Professional Teaching standards, student achievement is defined as “the status of subject-matter knowledge, understandings, and skills at one point in time” (p. 28), but is only part of the complete learning package. They continue to say that student achievement results are only an outward representation of part of the total learning that is going on inside the student. They continue,

Student learning is the growth in subject-matter knowledge, understanding, and skills over time. In essence, it is an increase in achievement that constitutes learning. Knowing
whether student learning has occurred, then, requires tracking the growth in what students know and can do. It is only by comparing student mastery at successive points in time that the nature and extent of learning can be gauged (p. 29).

Why might assessing student achievement be important and how might it be beneficial in helping students grow in language proficiency? If students learning is gauged using the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL, 2012), students begin with simple, one-word answers and move upward on the scale to include complete sentences, whole paragraphs, and to the point where they can write and discuss various topics in the past, present, and future with ease. It can be argued that useful tools in reaching higher levels of L2 proficiency are an increase in vocabulary and an understanding of correct grammar usage. A well-conceived achievement assessment can be a tool to show student growth in not only vocabulary and grammar, but in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. An increase in achievement does not necessarily correlate with increased proficiency, but it can indicate that student learning is taking place. These assessments can also be used to indicate where more practice is needed for student growth.

Although PBL/PBLL approaches do not focus on achievement assessments, it might be interesting to ask how students who engage in PBLL differ in measurable achievement assessments than students who are taught using other approaches. In this literature review and subsequent study, student achievement is defined as demonstrating growth in information retention and application during a certain time span. For example, if students are studying about the environment in the L2 and creating projects based on the BIE gold standards, will the students be able to understand what specific vocabulary words mean in context? Will they use grammar in an understandable way or can they only produce an authentic project in partially understandable L2? Does accuracy matter? If we use the ACTFL Proficiency Scale, accuracy
does matter as we reach higher levels of proficiency. Meaning can be conveyed through imperfect language efforts, but as our students move from novice to intermediate to advanced, the meaning should be expressed with greater accuracy.

With these definitions and thoughts in mind, might PBL and PBLL affect student achievement? Some studies show that students who engage in a PBL approach have advantages over their traditionally-taught counterparts. For example, in the web-design project mentioned earlier (Tuncay & Ekizoglu, 2010), the goal was to see if there was a difference in the academic achievement between the experimental, PBL class and the traditionally-taught, control class of 19 students. They defined a traditional method as a lecture method, where, in this case, students were given the information about web design through a lecture and then had no actual application. Both groups were given instruction through lectures about web design, but the PBL group was then given student autonomy to choose group members and to create a web page. Both groups were then given assessments on web design theory and on web design application, but neither group was given a public audience to present their designs to. Although not all variables were accounted for in the study, the researchers found that the PBL students scored higher than the control group on both tests. This study could have been greatly strengthened if more details had been given about the scope and sequence in order to see what differences existed in the curricula. It could have also been strengthened by knowing more about the teachers that taught each class and about the variables of student academic achievement in the two student groups.

An additional study that supports increased academic skills was done where 36 male, Persian EFL university students were divided into two groups (Sadeghi, Biniaz, & Soleimani, 2016). The control group, was taught paragraph writing using what they called a traditional,
teacher-led lecture method where the students were all given the same writing topic and there was no interaction with other students, but the teacher gave them feedback to improve their writing. The experimental group used a PBLL, student-centered approach, which incorporated forming a research question with a team, assigning roles and tasks to develop and collect material, receiving peer assessments, and presenting their product to their class. Both classes were taught over a 10-week period, after which the writings of both groups were analyzed based on topic sentence existence and effectiveness, topic development, and overall grammar and punctuation. The researchers state the following, “The results of the t-test indicated a statistically significant difference between the Pre-Test and Post-Test scores of the experimental group. They indicated that PBL activities were effective in improving EFL writing skills of intermediate level students of English” (p. 521). Because the researchers seem to have been thorough in their investigation, including having a control group and using most of the required criteria of a complete PBLL approach, their results seem credible. Although a definite correlation cannot be drawn between the PBLL teaching approach and improved writing skills, the researchers felt that it was a viable possibility.

A further study that investigated a PBLL approach on student achievement in the areas of vocabulary and reading ability was done at a university in Iran with 60 female EFL students at the intermediate level (Soleimani, Rahimi, & Sadeghi, 2015). They were divided into a group of 30 students using the PBLL method and a control group using a textbook-centered, traditional method. According to the researchers, the PBLL students chose a weekly project based on the topic of the English class. They then had to brainstorm with their groups, consult with the teacher, parents, and other sources, and then presented their projects to each other in the form of essays, oral presentations, plays, games, newsletter, newspapers, and charts. All students then
reflected on each other’s projects. Both the PBLL students and control were given a reading and vocabulary pre-test and a post-test. The results showed that PBLL students’ achievement in vocabulary and reading ability was higher than that of the control group.

One last study that supports the idea of increased student achievement when PBLL is used, is a study done at a university in Xinjiang, China (Li, 2010). The 183 EFL geography and tourism students were divided into PBLL (experimental) and non-PBLL (control) groups. In the PBLL group, the students used their English with their geography and tourism projects rather than Chinese. This allowed students to collaborate and do projects that they would do for their majors. Li states, “They also had to learn how to communicate with different people, how to express themselves in proper words and expressions. English became a real tool for communication when they were carrying out this project. While the target language was being used, instruction became effective” (p. 107-108). At the end of the semester, both groups were given the National CET-4 test, which is the college English test. The PBL group scored much higher on the vocab and listening parts of the test, while there was no difference in the reading and writing parts of the test showing that PBL might have a possible effect in some aspects of language achievement.

Although the four studies mentioned previously show that PBLL might help student achievement in various areas, some studies show that there is no difference in achievement when PBLL is used. In a study done in Turkey (BaŞ and Beyhan, 2010), the researchers wanted to look at how PBLL affected both the achievement and attitudes of students learning English in Turkey. To do this, they used a group of 50 students composed of two fifth-grade classes and used one class as the experimental PBLL class. To begin, the PBLL class did some activities all together and then they divided into groups based on their interests to complete a project. The control
group was taught with the teacher presenting information and asking questions, the students responding, and then doing bookwork or worksheets. An achievement test, developed by the researchers, was given to measure the levels of achievement. They checked the reliability and validity of the test. The results were that there was not a significant difference in learner achievement between the two groups.

As can be seen in the studies mentioned in this section, the opinions and research results show varying outcomes in regards to PBL/PBLL and student achievement and learning. These differing results could be due to variables such as different definitions of PBL/PBLL, a lack of alignment between projects, or variables in the contexts in which each project was conducted. Continued, thoughtful, experimentation and research will be valuable in understanding a possible connection between PBL/PBLL and student achievement.

2.5 Challenges Using PBL/PBLL

Although research has shown many benefits from using PBL and PBLL in the classroom, such as possible increases in student motivation, language proficiency, and learner achievement, teachers and students who use this learning/teaching approach also express some disadvantages and difficulties. I will mention four that appeared in the review of literature.

The first difficulty is teacher frustration, which can be caused by various factors. One cause of frustration that teachers have mentioned is that in order to implement quality PBL/PBLL, teachers need to spend an increased amount of time and effort for this teaching approach to be effective. In a study done at a university in China where a university faculty team attempted to develop project-based technology courses in order to help EFL students prepare for international communication, researchers found from their teacher questionnaires that teachers were disappointed by the increased time and effort they needed to expend in order for PBL to be
successful (Fang & Warschauer, 2004). Part of their time and efforts included working with the university to try a different, student-centered approach, rather than their traditional, teacher-centered approach. In addition, “teachers had to deal with large numbers of teacher-student email messages, student assessments involving electronic portfolios, and heavy teaching loads” (p. 369). These increased responsibilities were due to the implementation of the PBLL unit.

Teachers were not the only ones to feel some frustration with PBL/PBLL. Students did as well. In a study done with 118 ESL adult students in Canada (Peterson and Nasajii, 2016), researchers found that some students would get frustrated because some of the group members would not help with the projects. One student said, “Some of my group members don’t participate and they don’t make an effort. So the other members have to do that all by themselves” (p. 26). Collaboration is an integral part of true PBL, but human differences make an imbalance of the workload a natural obstacle. Finding a solution to this obstacle will require more experimentation in the classroom and the sharing of results.

The third difficulty deals specifically with PBLL and it is the challenge of getting students to stay in the target language while working in groups and navigating through their project completion. This is mentioned in the study done by Fragaulis (2010) when he states that although the children were enthusiastic, the teachers found that they had to find solutions to remedy the problem of children communicating in their native tongue. In addition, a study done in Dublin, Ireland, where 191 university students were enrolled in classes in seven different languages, researchers found that some students did not find the project-based learning to be an immersive class. One student commented, “I don’t think it is ideal as sometimes people don’t try to speak the language during discussions and sometimes we go off topic” (Gibbes & Carson, p. 179). Another said, “I disliked it sometimes because our language skills weren’t competent
enough to tackle the tasks” (p. 179). Maintaining student communication in the L2 is a very valid hurdle in the PBLL classroom. It would be beneficial to the teaching community to do more research in this area.

2.6 Chapter Summary

In summary, PBL/PBLL have the potential of being effective teaching approaches in the classroom. Some of these benefits may include motivating students and increasing student interest, improving language proficiency, and increasing student achievement. However, challenges, such as teacher and student frustration and staying in the L2 for PBLL, also exist, indicating a need for further investigation as to how to assist in remedying these frustrations.

In the PBL/PBLL studies discussed in this literature review, some gaps exist that need more research. For one, most of the studies are done at the university level. There is a lack of educational research on this topic done in the high school classroom. In addition, many of the studies are done with a small number of participants, which weakens research validity. Finally, many of the studies mentioned used PBL/PBLL approaches at varying degrees of vigor. For example, some did not have a public audience, while others lacked student choice or the opportunity for reflection. In order to state whether PBL/PBLL is an effective teaching approach or not, studies should include high-quality, engaging PBL/PBLL, containing the attributes listed earlier by the BIE and the NFLRC. If the studies contain only some PBL/PBLL qualities, their effectiveness cannot be compared in an equal fashion.

The goals of this action research are to do to a project-based language learning unit based on the attributes listed by the BIE and the NFLRC in a high school Spanish classroom, to document the steps that are taken in setting it up, and to document what the challenges are. An additional goal is to see how the PBLL approach affects the students in engagement,
achievement, and performance. It is hoped that this study will help fill these gaps and that it will contribute to a deeper understanding of the benefits and challenges of project-based language learning, which will help other educators as they decide whether to use PBLL or not.
Chapter 3: Research Design & Methods

3.1 Introduction

The research that has been done on project-based language learning suggests that this teaching approach can have important benefits for the students. Despite this assumption, it is clear that more research needs to be done in using PBLL in the high school language classroom in order to learn how this can best be achieved. It is also important that teachers who engage in setting up PBLL, document what works, what does not, and why. This action research was carried out to this end.

This chapter will include the research questions again in order to remind the reader how they are tied to the study. Also included in this chapter are details about the participants for this research, procedures for setting up the study, methods that were used to ensure compliance to PBLL elements, and data collection tools.

3.2 Research Questions
RQ1: Does PBLL seem to affect student learning in terms of achievement and performance?
RQ 2: How do students’ perceptions of effectiveness and enjoyment differ between PBLL and existing curriculum?
RQ 3: How might PBLL affect engagement in high school Spanish classes?
RQ4: What are the challenges in implementing PBLL in a high school Spanish classroom?

3.3 Participants

Participants for this study were chosen using a convenience sample because they were already enrolled in my four Spanish 3 classes. They ranged in age from 15-18 and consisted of 56% male and 44% female, mostly Caucasian (89%), middle-class students. Based on performance assessments given prior to this unit of study, their language abilities varied between
being able to use simple, memorized phrases to expressing themselves in native Spanish, but the majority of the students were able to communicate about basic topics using simple, original sentences. For example, when asked in Spanish in a previous unit what they did when they were little, a few students were only able to say things like “play” or “eat.” Most of the students were able to say things like “I used to play hide and seek with my friends.” The native students were able to express themselves freely. Thirteen students spoke native Spanish and were sprinkled throughout the four classes. They lived in homes where Spanish is spoken, but only four spoke and wrote it with clarity, ease, and accuracy.

Some clarification also needs to be given about the Spanish classes. One of the four classes was labeled Spanish 3 Honors, but it was very similar to the other three. The students in that class had had the same previous experiences as the other students in the other Spanish 3 classes. They did not have to take a placement test to join their class; they chose to take the class knowing there would be more homework and that the tests would be slightly harder. The main difference between the honors class and the regular Spanish 3 classes is that the students are usually more dedicated in classes that are labeled as honors. Additionally, the honors class tends to have fewer students. As a side note, some of the students who chose to take the honors class probably should have been in the regular Spanish 3 classes because of their difficulties in grasping the language. On the other hand, many of the students in the regular Spanish 3 classes would have performed well in the honors class because they excelled in the language.

To assist in making a comparison between students using PBLL and those not using it, I divided the classes into two groups: one using a PBLL approach and the other using the teaching method I had used with the other five Spanish 3 units during the school year and have used for
the past three years teaching this class. (See Appendices M and N.) While deciding how to divide the classes, several variables were taken into account.

Our high school has four 80-minutes classes each day and has a rotating A day/B day schedule so that the students have a total of eight different classes: A1, A2, A3, A4, B1, B2, B3, B4. I teach seven classes, four of those being Spanish 3. Of those four classes, two of them maintained a higher grade average during the school year than the other two.

The A1 class, with 42 students, struggled the most in terms of low motivation and lower grades. Prior to beginning unit 6, their class average was 78%. The A4 class, with 33 students, had only a slightly higher average with 81%. The A3 class had 39 students with a class average of 87%. B4, the Spanish honors class, had 30 students and had an 89% average. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Grade Averages Prior to Unit 6 and Number of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Grade average</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to make the study more balanced with numbers and perceived ability and motivation levels, the following groups were made:

Group 1: A1 and B4 for a total of 72 students (class averages of 78% and 89%)
Group 2: A3 and A4 for a total of 72 students (class averages of 81% and 87%)

In addition to the student participants, I need to give details about myself as both the researcher and teacher. I have 11 years of experience teaching Spanish at the high school level and five years of teaching English as a Second Language part time at the college level. This is my eighth year of teaching Spanish 3. I also teach Spanish 4 and AP Spanish Language. One of
my goals since I began teaching the upper levels at our school has been to grow the Spanish 4 and AP programs. Part of the reason for this study was to see if a PBLL approach would appeal to and help my Spanish 3 students, and perhaps benefit the overall Spanish program.

3.4 Study Procedures and Design

For the past few years in our school district, the Spanish 3 curriculum has been based on six thematic units during the year. The district also provides student learning objectives and a final unit proficiency assessment in one presentational mode (speaking or writing), as well as a list of vocabulary to be learned and a grammar principle to be taught in context (Appendix A). The school district theme that was used for this study was Nature and the Outdoors, and the required presentational mode was a writing assessment.

To begin this action research and in order to help answer the first research question, both the experimental group (A1 and B4 classes) and the control group (classes A3 and A4) took an achievement pre-test that had 25 multiple choice test questions based on Unit 6 vocabulary and the grammatical structures of present perfect and conditional (Appendix B).

After the pre-test, each class began the 11-day unit. Two of the Spanish 3 classes (Group A) were the control group and were taught the unit using the teaching approach that I had used with the other five units during the school year. It was a theme-based approach, consisting of contextualized listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. (See Appendix M for the scope and sequence.) The other two classes comprised the experimental group (Group B) and were taught using a project-based language learning approach for the same 11 days. (See Appendix N.) I taught all four classes, which eliminated the variable of different instructors. At the end of the unit, both groups were given a longer version of the multiple-choice pre-test to assess any changes in individual achievement and also to see if there are any differences between
the two groups (Appendix C). It consisted of 65-question post-test. Fifty of those questions were based on the vocabulary and grammar concepts from the unit. Those 50 questions were used for comparison between the pre-test (Appendix B) and the post-test (Appendix C). The other 15 questions were based on a reading excerpt and a listening passage and were not used in the comparison.

The pre-test was given on the same day as the previous unit’s final test, which caused several students not to be able to take the pre-test because they took the whole class period to complete the Unit 5 test and ran out of time. There were also several students who were absent. In addition, several students were not listening to the instructions to take the pre-test for Unit 6 after they had finished the Unit 5 exam. For those reasons, 34 students did not take the Unit 6 pre-test. There were only 108 students that took the pre-test, 44 from the experimental group and 64 from the control group. Thus, the medians for the pre-test are based on the same classes, but on a smaller percentage of students (76%). All of the students took the post-test except for two students in A1 for a total of 142 students.

Student performance is also an aspect of the first research question. In order to help with this, all students were given the written presentational assessment required by our school district after the 11-day unit, and scored using a rubric developed by the school district and based on ACTFL (2012) standards as depicted in Table 1. The scores from the two groups of students were then compared by totaling the scores of both individual groups and comparing the two averages.
Table 2. Writing Rubric for Level 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4 - Mastery Exceeds Expectations</th>
<th>3 - Developing Meets Expectations</th>
<th>2 - Emerging Approaching Expectations</th>
<th>1 - Exploring Below Expectations</th>
<th>Score / Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensibility</td>
<td>Fully understandable with some errors that do not impede comprehensibility</td>
<td>Generally understood by sympathetic readers (in teacher)</td>
<td>Partially understandable with errors that force interpretation</td>
<td>Minimally or not comprehensible (Even by a sympathetic reader)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Use (Vocabulary, Expressions)</td>
<td>Extensive unit vocabulary and expressions.</td>
<td>Adequate unit vocabulary and some expressions</td>
<td>Some unit vocabulary and few expressions.</td>
<td>Minimal unit vocabulary and expressions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure / Accuracy</td>
<td>Excellent control of unit structures, few or no mistakes</td>
<td>General control of unit structures, some mistakes</td>
<td>Limited control of unit structures, several mistakes</td>
<td>No control of unit structures, many mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling and Punctuation</td>
<td>Few or no mistakes</td>
<td>Some mistakes</td>
<td>Several mistakes</td>
<td>Incomprehensible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Performance</td>
<td>Student creates simple, meaningful, and connected sentences.</td>
<td>Student creates simple, connected sentences.</td>
<td>Student writes complete sentences.</td>
<td>Student writes in fragmented sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total out of 20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second component of this study was based on the second research question and focused on how the students in the PBLL group felt about their learning experience. After the unit assessments were completed, they were given a six-question survey to gather information about student perceptions of the two different teaching approaches used during the school year, their perceived changes in writing and speaking abilities, and cultural understanding (Appendix D). They were also asked if they felt that they spoke more Spanish in the classroom during this unit and if they preferred the project-based learning in comparison to the other teaching style used during the year.

The third and fourth components of this study are separate ideas, but are related in that they are both reported observations from the teacher. Neither required specific set up or procedures, but I had to be diligent in both recording observations about student engagement and in writing down details of how each daily class was set up, what scaffolding was used, and also what problems were encountered. These observations will hopefully be of benefit in helping
other teachers see what steps were taken to set up the classes and what I learned from my mistakes and my successes.

In order for the reader to gain a clearer understanding between the teaching approaches and procedures that I used in both groups A and B for this unit, a brief scope and sequence for each group is shared in the appendices. (See appendices M and N.) Both of the scope and sequences are based on the recommended curriculum theme, “Nature and the Outdoors,” provided by our school district. Both of the teaching approaches included the required vocabulary and grammar, but the ways that they were included in the daily lessons varied; grammar and vocabulary played a more central role in the first scope and sequence, whereas in the second one, they acted as a supporting role.

3.5 Incorporating “True” Project-based Language Learning in Unit 6

Part of the set up for this unit involved ensuring that I set up my project-based language-learning unit based on the rigorous standards that have been established by the Buck Institute of Education (BIE) and National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC). It was essential that I not just add a project to my unit, but that the project be the core of the unit. If I did not use project-based language learning, then my research questions that are based on project-based language learning and their results would be greatly weakened.

As a reminder to the reader what project-based learning and language learning standards are, I have briefly summarized them here. Following the summary, I will show how my project aligned to each standard.

According to the BIE, the components for effective, gold-standard, project-based learning should include the following: 1) a project that is focused on student learning goals, including standards-based content and skills 2) a challenging problem or question to solve, 3) sustained
student inquiry, 4) authenticity, 5) student voice and choice, 6) reflection, 7) critique and revision, and 8) a public product (“What is project based learning,” n.d.). Similarly, the NFLRC suggests that PBLL have a series of activities, motivated by real-world needs, be driven by learner interest, have a high level of learner autonomy, include a product shared with a target audience, and invite critique, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and intercultural communication (Project-based learning, 2014). I have combined the similar categories provided by both BIE and NFLRC so that the discussion does not become repetitive.

3.5.1 A challenging problem to solve/ motivated by real world needs /authenticity. The challenge that my students had to solve was authentic and motivated by real world needs. Based on a fictitious letter written in Spanish from the Utah Office of Tourism (Appendix E), they were asked to help with advertising recreational sites and activities to tourists from Spanish-speaking countries. Although the letter was not truly authentic, the need for sustained and increased tourism in our state is (Wharton, 2014). The letter was specific in asking them to research the travel habits of tourists from Spanish-speaking countries, contact a travel agency in a Spanish-speaking country, and create a website, blog or other digital source of information telling tourists in Spanish about what our state has to offer.

In addition, part of the authentic problem they had to solve was to learn how to create a useful website. Several students expressed gratitude for accepting that challenge and being successful with it. Others commented on how actually writing a formal email to a travel agency in another country helped them understand how to write in the target language.

Although the project was not completely authentic, it was motivated by real world needs and had challenging problems to solve.
3.5.2 A public project/A product shared with a target audience. There were three products the students had to share: a letter to a travel agency, a website or blog, and arguments for a debate about the best places to visit in a Spanish-speaking country (Appendix H). Although the debate was only targeted for the classroom audience, the other two products were targeted at travel agencies in Spanish-speaking countries. Thus, this project fulfilled these standards. The students also shared their website/blog links with the Utah Office of Tourism, which was an additional target audience.

3.5.3 Student voice and choice/high level of learner autonomy. The students had some voice and choice in this project, but could have had more. Based on the interest survey (Appendix D), I placed them in groups; they did not choose their group members. But they got to choose their group roles and norms. To guide them in their roles, I included a list of each role’s responsibilities (Appendix F), which also took away from student choice. I felt, though, that it helped scaffold the activity and was necessary.

Another area that both restricted and gave student choice was the letter from the Utah Office of Tourism, which outlined what information was required. But then the students got to choose the format they would share their product in and which country they were going to research and send their email to.

3.5.4 A project that is focused on student learning goals, including standards-based content and skills/critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and intercultural communication. The project that the students focused on required collaboration within their groups. They each chose the role of project manager, research leader, creative expert, or technology specialist. They each had responsibilities to fulfill and had to make decisions, both individually and collectively. The project also made it necessary for students to be creative with the website and learn about
technology. They had to communicate with each other and also interculturally with the travel agencies. Because the agencies did not reciprocate the correspondence, it was only partially effective. But overall, the project did fulfill this standard.

3.5.5 Reflection/critique/revision. This standard is one that needed great improvement in its utilization, but was minimized because of lack of planning on my part and lack of time. The goal was to have the students review each other’s emails to the travel agencies before they sent them and then have me review them, but there was not enough time to review other groups’ emails. In the end, I was the only one who read through them before they were sent to the travel agencies.

Although there was not daily reflection about what the groups had accomplished that day, I did incorporate interviews with the group leaders about how their groups were working out and how the project was going. This was a partial reflection was effective in helping them stay on track and try to improve.

One reflection area that was implemented in this unit was that before the groups sent off their website or blog links to the travel agencies, I had the students critique one other project based on a rubric about what they liked and did not like about the project (Appendix I). After the evaluation, they were to make changes based on the critique. This could have been improved by a more specific rubric and more time for revision so that they could receive feedback from each other.

One last area that fits in this standard is that after the project was over, I had them do a reflection about their project and group work using a reflection sheet (Appendix K).

The implementation of this standard could have been strengthened in three ways: 1) by having more time for daily reflection, 2) by me giving the students more time to critique each
others work and revise, and 3) by me giving them better scaffolding and rubrics to critique each other’s work.

3.5.6 Sustained student inquiry/activities driven by student interest. This element was also included in the unit, could have had a stronger presence. I dictated what the project would be about and they were not given the freedom to investigate a topic of special interest to them. On the other hand, they were asked to choose places in Utah that interested them and investigate Spanish-speaking countries that they found interesting. What increased their interest was that most students knew someone who had gone to one of the countries that they chose, they had gone there themselves, or they had learned fascinating things about it. In fact, some students were passionate about their choices which was evidence of student interest.

Something else that helped with student interest was that part of the project dealt with creating a website or blog. This interested many students, but it did not pique the interest of all. Some students seem to generally lack interest with almost any activity that is presented. That is where having the students, each student, find something that really interests them could become powerful in their learning.

Overall, all aspects of project-based language learning were incorporated into Unit 6 in some way.

3.6 Instruments and Data Collection

In order to answer the research questions listed at the beginning of this chapter, I used five instruments for data collection:

1. A 25-question, multiple-choice pre-test consisting of eight vocabulary and 17 grammar questions based on unit vocabulary and the present perfect tense (Appendix A)
2. A 65-question post-test consisting of 20 vocabulary and 30 grammar questions, as well as five reading and five listening questions, which were not used in the data comparison (Appendix B)

3. A performance-based written presentation assessment provided by the school district (Figure 1)

4. A six-question survey about how students enjoyed the unit and about their perceived abilities in writing and speaking Spanish (Appendix D)

5. A daily teacher observation journal documenting the successes and challenges faced by the students and the teacher and the details of setting up the PBLL unit.

Data for the pre-test and post-test were collected using gradecam.com, an online program provided by my school that scans multiple choice tests, grades them, and analyzes the results for each student and each class. Gradecam.com provided the median for each class for both the pre-test and post-test and then I compared the medians to see growth that had taken place in each class. I then compared the growth of the experimental group and the control group using a t-test to see if there was a significant statistical difference.

The performance-based written presentational assessment was given on the eleventh day of the unit. They were graded by the same teacher, using the proficiency-based rubric shown earlier, which was provided by the school district. I used descriptive statistics and totaled the scores of both the experimental and control groups and compared the averages.

The day after the final assessment, I gave the students in the experimental group the six-question survey using Google Forms and the students took those using our department Chromebooks in class. Google Forms provides detailed charts showing the percentages of the answers chosen and is a useful tool in analyzing the results of the first five survey questions.
The last survey question was open-ended and asked the students to name things that they liked and disliked the most about the unit. It also asked them to name activities they felt helped them the most. After I carefully read through each of the student responses, I noticed that six prevalent themes emerged: working in groups, speaking Spanish in their groups, working on vocabulary with games, working on the website, writing the email, and doing the overall project. I then reread the responses and categorized them according to the themes.

The last instrument I used to gather information was the teacher observation journal. I used it each day to write down successes and challenges that the students and I faced. They were notes written down daily in a Word Document. The overall purpose of the journal was to keep track of what activities or parts of activities worked well or did not work well and to log the reactions of students as we worked through the project-based unit together. At the end of the unit, I categorized the observations into two divisions: challenges and successes.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This action research study focused on two main areas: determining how project-based language learning might affect students and how teachers might implement it in their classroom. It specifically sought to see if PBLL affected student learning and if students enjoyed project-based learning. It is hoped that the results and discussion in the following two chapters will provide insight into the research questions.
Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the data that was gathered using the five data collection instruments listed at the end of Chapter 3. They will describe the data from the pre-test and post-test, and the results from the performance-based writing assessment. Also included are the data and the categorized findings from the student survey and the teacher observation journal.

4.2 Pre-test and Post-test Analysis (Instruments 1 and 2)

The following table shows the average percentages for the pre-test and post-test and the growth that each group showed and is based solely on the students who took both tests, which was 76%.

*Table 3. Pre-test and post-test means for the achievement test.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean for pre-test</th>
<th>Mean for post-test</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 experimental class</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4 experimental class</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>94.5%</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total experimental group</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3 control class</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4 control class</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>93.6%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total control group</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All classes</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table we can see that the experimental class A1 started with the lowest pre-test score and achieved the lowest post-test score, and, as is most often expected, they had the largest growth with 50.1%. B4, the second experimental group had a growth of 44.5%. When I averaged the growth of the two classes for the experimental group, the growth was 46.9%. The class that started with the highest pre-test score was control group class A3 and it had the smallest growth.
with 38%. A4, the second control group class, had a growth of 41.9%. The average for the group of the two classes for the control group was 39.6%. The difference between the averages for the experimental group and the control group was 7.3%. According to a t-test, p=.032, the difference is statistically significant.

4.3 Performance-Based Writing Assessment (instrument 3)

The performance-based writing assessment for this unit was provided by our school district. The writing prompt is in English and is adapted culturally when needed and used by most language teachers in the district. Rarely do students reach a perfect score of 20 on our district assessment because, as noted on the rubric, a 4 in each category represents going beyond the expectation and most students are able to just reach the anticipated 3. Because of this, a 15 would be considered a perfect score. Most native speakers should be in the 4 range and are capable of reaching a 20 overall, which exceeds expectations in all categories, but students who are native Spanish speakers tended to be conservative in both the content and the quantity of their expressions. This caused their scores to be lower than what they could have achieved.

The writing assessment prompt the students were given is shown in Figure 1 and the writing rubric that was used to assess the writing is Table 2.
You have been asked by *Grandes espacios*, a Spanish outdoor magazine to write an online article about your last adventure outdoors. The company wants to hear from Spanish-speaking students across the world as they highlight some of the great things to do on the planet. There is a cash prize for the best articles submitted and, of course, you will be published in the upcoming edition!

You will want to include the following:

- A description of what you did on your last outdoor adventure
- An explanation of what you would do on your next outdoor adventure

Add anything else you feel will help you win the cash prize.

The following table shows the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation for the four classes, first listing those of all four classes combined in the second column of the chart. The third and fourth columns show the mean, median, mode and standard deviation for the two classes from the experimental group, with the fifth column showing the totals for both experimental classes. The last three columns show the totals individually for the two control group classes and then the totals for the whole control group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All 4 classes</th>
<th>A1 experimental group</th>
<th>B4 experimental group</th>
<th>Total experimental group</th>
<th>A3 control group</th>
<th>A4 control group</th>
<th>Total control group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>13.17</td>
<td>12.34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.07</td>
<td>13.45</td>
<td>13.03</td>
<td>13.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIAN</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODE</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that the difference in the results in the two groups is small. The average score for the experimental group was 13.07 compared to 13.26 in the control group.
students’ scores can be found in Appendix L.) The t-test resulted in a p value above the limit of .05 (p = .661).

4.4 Student Survey (Instrument 4)

The student survey was given on the last day of the unit to the students in the experimental group, which was the same day as the Unit 6 exam. Sixty-one of the 72 students took the survey. The purpose was for them to share their opinions of the project-based language unit as to whether they liked it or not and how they felt it affected their learning. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2. Post-unit survey questions

1. In comparison to previous units taught by Sra. Collier, I felt that how she taught unit 6, Nature and the Outdoors, with a main project was _________ than the previous units during the year.
   - much more enjoyable
   - more enjoyable
   - the same
   - less enjoyable
   - much less enjoyable

2. I feel like I spoke in Spanish more with this unit in comparison to past units.
   - strongly agree
   - agree
   - somewhat agree
   - somewhat disagree
   - disagree
   - strongly disagree

3. I feel that my speaking and writing abilities in Spanish __________ during this unit of study.
   - increased greatly
   - increased some
   - stayed the same
   - decreased some
   - decreased greatly

4. I feel that this unit helped my cultural understanding about Spanish-speaking countries increase.
   - strongly agree
   - agree
   - somewhat agree
   - somewhat disagree
   - disagree
   - strongly disagree

5. I prefer the way unit 6 was taught (with a group project) compared to how previous units were taught.
   - strongly agree
   - agree
   - somewhat agree
   - somewhat disagree
   - disagree
   - strongly disagree

6. Why did you like or dislike this unit? Please be specific.

4.4.1 Survey Questions 1-5. The following five figures show the results for the first five survey questions with more details below each one. (See Figures 3 through 7.)
According to the results of this question, a total of 50.8% of the students found project-based learning more enjoyable than how previous units were taught. The percentage that found this unit less enjoyable was 24.4%, while those who had no preference was 24.6%. The key point of this chart indicates that many students would probably enjoy additional units taught through project-based learning.

These data from Figure 4 show that a majority of the students, 75.1%, felt that they spoke more Spanish than in previous units. The percentage of students who disagreed in some measure
with the statement from Question 2 was 24.9%. These percentages indicate that project-based learning was a possible tool to help them stay in the target language. Some evidence that shows a possible cause for the 75.1% for this question can be found in the teacher observation journal with the following comments:

*May 8: It really helped that I talked to the team leaders and reminded them all of the word board.*

*Some students are really trying to stay in Spanish.*

*May 10: Two girls in one group weren’t doing that great speaking Spanish, but after talking with them, they are re-invigorated and recommitted.*

*Figure 5. Results for survey question 3.*

From Figure 5, it is evident that a majority of the students felt that their speaking and writing abilities increased in some measure with this unit. The total percentage was 70.5%. On the other hand, 27.9% felt that they remained the same. Only 1.6% felt that they greatly decreased. These results indicate that a majority of the students felt that this unit helped them in their speaking and writing abilities. Some evidence for reasons behind these feelings can be
found in the student comments found in section 4.4.2 under the subheading *Speaking Spanish in groups*.

**Figure 6. Results for survey question 4.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I strongly agree (18%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree (52.5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I somewhat agree (19.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I somewhat agree (4.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree (3.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I strongly disagree (1.6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to notice that according to the Figure 6, the total for students who felt that their cultural understanding increased was 90.2%. However, three of the percentages in Figure 6 show that some students disagreed with the statement with a total of 9.8%. These results indicate that a majority of the students felt that their cultural understanding about Spanish-speaking countries increased with this unit.
Figure 7. Results for survey question 5

The data from Figure 7 show that when the students were asked if they preferred learning about nature and the outdoors through a project, 62.3% said they do prefer it, while, 37.7% said they do not. This question is similar to Survey Question 1 where students indicated if they found the way this unit was taught more enjoyable in comparison to previous units. The percentage for positive responses for that question was 50.8%, while 62.3% for Question 5. With an 11.5% difference, it is interesting to note that although some students may prefer the PBLL method, they might not enjoy it as much despite preferring it.

4.4.2 Survey Question 6. Survey Question 6 was open-ended and contained two parts: 1) What did you like or dislike about this unit? and 2) What activities helped you most? Please be specific. After carefully reading through the students’ responses, I found that they could be categorized into six themes: working in groups, speaking Spanish in their groups, working on vocabulary with games, working on the website, writing the email, and doing the overall project. The results for the questions are listed in Table 5 below.
Table 5. Responses to Survey Question 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th># OF POSITIVE RESPONSES</th>
<th># OF NEGATIVE RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working in groups</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking Spanish in groups</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on vocabulary and grammar with games</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on the website</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing the email</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing the overall project/unit</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the total 73 responses that were given, some were lengthy and had multiple items in a single response, while a few were very general. The number of categorized positive responses, which were things they liked and that they thought were helpful, was 51. The total of responses that listed things they did not like was 22.

*Working in groups.* Based on the data, two thirds of the student comments about working in groups were favorable. One student said, “I liked sitting by people I like to talk to and being able to learn in groups and figure out things together.” Another commented, “I liked having a group help with problems” and another said, “I liked being able to split the work instead of having to do it all by myself.” Some students do not always enjoy working in groups, but found this one to be positive. One student commented, “I really liked being in the groups. I felt it was helpful, although I normally hate being in groups because I carry everyone on my back. I really enjoyed this group and how well we worked together. I also really enjoyed how we did a majority of the work in class.”
Although some students enjoyed working in groups, one third of the comments about the group work were negative. One reason that some students did not like the project work was because it was difficult to communicate in Spanish in their groups. One student said, “I liked being able to spend a lot of time with my group and speaking Spanish, but I did not like that we were in a group because there was a lot of miscommunication and it was hard to get things done.” Another one commented, “It was really hard to speak all in Spanish. It made it hard to communicate ideas.”

Another suggested reason that students seemed to not like working in groups was because there were sometimes team members who do little or nothing to contribute and the more dedicated students were the ones left to carry out the work of the project. “I didn’t really like the group project because a lot of the members in my group didn’t do their homework so it was hard to get the project done and I ended up doing most of it myself,” said one student. Another adds, “I never liked group projects and I never will. Grades should never be shared with others. It ended up me and one other person working while everyone else slacked off.”

Based on both the negative and positive comments about group work, it is possible that more scaffolding for group work and communicating in Spanish would be beneficial in making collaboration in teams a positive experience for more students.

*Speaking Spanish in groups.* Four students commented negatively about having to speak only Spanish in their groups, while six spoke favorably of the experience. The comments shared in this section are representative of other student comments. One student said, “I didn’t like how it was hard to speak in your group in Spanish. It was somewhat hard to tell them to do their tasks sometimes.” Another said, “It was hard to talk in Spanish the whole entire time.” Both of these
students mentioned it being hard to communicate in Spanish, but they did not say that it was impossible. Again, more scaffolding could help with group communication.

Based on student comments and teacher observation, many students found that doing the project while staying in the target language was difficult, but many students found this to be a tool for improving their Spanish. One student said, “I loved this unit a lot because it helped me to more develop the skills of speaking Spanish in a work setting and to be able to improvise with a group.” Another commented, “I couldn’t always understand or tell others what I wanted to do, but it made me work harder in the language.” This student took the difficulty as a challenge and worked harder because of it.

Working on vocabulary and grammar with games. All nine students who mentioned the vocabulary and grammar games spoke positively about them. Two examples are “I liked the vocab activities that we played games with and the way we studied vocab” and “I enjoyed the games.” The students did not specify why they liked the games, but only indicated that they were enjoyable. It should be noted that vocabulary and grammar games were interwoven into the project to keep them in context and make them applicable to the situation.

Working on the website. Five of the seven student comments that were centered on liking or disliking working on the website were positive, while two were negative. Although two students said, “I didn’t really like how we had to make the website” and “the websites were really hard to make,” others said, “I liked the task of making the website” and “I liked the website the most because of the payoff of all the work that was done.” Observations from the teacher journal corroborate the student positive student comments about making the website. One comment on May 10 said, “Several groups were excited to show me their websites. I asked
one group that was especially proud if it was their first time making a website and they said yes. They were very happy.”

**Working on the email.** This category had the fewest comments with only five. Four students liked writing the email or felt that it helped them with their Spanish. One student wrote, “Writing the email helped me the most because it was my first one in Spanish.” Another said, “I liked how we were supposed to contact an agency outside the U.S. and we had to try to seem polite to communicate with them.” The negative comment was, “I thought the email was pointless.” The comments indicate student attitude, which influences how students feel about classroom tasks.

**Doing the overall project/unit.** The nine comments that talked about the overall project were almost balanced in number. Of the four negative comments, one student said, “I hated the project. I don’t like being in groups.” Another said, “I didn’t like how everything was based off of one project.” Of the positive comments, one student said, “I liked the variety of the unit and all the stuff we did different.” Another said, “The project itself was very helpful and it helped feeling like we were actually accomplishing something!” These comments suggest that students who had negative feelings toward the project each had very different reasons for disliking it, such as group work or the weight of their grade that was dependent on the project. Other comments suggest that students liked the authenticity of the task and that they liked the variety.

Overall, the 73 student comments about Unit 6 were more positive than negative, indicating that a project-based learning approach appeals to many students. Based on the negative student comments, it would be beneficial to identify changes could be made in order to make it a more positive experience for a greater percentage of students. This will be discussed in Chapter 5.
4.5 Teacher Observation Journal (Instrument 5)

The observations that were logged daily were categorized into the two groups of challenges and successes.

4.5.1 Challenges and problems. The challenges and problems that were written in the teacher observation journal were read carefully at the end of Unit 6, looking for patterns in the comments. They were then categorized into the following areas: 1) lack of teacher knowledge and experience about preparing the PBLL unit, 2) lack of time to implement all activities, and 3) staying in the target language.

*Lack of knowledge and experience.* The first challenge was based on lack of teacher knowledge and experience in executing a PBLL approach and in setting up the activities. The following journal entries are evidence of this problem, often showing that greater knowledge and experience would have been beneficial in avoiding some of the mentioned teacher quandaries and challenges.

April 20: When deciding groups, what should I do with odd numbers of students? What should I do with students who don’t like anything on the interest survey? What should I do with students who were absent for the survey?

April 27: I should have had them cc me on the email to the travel agencies.

I should have given examples of travel websites that are only online and others that are actual agencies with someone who might respond to the email.

April 27: I should have connected the required school district vocab more to project.

May 2: I should have scaffolded the debate more by giving them a full example and not just ideas.

May 10: I should have given them the presentation rubric earlier.
May 15: The presentations got a little boring when they just read from their sites—what to do?

I should have given them a good example of a presentation.

What to do if people were absent on presentation day?

They should have done a daily reflection on their group work.

I should make changes on the rubric—more area for the presentation, add grammar

As can be seen in the recorded observations, a lack of teacher experience and understanding created obstacles in the execution and success of some activities.

_Lack of time._ The next challenge I faced was not having sufficient time for different classroom activities in the PBLL unit. The following comments from the journal illustrate this.

April 20: I tried to do too much in one class.

April 24: Not enough time today

April 26: They didn’t have time to revise each other’s emails.

May 2: I thought the debates would take about 40 minutes, but they took the whole class period.

The lack of time category can be tied to the lack of teacher experience. As activities are adapted and repeated in following units, challenges caused by the lack of time can be overcome.

_Staying in the target language._ As I taught this Unit 6, the importance of the teacher staying in the target language was evident. I was the example. It was also important that I encourage the students to speak in Spanish and encourage the team leaders and native Spanish speakers to stay in the target language. The following observations support this idea.

April 26: The team leader kept them on track.

English usage had to be monitored by me—We used word the wall a lot today.
May 1: It made me sad to hear a majority of the students talking in English in their groups in the A1 class. I tried to encourage them and told the team leaders to mark them down, but the team leaders were part of the problem. I will talk to the team leaders next class.

May 2: I loved how they debated back and forth in their imperfect Spanish.

May 8: I set the example by speaking Spanish.

May 8: Today I interviewed the team leaders and it seemed so much more natural to interview them. It was real. I have interviewed them for “tests,” during the year, but they seemed nervous when I did it for the test because they were getting a grade. This time they weren’t as nervous talking to me in Spanish as I asked them how their groups were progressing with the projects and how it was going speaking Spanish in their groups.

May 9: It really helped that I talked to the team leaders and reminded them all of the word board. Some students are really trying to stay in Spanish and others are goof offs. One native speaker loves to be a clown in English and wants to be loved by all. I took him in the hall and told him that I needed his help. He said, “The other students don’t understand me when I speak Spanish.” This made me realize that I need to talk to my native Spanish speakers about how they are needed as good examples and that they should speak more slowly also and help their classmates.

From the reported observations, it is evident that in order for a class to stay in the target language, a team effort is necessary. All team players are needed, including the teacher, the native speakers, and the rest of the class. It is also evident that consistent effort is necessary.

In addition to the challenges of a lack of teacher knowledge and experience in preparing a PBLL unit, a lack of time to implement all activities, and staying in the target language, other obstacles should perhaps be taken into consideration. Based on the observation journal, one challenge centered on technology issues, such as what to do if certain websites are blocked or if
there is not access to computers each day. Another recorded challenge was what to do when groups or individual students finished working on an activity or the project before others.

As teachers engage in project-based language learning, there will be obstacles like the ones I encountered. But as teachers share ideas and solutions and experienced is gained, they can help each other build lessons that flow more seamlessly.

4.5.2 Successes. Each day I noticed different successes in the classroom and I categorized them into the following areas: 1) high levels of student enthusiasm, 2) students working well in groups, 3) increased effort in speaking Spanish, and 4) good engagement in authentic activities.

*Student enthusiasm.* From the very beginning of the unit, I noticed that many students expressed enthusiasm. Some students seemed excited about writing to travel agencies in Spanish-speaking countries. One popular senior exclaimed, “Dude!” when he found out what we were doing. That meant he was very excited, which excited the others. They were also very enthusiastic the day we did our team debates about which Spanish-speaking country has the best places to visit in the outdoors. Some students were very dramatic as they debated and pulled the whole class into their enthusiasm. The following are other comments taken from the observation journal that are evidence of student enthusiasm.

April 20: They got excited when I put them in their groups and they got to choose their roles today.

May 2: They seemed to enjoy the debates today. The kids really got into it in B4. They said how much they loved it.

May 10: Several groups were excited to show me their websites.

From comments written in the teacher observation journal and from the student responses on the survey, it is obvious that student enthusiasm existed among some students during Unit 6.
Students working well in groups. Although some team leaders were not the best examples at times, as noted in the challenges section, most worked hard on the project and kept their teams on track. In addition, the group members seemed to divide the work up equally and were involved in writing together. The following comments from the observation support this.

April 20: They wrote their norms together in Spanish and read their responsibilities in Spanish.

April 24: They were engaged in writing together.

April 26: They divided up the work and some searched while others wrote.

Increased Effort in Speaking Spanish. One comment that I wrote one day was “I love hearing the students trying their best to communicate in the broken Spanish.” Everyday I would hear individual students talking to their team members in Spanish without me monitoring them, which did not happen with previous units. But with this unit I heard them making concerted efforts to stay in the target language. On May 8, I wrote, “They were having fun speaking together in Spanish.” It was fun to see them put for such a great effort and have fun doing it. Also on May 8, I interviewed the team leaders individually in Spanish to see how their groups were doing and I wrote, “The students didn’t seem nervous like they often do when I interview them. It was a real chat and they seemed to really want to communicate.”

Good engagement in authentic activities. As the students wrote the emails to the travel agencies and made their websites, I noticed that most of the students were working diligently. On May 10, I observed, “Several groups were very excited to show me their websites they had made.”

On May 15, I wrote, as the students shared their group websites with the class, I wrote, “Students paid more attention than normal in listening to other student presentations today.”
observations can also be corroborated with student comments as seen in Question 6 of the student survey.

Each day in class, it was fulfilling to see the various successes that the students were having as they worked in their groups and engaged in their projects in Spanish.

4.6 Chapter Summary

The data for this action research was collected using five instruments: the pre-test and post-test, the results from the performance-based writing assessment, the findings from the student survey, and an observation journal.

All students, in both the experimental and control groups, progressed in achievement from the pre-test to the post-test. The average for all for classes was 42.8% in their achievement, advancing from 50.2% to 93%. The experimental group went from 45.7% to 92.3%, progressing 46.9%, while the control group moved from 53.9% to 93.5%, gaining 39.6%. The difference of the growth between the two groups was 7.6%, with the experimental group showing more growth. The results from the t-test showed were statistically significant at the .05 level (p=.032).

The writing performance test showed that both groups, the experimental and control, scored quite similarly. The experimental group averaged 13.07 out of 15 expected points, while the control group scored slightly higher with 13.26. The t-test resulted in a p value of .661, which is not statistically significant.

The student survey showed that the students preferred project-based learning more than how I had taught the previous units. The first question showed that 50.8% enjoyed this unit in comparison to others, while 24.4% had no preference, and 24.6% enjoyed the previous method. The second question showed that 75.1% felt that they spoke more Spanish with this unit in comparison to 24.9%, who felt that they spoke less. The third question was similar to question 2,
but asked them how they felt about a change in their writing abilities, with 70.5% feeling that their writing abilities had increased and 27.9% feeling that they had remained the same. Only 1.6% felt that they had decreased. Question 4 probed the students’ perception of cultural understanding. The largest percentage found in this survey was 90.2%, which was the figure of those who felt that their cultural understanding had increased with this unit and only 9.8 felt that it had not. The fifth question asked the students to compare the teaching approach of unit 6, which was project-based, to how the previous units were taught and which method they preferred. The students preferred the project-based learning, 62.3% to 37.7%. Question 6 was an open-ended question and asked the students to report things that they liked, did not like, and things they thought were helpful during the unit. Of the total comments, 51 listed items that were positive and 22 listed negative items.

The last area of data that was collected was in the form of teacher observations about class and problems and success. The common problems were, lack of teacher knowledge and experience with preparing the PBLL unit, student-interest survey problems, a lack of time to implement all activities, grading concerns, and staying in the target language. The success areas included good student enthusiasm, students working well in groups, an increased effort in speaking Spanish, and good engagement in authentic activities.

The data collected through these five instruments shows overall positive results from doing one unit of project-based language learning.
Chapter 5 : Discussion & Implications

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this action research project was to create and implement a project-based language-learning unit and analyze the results and implications. Although this project was done in only one classroom, it was also intended to benefit other teachers who also might want to try this approach and share some ideas that worked and some challenges that can be overcome. This chapter will discuss the findings from Chapter 4 and its implications.

This study began with four research questions, which were each based on how project-based language learning affected another variable, for example, student learning, student engagement, the classroom, and the teacher. In Chapter 5, I will discuss my research questions, share my hypotheses, perceived outcomes and analysis, followed by a section concerning possible pedagogical implications. In the last two sections, I will provide suggestions for further research and the conclusion.

5.2 Reflection on the Research Questions

This study began with four research questions:

RQ1: Does PBLL seem to affect student learning in terms of achievement and performance?

RQ 2: How do students’ perceptions of effectiveness and enjoyment differ between PBLL and existing curriculum?

RQ 3: How might PBLL affect engagement in high school Spanish classes?

RQ4: What are the challenges in implementing PBLL in a high school Spanish classroom?

Following is a discussion about each question, my ideas about what I thought the outcomes would be, what the results were, and reflections implications.

5.2.1 RQ1. Does PBLL seem to affect student learning in terms of achievement and performance? This question looked at both an achievement test and a writing performance
assessment. First, I will discuss the results of the achievement test and then the performance assessment.

When I first decided to teach two of my Spanish 3 classes using project-based language learning, I worried that they would not learn as much vocabulary or understand grammar as well as the two control group classes where we did more practices with the unit vocabulary about nature and the outdoors and grammar concepts, which were the conditional and present perfect. In both the experimental group classes and the control group classes, I presented the vocabulary and grammar in context, but I was concerned that PBLL would affect the acquisition of vocabulary and correct grammar usage in a negative way in the experimental classes. Because of this, my hypothesis was that the experimental group would not score as high as the control group on the achievement test. Although the hypothesis turned out to be true, the difference between the two groups was only .4%. This seems to indicate that the PBLL unit did not have a negative impact on vocabulary and grammar understanding, but did not increase it either. These results do not correlate with several studies found in the literature review, whose outcomes indicated that PBL/PBLL can help increase achievement test scores (Li, 2010; Sadeghi, Biniaz & Soleimani, 2016; Soleimani, Rihimi & Sadeghi, 2015; Tuncay & Ekizoglu, 2010). However, this current study agrees with other research presented in the literature review that shows that there is no difference in student achievement when PBL/PBLL is used (BaŞ and Beyhan, 2010).

However, the difference between the growth of experimental group and the control group on the achievement test was an unexpected result in relation to my hypothesis. Because A1 was paired with B4 to form the experimental group and A3 was paired with A4 as the control group, I believed that the growth would be similar between the two groups due to the groups being balanced based on previous class scores. But the experimental group showed more growth than
the control group, growing 43.5%, while the control group grew 39.4%, with a significant t-test result of \( p = .032 \). This implies that project-based language learning does not inhibit learning the vocabulary and grammar. In fact, it has the potential to increase it. This coincides with studies done by Li (2010) Sadeghi, Biniaz & Soleimani (2016), Soleimani, Rihimi & Sadeghi, (2015), and Tuncay & Ekizoglu (2010).

I will now discuss the writing performance assessment. My hypothesis was that the experimental group would perform better on the writing assessment, but this was not the case. Although the mean for the control group at 13.26 was slightly higher than the experimental group at 13.07, there was no significant difference with a t-test result of \( p = .667 \). It appears that project-based language learning did not affect the writing performance negatively or positively.

Although it is true that some studies indicate that PBL/PBLL can enhance writing performance (Sadeghi, Biniaz, & Soleimani, 2016), the writing performance assessment for this project was only one small part of the unit assessment. I did not have the students give feedback on individual writing assignments in class and make improvements, which would have been valuable preparation for the writing assessment. If I had implemented that PBLL technique, I might have seen different results between the control group and the experimental group.

5.2.2 RQ2. How do students’ perceptions of effectiveness and enjoyment differ between PBLL and existing curriculum? Again, this question has two parts: perceptions of effectiveness and perceptions of enjoyment. It probably would have been more effective if this question had been divided into two parts. I will first discuss the students’ perceptions of effectiveness, followed by their perceptions of enjoyment of the unit.

Survey Question 3 asked students about how they felt PBLL had helped them with their Spanish, specifically their speaking and writing abilities. I believed that PBLL would help them,
and the student responses corroborated this hypothesis. At 60.5%, a majority of the students felt that their abilities in writing and speaking had increased and only 27.9% felt that they had not. Many students expressed how they thought it was hard to speak in their groups in Spanish, but that this effort had helped them improve. I feel that a push to help them stay in the target language as well as them needing to use their language in authentic situations aided in this perceived growth. The results in this area align with results found in the study mentioned in the literature review by Fragaulis (2007).

The second part of this survey question asked how the students enjoyed this PBLL unit in comparison to previous units that I taught. I predicted that some would like it and some would not, but more liked it than I thought would. Survey Question 1 asked the students if they enjoyed the PBLL unit more than previous units and 50.8% said they did, with 24.6% saying they preferred the previous way. Twenty-four percent said they did not care. High levels of student enjoyment of the PBL/PBLL approaches is also shown in studies shared in the literature review (Holms, 2017, Tuncay & Ekizoglu, 2010).

It would have shed more light on this area if I had asked, “Why do you prefer the PBLL approach or the previous way of teaching?” so that I had more understanding of the reasoning behind their preferences. Some students commented to me that it was nice to do something different from the other units. Others indicated in their comments about the overall unit that they prefer to only be responsible for their own work. It is possible that the percentage of students who did not enjoy the PBLL unit would enjoy it more in the future as they are given more choice and voice in the project and more scaffolding is done for communication and for work responsibility. This belief is corroborated by other studies done on the subject (Fragaulis, 2007; Tuncay & Ekizoglu, 2010).
5.2.3 RQ3. How might PBLL affect engagement in high school Spanish classes? This question was answered using the teacher observation journal. In this question, engagement means that students are actively involved in the activities and in the project.

My hypothesis was that students would be more engaged because of the authenticity and the individual responsibility for their groups. From what I observed with most groups, that is what happened. As I walked around helping the different groups, most students were on task and seemed to be sincerely trying to help with the project. It was especially rewarding to me to hear them engaged in the language while working together, which did not happen in the control group classes. One reason for this might have been that the PBLL classes held each other responsible for speaking Spanish and that I was more diligent at reminding them to stay in Spanish as they communicated in their groups. Another possibility is that these students seemed sincerely interested in the different tasks.

One aspect that I have not mentioned earlier is that three or four out of the 18 groups that worked on projects were less engaged than in previous units. Because of the freedom they were given, they chose to be off task. If I was not being a taskmaster, they would get on their phones, chat in English, or sit and do nothing while only one person did the work. Thus, my hypothesis that they would be more engaged with PBLL was correct for most of the students, but not all. Earnest student engagement was also demonstrated in studies done by Fougler & Jimenez-Silva (2007) and Tuncay & Ekizoglu (2010).

5.2.4 RQ 4 What are the challenges in implementing PBLL in a high school Spanish classroom? The challenges that I documented in the teacher observation journal can be categorized into three areas: 1) lack of teacher knowledge and experience about preparing the PBLL unit, 2) lack of time to implement all activities, and 3) staying in the target language.
Following are some thoughts about these challenges and some suggestions to overcome them.

First, the lack of teacher knowledge and experience was a big challenge. I had never done a PBLL unit before and had to rely on advice that I found on the Internet because I did not know anyone personally that had done what I was trying. I searched for lesson plans and activities for PBLL units, but found scattered ideas and pieces of lessons. I attended a PBLL training and gained knowledge about PBLL lessons, but had never observed a unit or even a class taught using this teaching approach. I prepared my scope and sequence focusing on the end product, which was the website promoting tourism in Utah. But now I have some experience, which I can use as I prepare other PBLL units. And in hope of helping other teachers in the same situation, I will share my unit and PBLL ideas. As more and more teachers create language units using PBLL and share them, a greater bank of knowledge to improve our teaching will be created.

The second challenge I documented was the lack of time to implement all of the PBLL activities. This challenge is similar to the challenge that some teachers in the literature review encountered (Fang & Warschauer, 2004). These researches found it frustrating to have an increased amount of time required to implement PBLL. Similarly, I found that more time was required in its implementation. Before I began the unit, which was our last unit of the year, I realized that I was on a tight time schedule before the school year ended. I had thought that ten 80-minute class periods would be sufficient to do each of the activities I had planned in the unit, but it was not enough. I had one extra day to give the unit assessment, which was helpful. In hindsight, I believe 12-13 class periods would have been better. The need for more time was indeed a frustration.

A third challenge, which was not mentioned previously and yet was mentioned in a few comments in the teacher observation journal, was a lack of student participation. This challenge
exists in most high school classes, whether they are language classes, PBL classes, or not. There are always students who are hard to engage for a variety of reasons. This is where I believe more choice and voice would have played an important role, engaging students in things that they are interested in. This would have had the potential to give a desire to students who missed class because they were not interested in coming to class, but it would not have helped the problem of what to do with team members who missed because of extracurricular activities, sickness, or family vacations. Some possible solutions would have been to modify their part in the project, excuse them from certain activities, or have them participate through Google docs.

One last challenge that was not discussed earlier but that was recorded in one or two comments in the teacher observation journal, as well as in student comments from the survey, was having groups and students finish activities and the project at different times. This is also a challenge that is present in high school classes in general. Several students commented that they had too much time to do the activities in their groups and then were bored. I noticed this as I worked with the students, but at the same time I noticed that other groups were not finished. I wondered if it because those groups had not been on task earlier or if it was because they truly needed more time. It would have been helpful if I had guided them more by having them set specific goals for the day and mark them off as they reach them. That would not take away from their voice and choice. Again, it would have helped to give them examples to guide their goal setting. Another idea to help groups who had extra time would have been to have supporting activities ready for them to use. One last idea that I could have implemented would have been to have the groups and students who are finished first help those who were not finished.
5.3 Pedagogical Implications In the Foreign Language Classroom

What does this action research study mean for foreign language classrooms? Based on this one study, it is apparent that project-based language learning appeals to many students as an approach to learning a language. It is also evident that PBLL can enhance learning and engagement in the language. It is true, however, that not all students enjoy PBLL, but it is also true that there is not a definite language learning approach that satisfies each learner with the various learning styles. I suggest that PBLL be used intermittently throughout the scholastic year, perhaps with every other unit in order to give variety to the teaching approaches and to appeal to different types of learners. In addition, some topics lend themselves more easily to an authentic project than others so teachers could identify which units would be more powerfully taught using PBLL. As PBLL is incorporated into our curriculum, steps can be taken to change how roles of both students and teachers are viewed and make those roles more powerful learning tools.

5.3.1 The role of the student. The major focus of project-based learning is to turn the learning focus from the teacher to the student. Based on this action research study, I suggest that it be ensured that the students are given increased responsibility for their own learning by identifying specific roles and responsibilities in their project groups. They also need to report their level of success in carrying out these roles so that they become better stewards of their own learning.

Another role students should be given is that of decision maker. Students should be given voice and choice in the project decisions, such as project specifics and how to present their projects. Creativity should be encouraged, as well as connecting to other fields of study.
Another role of the student is language monitor. In this study, the group managers were responsible for keeping the students in the target language and reporting the results (Appendix G) and this was partially successful. Many of the group leaders kept track of the students in their groups and were very strict. They also led by example. I had to monitor other leaders and remind them of their duties. Several of the leaders who were not as enthusiastic at first, became more enthusiastic with encouragement and personal interviews with me. Having them perform specific, essential roles aided in their student engagement and interest.

5.3.2 The role of the teacher. As teachers wanting to engage in project-based language learning, there are things should be kept in mind, and perhaps even do differently than what is currently done. As teachers begin a PBLL journey, it is an important time to reflect on how they interact with their students. In PBLL, our principle role is learning guide. But as guides, teachers have to make sure that the road map that their students are given is accurate, detailed, and complete. There is careful preparation that needs to happen before beginning a PBLL unit. Of course outlines and activities for our classes must be prepared. In addition, following are three additional pedagogical suggestions learned from this study. First, we have to be prepared to be examples of speaking the target language. If we speak in English, they will follow us down the English trail. Additional classroom preparation is required to explain and give examples in the target language. If we do not prepare beforehand, the temptation can be too great to slip into English. Some students might complain and say they do not understand, but for their progression it is imperative that we provide constant comprehensible input through authentic reading and listening activities.

Second, as we blaze new trails with PBLL, we need the help of other teacher guides. Collaborating with others interested in creating lessons based on PBLL will lighten our teaching
load and increase our ideas. It was difficult for me to create each activity for this unit and would have been very helpful to have others to help and give suggestions for improvement.

The third suggestion to help in our role as learning guide is to scaffold activities. With PBLL, we cannot just tell our students to do a project based on a certain topic and expect them to stay in the target language and be successful. We have to envision the project execution ourselves and predict where the students will encounter obstacles and confusion and have steps in place to help them. This study has included some scaffolding documents, but as we collaborate with other teachers and gain more experience, we can add to our scaffolding portfolio.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Based on this action research study and on questions that arose while I completed it, it would be beneficial to the educational community to research more ideas on keeping students in the target language in their interactions with each other during project group work. This would be helpful in gathering ideas of how to help classes stay in the target language. It would also be valuable to see how PBLL affects speaking performance, as this study only assessed writing. One last area I want to mention that needs further investigation is a longer-term study of the effects of PBLL. This study included only one unit during the school year. It would provide greater insight into the influence of PBLL to see the results of a study examining a complete scholastic year.

5.5 Conclusions

In effective 21st century language classrooms, teachers want their students to be engaged and become owners of their learning. They hope that they are empowering students not only with information, but with the ability to become lifelong learners. These educational shepherds lead
their students to greener pastures of learning so that they can explore these new fields themselves. This action research study sought to see if project-based language learning could be an instrument in helping the students become more engaged in their own learning and would help them achieve and perform well in the target language. The research results were that PBLL is indeed a teaching approach that can help achieve those goals.

Based on this study, is engaging in PBLL worth the work a teacher needs to do in order to implement it fully in the classroom? The results indicate that yes, it is. Through the benefits shown in this study, including positive student reactions and students’ marked progress, it is clear that PBLL can be an important tool in helping students advance and become the central focus of their learning. It is evident from this study that there are challenges that need to be faced, such as, scaffolding activities in the target language, a lack of time to implement all activities, and a lack of teacher knowledge about PBLL, but with continued practice, collaboration with other interested and experienced teachers, and continued research, materials for true PBLL projects will become more readily available and will make the PBLL journey more accessible and doable for all interested teachers.
REFERENCES


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https://www.edutopia.org/project-based-learning-guide-importance

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http://www.bie.org/about/why_pbl
APPENDICES

Appendix A – School District Unit 6 Requirements

ALPINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXPANDING LANGUAGE - Level 3

UNIT 6 OVERVIEW: Outdoor Adventures

What students will be able to do by the end of this unit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERPRETIVE</th>
<th>INTERPERSONAL</th>
<th>PRESENTATIONAL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td><strong>Person-to-Person</strong></td>
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<td>• I can understand what people say when they talk about their outdoor activities.</td>
<td>• I can understand what I read about campsites and resorts.</td>
<td>• I can ask and answer questions about what I did on my last outdoor adventure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I can understand a description about campsites and beach resorts.</td>
<td>• I can read and understand online reviews about outdoor adventures.</td>
<td>• I can ask and answer questions about where I would go and what I would do for my next outdoor adventure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I can understand blogs or user-reviews about outdoor adventures.</td>
<td>• I can talk about what I would do differently on my next adventure.</td>
<td>• I can talk about an adventure that I had.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What will students know about by the end of this unit?

**Benchmark Vocabulary**

The Beach:
Nouns: Sand, fins, Ocean, life guard, Waves, sand castle, Island, swimmer, Fish, umbrella, Boats, beach towel, Resort, sunscreen, Snorkel, cruise
Verbs: to surf, to parasail, to water ski, to sunbathe, to scuba dive, to snorkel, to sail, to fish, to get burned, to rent, to fish

Mountains:
Nouns: Mountain camp stove, Forest sleeping bag, Lake matches, River flashlight, Waterfall pocket knife, Trees water bottle, Fire tent
Verbs: to camp, to hike, to climb, to roast marshmallows, to tell ghost stories, to build a fire, to pitch the tent, to sharpen your knife, to ride horses

Nature Words: sky, clouds
moon  weather vocabulary (review)  I would go…
sun  I did…
stars  I would do…
storm  I saw..
storm  I would see…
lightning  I went…

**Grammar/Structures**
Past Tense (review)
Conditional (introduction)
Comparatives (review)
Appendix B – Unit 6 Pre-test

Pre-examen de la unidad 6 (español 3) (25 puntos)

Nombre: Clase:

Parte A. El vocabulario. Choose the correct word from the list below the pictures by bubbling in the corresponding letter on your bubble sheet. Your choices will be a, b, c or d. Not all words will be used. (20 puntos)

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ 4. ____
5. ____ 6. ____ 7. ____ 8. ____

A. las olas  b. las aletas  c. bucear  d. el hornillo
a. el barco  b. la cascada  c. saco de dormir  d. castillo de arena

Parte B. El presente de perfecto. Escribe la palabra correcta en cada espacio. (7 puntos) (I have done, you have made, we have gone, etc.)

a. ha navegado  b. hemos navegado  c. habéis navegado  d. hemos navegado

10. Mis sueños (viajar) ____________________________ a Asia 3 veces.
a. han viajado  b. han hecho viajar  c. hemos viajaremos  d. hemos viajar

11. Vosotros (vivir) ____________________________ en España por 5 años.
a. hemos vivido  b. hemos vivido  c. háis vivido  d. habéis vivido

12. Yo (hacer) ____________________________ el surf en Hawaii.
a. ha hecho  b. he hecho  c. ha hecho  d. has hecho

13. ¿(ir) ____________________________ tú a Cancún, México?
a. ha ido  b. iría  c. iría  d. ha ido

14. ¿Es verdad que Miguel (romperse) ____________________________ los brazos otra vez?
a. se ha rompido  b. se ha roto  c. te has rompido  d. ha te roto
15. David Bisbal (cantar) _________________________ en muchos conciertos.
a. he canté    
b. he cantado    
c. ha cantado    
d. ha cantaba

Parte C. El condicional. Llena cada espacio con la forma correcta del condicional. (10 puntos) (I would sing, you would go, she would think, etc.)

16. Nosotros (comprar) _________________________ los postales, pero no tenemos dinero.
a. compraríamos  
b. comprábamos  
c. compraremos  
d. compramos

17. Los pájaros (volar) ___________________________ al sur, pero está nevando.
a. volaban  
b. volaron  
c. volarían  
d. volarán

18. Yo (leer) ___________________________ ese libro porque me interesa, pero es muy violento.
a. leeré  
b. leía  
c. leería  
d. leí

a. sentámonos  
b. nos sentamos  
c. sentaríamosnos  
d. nos sentaríamos

20. Yo (tener) _______________________________ tiempo otro día, pero tengo que trabajar hoy.
a. tendría  
b. tendría  
c. teneré  
d. tendré

21. ¿Qué (hacer) ______________________________ tú en esta situación?
a. haré       
b. harías     
c. haceré     
d. haría

22. Ramona (venir) ______________________________ con nosotros, pero tiene tos.
a. vendría     
b. vendría     
c. vendría     
d. vendría

23. Mis hermanos (poder) ______________________________ venir también, pero están en Miami.
a. podrían    
b. podrán     
c. podrían    
d. podrían

24. Vosotros (bailar) ______________________________, pero tenéis mucho calor.
a. bailaríais 
b. bailarían   
c. bailabais 
d. bailáis

25. Las enfermeras nos (ayudar) ___________ ahora, pero están atendiendo a otros pacientes.
a. ayudaríamos 
b. ayudaron    
c. ayudarían  
d. ayudábamos
Appendix C – Unit 6 Post-test, Questions 1-50
Examen de la unidad 6 (español 3) (85 puntos)

Nombre:           Clase:

Parte A. El vocabulario. Choose the correct word from the list below the pictures by bubbling in
the corresponding letter on your bubble sheet. Your choices will be a, b, c or d. Not all words
will be used. (20 puntos)

1. ___      2. ___   3._____  4. _____
5. ____     6. ___  7. _____  8. _____
9. ____      10. ___   11. ____   12. _____
13. ___  14. ___   15. ___    16. ___
17. ___    18. ____ 19. _____   20. _____

a. esquiar en agua  c. la montaña            a. el barco     c. contar cuentos de fantasmas
b. hacer paravelismo  d. el árbol  b. el mar       d. el saco de dormir
 c. bucear   a. el turista  c. subir           a. afilar el cuchillo
d. el hornillo   b. el traje de baño d. acampar   b. la linterna
a. montar a caballos  c. hacer senderismo a. el fuego   c. la cascada
b. el nadador

d. las olas
b. las aletas                 d. castillos de arena
Parte B. El presente de perfecto. Escribe la palabra correcta en cada espacio. (10 puntos) (I have done, you have made, we have gone, etc.)

   a. ha navegaba          b. hemos nevegaba c. habéis navegado        d. hemos navegado

22. Mis suegos (viajar) ______________________________________________ a Asia 3 veces.
   a. han viajado   b. han hecho viajado c. hemos viajaremos      d. hemos viajar

23. Vosotros (vivir) ________________________________________________ en España por 5 años.
   a. hemos vivido b. hamos vivir  c. háis vivido        d. habéis vivido

24. Yo (hacer) __________________________________________ el surf en Hawaií.
   a. ha hacido  b. he hecho   c. he hacido          d. has hecho

25. ¿(ir) ___________________________________ tú a Cancún, México?
   a. ha ido  b. ha iría   c. he iría           d. has ido

26. Yo creo que los muchachos no (decir) ____________________________ la verdad.
   a. hemos dicho b. han decidio c. han dicho      d. hemos decido

27. Mi hermana (escribir) ________________________________ a la abuela 2 veces este mes.
   a. has escirto  b. ha escrito   c. has escribido      d. ha escrito

28. Los abogados (quejarse) __________________________________________ al juez.
   a. han quejarse   b. han quejadose c. se han quejado    d. han se quejado

29. Tú (ver) ______________________________________________ demasiada televisión hoy.
   a. has veído  b. has visto  c. ha vido          d. he visto

30. Yo (lavarse) ______________________________________________ las manos.
   a. me he lavado b. he lavadose  c. te has lavado    d. he me lavar

31. María y yo (escribir) ________________________ la carta al presidente.
   a. habéis escrito b. habéis escrito c. hemos escrito    d. hemos escrito

32. ¿Es verdad que Miguel (romperse) ____________________________ los brazos otra vez?
   a. se ha rompido b. se ha roto    c. te has rompido    d. has te roto

33. David Bisbal (cantar) ________________________________ en muchos conciertos.
   a. he canté          b. he cantado     c. ha cantado      d. ha cantaba
34. Es obvio que vosotros (coleccionar) ___________________ muchas tarjetas de béisbol.
   a. habéis coleccionado    b. han coleccionado    c. habéis coleccionaréis    d. han coleccionaréis

35. Yo creo que mis abuelos (volar) _______________________ a cada continente del mundo.
   a. hemos volaraban    b. han volado    c. tienen volado    d. han volaron

Parte C. El condicional. Llena cada espacio con la forma correcta del condicional. (10 puntos) (I would sing, you would go, she would think, etc.)

36. Nosotros (comprar) ___________________________ los postales, pero no tenemos dinero.
   a. compraríamos    b. comprábamos    c. compraremos    d. compramos

37. Los pájaros (volar) ___________________________ al sur, pero está nevando.
   a. volaban    b. volaron    c. volarían    d. volarán

38. Yo (leer) ____________________________ ese libro porque me interesa, pero es muy violento.
   a. leeré    b. leía    c. leería    d. lei

   a. sentámonos    b. nos sentamos    c. sentaríamosnos    d. nos sentaríamos

40. Yo (tener) _____________________________ tiempo otro día, pero tengo que trabajar hoy.
   a. tenería    b. tendría    c. teneré    d. tendré

41. ¿Qué (hacer) ____________________________________________ tú en esta situación?
   a. haré    b. harías    c. haceré    d. hacería

42. Ramona (venir) ___________________________________ con nosotros, pero tiene tos.
   a. venerá    b. veniría    c. veníre    d. vendría

43. Mis hermanos (poder)_________________________ venir también, pero están en Miami.
   a. podremos    b. poderán    c. podrían    d. poderían

44. Vosotros (bailar) ________________________________, pero tenéis mucho calor.
   a. bailaríais    b. bailarían    c. bailabais    d. bailáis

45. Las enfermeras nos (ayudar) _____________ ahora, pero están atendiendo a otros pacientes.
   a. ayudaríamos    b. ayudaron    c. ayudarían    c. ayudábamos

46. ¿Qué (decir) les ___________________________ a tus padres si fueras yo?
   a. dirías    b. decirías    c. dirían    d. decidirían

47. Carlos (besar) ____________________________ a María, pero tiene miedo.
   a. besará    b. besa    c. besaba    d. besaría
48. Yo (ver) ____________________________ los dibujos animados más, pero no tengo tiempo.
   a. vi       b. veía      c. vería     d. viste

49. El botones (cargar) __________________________ las maletas, pero no tienen un carrito.
   a. cargó     b. cargaba   c. cargaría  d. cargaré

50. Los alumnos (saber) _________________________ las respuestas, pero no estudiaron.
   a. saben     b. sabían    c. saberían  d. sabrían
Appendix D – Student Interest Survey

Unit 6 Interest Survey

1. What is your name?

2. I enjoy being in nature.
   I strongly agree.     I agree.     I don’t have an opinion.     I disagree.       I strongly disagree.

3. I enjoy camping.
   I strongly agree.     I agree.     I don’t have an opinion.     I disagree.       I strongly disagree.

4. I enjoy hiking.
   I strongly agree.     I agree.     I don’t have an opinion.     I disagree.       I strongly disagree.

5. I enjoy exploring outdoors.
   I strongly agree.     I agree.     I don’t have an opinion.     I disagree.       I strongly disagree.

6. I believe that Utah has great activities to do outdoors and offers beautiful scenery.
   I strongly agree.     I agree.     I don’t have an opinion.     I disagree.       I strongly disagree.

7. I enjoy the beach activities.
   I strongly agree.     I agree.     I don’t have an opinion.     I disagree.       I strongly disagree.

8. I would like to travel abroad.
   I strongly agree.     I agree.     I don’t have an opinion.     I disagree.       I strongly disagree.

9. I like to create visual art.
   I strongly agree.     I agree.     I don’t have an opinion.     I disagree.       I strongly disagree.

10. I like to write.
    I strongly agree.     I agree.     I don’t have an opinion.     I disagree.       I strongly disagree.

11. I like to create blogs, websites, etc., or would like to learn how.
    I strongly agree.     I agree.     I don’t have an opinion.     I disagree.       I strongly disagree.

12. I like being a team leader.
    I strongly agree.     I agree.     I don’t have an opinion.     I disagree.       I strongly disagree.

13. I like to work on a team that has vision and is excited about something.
    I strongly agree.     I agree.     I don’t have an opinion.     I disagree.       I strongly disagree.

14. I like to work on team projects.
    I strongly agree.     I agree.     I don’t have an opinion.     I disagree.       I strongly disagree.

15. I like to organize.
I strongly agree. I agree. I don’t have an opinion. I disagree. I strongly disagree.

16. I work well with deadlines.
I strongly agree. I agree. I don’t have an opinion. I disagree. I strongly disagree.

17. I only want to speak Spanish in class.
I strongly agree. I agree. I don’t have an opinion. I disagree. I strongly disagree.
El 15 de abril de 2017

Estimados estudiantes de American Fork High School:
El turismo de nuestro estado es de suma importancia para nuestra economía. Siempre estamos en búsqueda de diferentes maneras de crecer el número de turistas y sabemos que una de estas maneras es de tartar de contactar a nuevos turistas potenciales para que sepan de las varias atracciones que tenemos en nuestro estado.
Con esto en mente, tenemos la idea de pedir su ayuda para hacer tres cosas: 1) investigar qué tipos de actividades en la naturaleza les gusten a la población hispanohablante, 2) crear un anuncio con detalles sobre lo que ofrece Utah para turistas en forma de blog, sitio de web u otra idea digital y 3) contactar a una agencia de viajes en un país hispanohablante para compartir esta información.
Al usar sus habilidades en español para alcanzar a la población hispanohablante sabemos que el número de turistas que vienen a nuestro estado crecerá y que esto ayudará a nuestra economía. Gracias por sus esfuerzos y tiempo en usar su creatividad y su conocimiento de la tecnología en comunicarse con los futuros turistas de nuestro gran estado.
Sinceramente,
El equipo de marketing del Utah Office of Tourism
801-538-1900
Los roles/papeles (todos comparten la responsabilidad):

1. El/la gerente del proyecto:
   Responsabilidades:
   a. ayudar a todos los miembros del grupo con todo
   b. mirar el calendario y las fechas de límite y guiar al grupo
   c. llenar el formulario de hablar solo español
   d. asegúrense de que los miembros del grupo sigan las normas
   e. llenar la línea de tiempo
   f. entregar los entregables (deliverables) a la profesora

2. El/la líder de la investigación
   Responsabilidades:
   a. guiar al grupo en sus investigaciones individuales
   b. juntar y organizar la información
   c. escribir la información que van a usar en el proyecto

3. El/la experto/a de la creatividad
   Responsabilidades:
   a. decidir que fotos van a usar
   b. decidir el estilo del proyecto que decide el grupo
   c. escribir la carta a la agencia de viajes

4. El/la especialista de la tecnología
   Responsabilidades:
   a. estar encargado de poner la información en un blog o sitio de web
   b. pedir ayuda de especialistas
Appendix G – Speak-Spanish Chart

Hablar español en los grupos

Escala de calificación: 5—habló todo en español y participó totalmente
4—habló la mayoría en español y participó bastante
3—habló bastante en español y participó
2—no habló mucho en español
1—No dijo nada o habló todo en inglés

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<th>calificación</th>
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Appendix H – Team Debates

Mi nombre:
El nombre de mi grupo:
Mis dos puntos para mi debate: 1. 
2. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Puntos clave</th>
<th>Nombre del grupo A</th>
<th>Nombre del grupo B</th>
<th>¿Quién crees que ganó?</th>
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## Appendix I – Group Feedback Sheet

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<th>Pre-evaluación del proyecto de otro grupo</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nombre del grupo:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi nombre:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosas que me gustaron:</td>
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### Rúbrica para el proyecto de Utah

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TOTAL: __________________ /100 PUNTOS
Appendix K – Final Reflection

Utah Project Reflection Sheet

Nombre:

Self Reflection:
1. The most important thing I learned while doing this project was…

2. The part of the project I did my best work was…

3. I struggled with…

Group Reflection:
1. I think my group worked well at…

2. We struggled at…

Project Reflection:
1. The most enjoyable part of this project was…

2. The least enjoyable part of this project was…
Appendix L – Individual writing assessment scores

Writing performance assessment scores for experimental class A1

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Writing performance assessment scores for experimental class B4

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**Writing performance scores for control group class A4**

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Appendix M – Scope and Sequence for Group A

The day prior to Day 1:
  • The vocabulary, reading, listening, and grammar achievement pre-test is given.

Day 1:
  • Introduce beach vocabulary and the present perfect tense through content-based, interactive activities, such as questioning and pictures.

Day 2:
  • Practice day 1 vocabulary and present perfect through vocab competitions, videos, interviews, journal writing, and a survey.

Day 3:
  • Take quiz over beach vocabulary, introduce mountain vocabulary, play “Never Have I Ever” to practice present perfect, show video about Iguazú in Argentina.

Day 4:
  • Practice mountain vocab through games, teach the conditional tense in context, start learning the Song “Ave María” by David Bisbal and look for “ía” words, watch short video about “El gaucho” in Argentina.

Day 5:
  • Sing Ave María, practice, mountain vocabulary, practice conditional using websites and class games. Do an information search activity using the website: http://www.solocampings.com.ar/busqueda.php#guia-de-camping.

Day 6:
  • Sing Ave María, watch videos a camping video called “Artículos que no pueden fallar,” do a 5-minute write about ¿Qué país hispanohablante visitarias y qué harías allí?” play “Kahoot” about conditional, work on a short oral presentations about what they have done and what they would do at the beach and in the mountains.

Day 7:
  • Give oral presentations in class.

Day 8:
  • Finish oral presentations, review conditional and present perfect tenses with mini white boards. Do a reading with questions called, “Prepárate para el sol,” watch a beach video called “Vamos a la playa Los Yuyos,” listen for familiar words and discuss.

Day 9:
  • Do a reading about camping, write about what the best trip ever would be, and start on review packet.

Day 10:
  • Correct unit review packet and do review activities in class.
Day 11:
  • Give multiple-choice achievement test and district presentational writing assessment.
Appendix N – Scope and Sequence for Group B

Scope and Sequence for Group B:

The day prior to Day 1:
- Give vocabulary, reading, listening, and grammar achievement pre-test (Appendix B).
- Give student-interest survey on Google docs to form project groups (Appendix D).

Day 1:
- Introduce the topic with a video called “El columpio en el fin del mundo” and ask “Lo harías? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amdQ0_aMeCI&t=33s
- Watch video “Cinco actividades cuando visites baños de Agua Santa.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amdQ0_aMeCI&t=33s
- Show a map with Mexico, Central and South America and I ask them which country they think has the most international tourists. They discuss this with a partner and we watch a video called “Los 10 top países.” Then I ask them between Mexico and Spain which one has the most (Spain). Then I ask them which are the top states in the U.S. for tourists (California, New York, Florida).
- Ask ¿Por qué es bueno para un país o estado tener muchos turistas? ¿Por qué es bueno para turistas visitar otro lugar?
- Introduce the driving question by having them read a letter from the Utah Office of Tourism and we discuss what the Office is asking them to do in the letter (Appendix E). These tasks are 1) research outdoor activities that are popular in Spanish-speaking countries, 2) create a website or blog advertising great places to visit and things to do in the outdoors in Utah, and 3) write to a travel agency in a Spanish-speaking country in order to share the website or blog.
- Put them in their project groups of 4 based on the interest survey and show them a list of role options, and they decide what roles they want (Appendix F).

Day 2:
- Introduce the word wall for scaffolding conversations.
- Give a team leader folder to the team leader and they decide on team norms and write a team contract; Introduce the guidelines for speaking Spanish (Appendix G).
- Brainstorm what information they will need to know in order to accomplish the required task by the Utah Office of Tourism.
- They choose a Spanish-speaking country to focus on.
- Do a readers workshop about scanning and they search in Spanish for two travel agencies in their country.
- They decide how they will share the information about Utah with a travel agency (public product) with this audience (blog, website, Spanish-speaking visitors in the classroom, etc.).

Day 3:
- Give them useful vocabulary for beaches and we practice with games and ask what they would do (conditional).
• Give them a blank time line to fill in and they determine team tasks.
• Write an email in groups to a travel agency in their country to ask if they can send information about sites to see in Utah.
• Revise and edit and have me look at it.
• Send the email to the agencies.

Day 4:
• Discuss a reading about protection from the sun, which was given as homework.
• Prepare for a group debate in the next class. They decide on a region of their country that would be interesting to visit and what there is to do there. They each have to come up with two reasons.
• I scaffold with: Nosotros (nombre de equipo) _________________________, creemos que (lugar) _________ es el mejor lugar para visitar por varias razones.
• Work on projects.

Day 5:
• Have team debates (Appendix H).

Day 6:
• Give them mountain/camping vocabulary to help them in their writing about things to do in Utah and we practice with a game.
• Sing Ave Maria (conditional practice, fun and good for pronunciation).
• Work on group projects.

Day 7:
• Review mountain vocab.
• Work on projects and evaluate goals and progress
• Talks with team leaders and ask the following in Spanish: What is going well? How is the project coming along? How is the speaking only Spanish in your groups going?
• Writing assignment: ¿Cuáles serían las mejores vacaciones para ti? ¿A dónde irías? ¿Qué harías?

Day 8:
• Review all vocab with groups and talk about what outdoor activities they have done in their lives
• Work on projects and evaluate goals and progress
• Listen to audio with worksheet: “Artículos que no pueden fallar.”

Day 9:
• Share group projects with one other group in the class and the groups give each other scores based on the rubric and make corrections to finalize (Appendix I).
• Send their finished product to the travel agency.
• Review things they would do and have done (conditional and present perfect).

Day 10:
• Finalize projects and share with the whole class. The students and I evaluate the other groups’ performance based on the rubric (Appendix J).
• Review for test using Kahoot and a game.

Day 11:
• Take unit achievement test over vocabulary, grammar, reading (Appendix C).
• Do School District writing performance assessment.
• Complete self and group reflection (Appendix K).
• Take final 10-question survey (Figure 2).