

**Project-based Learning through the Eyes of Teachers and Students: Investigating
Opinions of PBL in Adult ESL**

by

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B.A., University of Victoria, 2004

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

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Abstract

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This thesis examines research done to explore teachers' and students' perspectives and use of Project-based Learning (PBL). The research was conducted at two ESL schools with distinct student populations in Victoria, BC and had 118 total participants. There were 30 teachers from three schools and 88 students from two schools. The teachers and students completed parallel questionnaires asking about their opinions of the various aspects involved in a PBL approach, their use or teachers' use of it, their opinions about examples of projects, and also completed open-ended questions about their opinions and experience with projects. The questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), non-parametric, 2 independent samples and is the primary quantitative data. The means and statistical significance between teachers and students were examined to find any main differences in opinion about PBL. Individual interviews were also conducted with teachers and students from two schools. Seven teachers also provided some artifacts from their classes which were examined to see if they corresponded with their perspectives. The latter two forms of data collection form the qualitative data in this study.

Perspectives on PBL were found to be generally positive, with some mixed results within certain areas. Teachers' and students' perspectives were not that different, which is encouraging for those interested in using projects. Although teachers scored slightly higher in most cases, there were no stark contrasts between negative and positive attitudes. There were distinct differences between schools, as School A used project work more often due to different student backgrounds and needs. Teachers and students were the most favorable to more common practices in ESL classes, but still exhibited positive perspectives towards aspects of PBL as well. And lastly, the most common type of project being used in adult ESL is the presentation of some kind, falling under the production or performance project type (Stoller, 1997).

Beckett's (1999) study found that students carried out projects successfully, but that their evaluations "expressed dilemmas, frustrations, and tensions" (Beckett, 2002, p. 60). No such comments were found when interviewing students about their project work presentations at School A, as most students felt that they were 'interesting, motivating, dynamic, and fun,' among other comments. These results, along with means in the quantitative section exhibiting positive results reveals more support for the use of projects in adult ESL.

The most significant discovery from this research was that teachers need to consider their students' backgrounds and needs when trying to implement a project. The initial assumption that School B, which had all immigrant students, would have more projects was completely wrong. I was surprised that they did not do more projects, and was faced with the reality that teachers need to take into consideration hectic lives outside of school and family obligations of immigrant students before using a PBL approach. The

international students at School A were younger and seemingly more devoted to learning language through a variety of methods within their time in Canada.

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Chapter One - Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Educational teaching approaches and policies, regardless of the type of teaching situation, seem to be much like a wave. At first they build out in the ocean, rolling along, until they finally crash to shore for all to see. One example of this is Communicative Language Teaching, which began in the 1970s, and is now accepted by many as a “new” or “innovative” way to teach English as a second or foreign language (Savignon, 2001, p. 13). While I am not entirely convinced that Project-based Learning has completely hit the shores yet, it has certainly gained some momentum.

This thesis stems from my own desires as both a teacher and a student to engage myself in meaningful and connected-to-real-life education. As Stoller (1997) stated, “In recent years, increasing numbers of language educators have turned to content-based instruction and project work to promote meaningful student engagement with language and content learning” (p.1). Other proponents of project-based learning include Legutke and Thomas (1991) who view it as being “rooted in an educational philosophy which aims at providing the direction, and some possible routes, to a more democratic and participatory society” (p. 158). The notion that experience is the best teacher is the basis from which I will examine projects and student-centered, experiential learning as cited by researchers such as Beckett & Miller, 2006; Eyring, 2001; Kohonen, 2001; and Legutke & Thomas, 1991, among others.

After all, how many times have you tried to memorize a list of vocabulary or done grammar drills, and then completely forgotten it all not long after? Having studied three languages at the university level, I am no stranger to these concepts. It is partly these

reasons which have propelled me to investigate an experiential, project-based approach, and to do it within the second language realm. I also had the opportunity to experience and teach using a project-based approach in Seoul, South Korea, while working with pre-school children. I saw first-hand how using projects motivated the children and provided them with authentic learning situations. I felt this teaching approach would be beneficial to adult learners of English as well, and henceforth came upon this thesis topic.

I have always wondered why we start in kindergarten with projects, gradually grow away from those, but then back in college and university the MA or PhD are the ultimate forms of a project. Why do we drift away? Is it due to standardized testing? Robert Sternberg (2006), states, “The increasingly massive and far-reaching use of conventional tests is one of the most effective, if unintentional, vehicles this country has created for suppressing creativity” (in Beckett & Miller, 2006, p. 64). While this thesis does not discuss testing, one must wonder why experiential teaching methods are not more prevalent, which may stem from the fact educators are forced into a box in which testing is necessary.

According to Beckett & Miller (2006, p. xv),

“There are two themes, or tendencies, which shape the educational policies of most, if not all, governments. One is to create a work force that is flexible, creative, adaptable to market changes and capable of life-long learning. The other is to control, prescribe and predict what goes in and comes out of educational establishments. The irony is that one theme is completely incompatible with the other.”

These are some of the underlying threads of educational thought which propel this thesis and my search for answers about what other teachers and students think about a project-based, experiential approach to teaching and learning. I will outline the goals and the rationale for this paper in the following section.

1.2. Overall goals and rationale

The goal of this thesis is to explore teachers' and students' perspectives on Project-based Learning (PBL); more specifically, to examine whether their perspectives are the same or different, if there are any differences in the way teachers and students view PBL at different institutions, as well as examine what aspects of PBL are more favorable to teachers and students and what aspects of PBL teachers use in their classes. This thesis explores these differences and perspectives through the use of questionnaires, interviews and artifact collection. Before embarking on a pro Project-based Learning career, I decided that I required a substantial data source either confirming or negating this approach. After all, within an academic society, universities and colleges base courses on theories and empirical evidence backing up those theories in order to train and educate the masses. By seeking the opinions of teachers and students, this thesis aims to provide current evidence supporting and clarifying the use of projects in ESL. In order to make informed decisions as educators, particularly with regards to using a certain teaching approach, it would only make sense that we know what teachers and students think about it. Is it a viable approach? Why or why not? How can we know if what we are doing in class as teachers is being accepted by students? How can students express their wants and needs with regards to the type of teaching they are given? It is in such reports

as the current study that we begin to unravel these types of questions. We may also explore these types of questions and how they fit within previous studies done in the same area through a review of the literature, which will be discussed in Chapter Two.

There is a need to investigate the use of Project-based Learning in ESL classrooms in order to help clarify current perspectives and usage of this approach. ESL counterparts to project-based learning have not always been endorsed enthusiastically, despite their apparent success in project work (Beckett, 2002).

One problem with projects is mentioned in Beckett's (1999) study, which saw students expressing dilemmas and frustrations, as they felt that project activities "disallowed them from learning ...vocabulary, grammar, conversational English and English composition, despite that they did all this during their project work" (in Beckett, 2002, p. 62). Eyring's (1989) study showed similar trends, with students reporting frustrations when learning English through project work, despite producing impressive work. Students in this study also "...appeared to consider grammar lessons to be more important than doing projects, although they conducted their project work by listening to, speaking, reading, and writing in English using grammar. The students also seemed to dislike the power given to them during project work" (in Beckett, 2002, p. 62). Beckett (2002) brings up an important point to consider, in that general (Western) education students may have evaluated project work more positively because "they are more used to a student-centered North American educational culture, whereas their ESL counterparts may have been used to a more teacher-centered educational culture from their home countries (e.g. China)" (p. 63).

Further insight into ESL classrooms and the use of projects in adult ESL will be provided by examining if there are any significant differences in the use of Project-based Learning techniques in different contexts. This will be done by providing statements and data through the use of questionnaires, interviews and artifact collection. Exploring the extent to which ESL teachers use project work can add knowledge to the field of Applied Linguistics and second language acquisition, as project work has been noted in general education as being evaluated positively (Beckett, 2002). This paper will help add to the literature and clarify issues on Project-based Learning by providing more evidence (in either direction) about students' evaluations and perspectives about Project-based Learning with participants from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. It will also provide more data from teachers regarding the use of projects in English as a second language classrooms. In order to be informed and to contribute to the growing body of literature about effective teaching methods, researchers need to conduct studies such as the current one which can help support other researchers and educators in making informed decisions about second language education and pedagogy.

1.3 Organization of the thesis

This paper is organized in the following manner. Chapter two begins the journey with an overview of the literature by providing the theoretical foundations, defining Project-based Learning in relationship to several other similar approaches, and also discusses previous empirical studies in the area. Chapter three describes the methodology, which includes the design, participants and the research procedure. Chapter four discusses the real 'meat' of this paper, the analysis and results from the quantitative and qualitative

methods. The analysis section is divided into four main sections, reflecting the different types of data present in the study. These sections are the quantitative data from the questionnaires, the qualitative data from the questionnaires, the qualitative data from the interviews, and lastly, the artifact data. Chapter five concludes with a discussion of the findings of the study and its implications for second language teaching theory and practice. Lastly, this paper concludes with the limitations of the study and directions for future research.

Chapter two – Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Foundations for Project-based Learning

It is a well-known fact that theories of Project-based Learning (PBL) and Experiential Learning are nothing new. Due to the often overlapping use of PBL and Experiential Learning, I have decided to stick with the term Project-based Learning throughout this paper, as more recent literature has been toting this term as its mainstay (Beckett & Miller, 2006). PBL is an approach to teaching and learning that deserves further inquiry and research backed with empirical evidence. The roots of PBL begin with John Dewey, dating back to the early 20th century. Dewey strove to advocate action-based learning and experience as the forefront of positive learning. Dewey had ideals for education which were largely based on democratic and social-behaviorist principles (van Lier, 2006). Dewey also believed that the classroom should be a reflection of society and that students should be participants and active learners, rather than simply being funneled information from their teachers. He viewed logical reasoning and discussion as integral parts to group problem solving (Eyring, 2001). Dewey was a large part of a reform movement in the United States, mirroring many previous educational reforms proposed in Europe which also recommended experience-based, action-based and perception-based education. Dewey was a pragmatist, and in his study ‘Democracy and Education’ (1916), he emphasized the need for the learning process to create responsible citizens and an experimental society of cooperating individuals (Legutke & Thomas, 1991).

One of his philosophical counterparts during the Reform Movement was Kilpatrick, who also viewed the educational project as ‘a whole-hearted purposeful activity’ (Kilpatrick, 1918, in Legutke & Thomas, 1991, p.157). Kilpatrick further illuminated

Dewey's ideas with *The Project Method* in 1918. He proposed that classrooms be a place for the 'laws of learning' but maintain 'the essential elements of the ethical quality of conduct' (p.3). There were also a few noteworthy European influences who are considered as contributing to the threads of the PBL quilt during this time; those being Johann Pestalozzi, Maria Montessori, and Jean Piaget.

Piaget is frequently cited in the literature for his ground-breaking theory of cognitive development. Piaget stated that "education, for most people, means trying to lead the child to resemble the typical adult of his society . . . but for me and no one else, education means making creators. . . . You have to make inventors, innovators—not conformists" (Bringuer, 1980, p.132). It is partly in this quote that one can connect the creative sparks necessary for Project-based Learning with Piaget.

Following the above mentioned was F.J.J. Buytendijk, a Dutch existential psychologist, who proposed humanistic methods involving the whole-body as an approach to learning (van Lier, 2006). Lewin was also a prominent psychologist during this era, often recognized as the "founder of social psychology." He was one of the first researchers to study group dynamics, action research and organizational development (Marrow, 1969).

Also lying within the background to PBL is the social constructivist, Lev Vygotsky and his theory of the zone of proximal development. Vygotsky investigated child development and how this was guided by the role of culture and interpersonal communication. Vygotsky observed how higher mental functions developed historically within particular cultural groups, as well as individually through social interactions with significant people in a child's life, particularly parents, but also other adults (Brown,

2000). This precursive outlook on learning is easily applied to the close-knit group work and interpersonal communication involved with projects.

Freire was also a contributor to the background of more democratic learning, as he believed that the role of an educator was highly politicized and that we must welcome the radical possibility of education as a force to challenge oppression (Brydon-Miller, 2006.). Freire contrasted problem-posing education and critical pedagogy with what he called the *banking concept* of education. This type of teaching is still prevalent in many institutions and around the world, and is a largely uni-directional system "...in which the teacher deposits learning into the empty vessels who are the students, later withdrawing this learning in the form of testing. Standardized tests are thus the ultimate form of narrow-minded accountancy in the banking approach to education" (Brydon-Miller, 2006, p. 42). He was a proponent of problem-posing education which encourages creativity and reflection, as well as action upon reality outside the classroom. Freire (1983) seeks to link literacy and action and discusses his concept of *conscientization* which is imperative for the recognition of the power of literacy as a voice in liberation. Freire felt that becoming literate and relating speaking the word to transforming reality would allow us to understand the significance of critical reflection and an education which ultimately provides freedom. Freire "exposed how even well-meaning teachers, through their lack of critical moral leadership, actually participate in disabling the heart, minds, and bodies of their students –an act that disconnects these students from the personal and social motivation required to transform their world and themselves" (Darder, 2003, p. 498 as cited in Brydon-Miller, 2006, p.44). Freire strongly criticized the mere transmission of "facts" as the goal of education. Freire's work, however, updated the concept of problem-

posing education and placed it in context with current theories and practices of education, laying the foundation for critical pedagogy. In terms of PBL, Freire would have agreed with envisioning teacher-student and student-teacher roles; that is, a teacher who learns and a learner who teaches, as the basic roles of classroom participation.

Kolb's (1984) seminal work, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* is based on the intellectual works of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget. While Kolb is not from the same era as some of the previously mentioned academics, he does have a solid place within the roots of PBL, as the two approaches (Experiential Learning and Project-based Learning) are inter-twined. Kolb combines philosophical practicality, social psychology and cognitive-developmental humanism which provide a distinct outlook on learning and development. Kolb wrote this book in the hopes that Experiential Learning Theory would become more than just another "educational fad" (p. 3). He states that "Experiential learning theory offers something more substantial and enduring. It offers the foundation for an approach to education and learning as a lifelong process that is soundly based in intellectual traditions of social psychology, philosophy, and cognitive psychology" (p. 3-4). Learning is viewed as a four-stage cycle, which has immediate, concrete experience as the basis for observation and reflection. The observations are then incorporated into an idea or theory from which new implications for action can be realized. These hypotheses are then used as guides in acting to create new experiences. Concrete experience skills (CE), reflective observation skills (RO), abstract conceptualization skills (AC), and active experimentation skills (AE) are needed by the learner in order to participate fully in the new experience (Lewis, 1986, p. 100).

These researchers contribute most auspiciously to Project-based Learning. Without these brilliant minds to help shape educational reform and thought, we just might all still be sitting in rows, watching our teacher write out a list of words for us to memorize! Their contributions to concepts such as action-based learning, learning by doing, group dynamics and interpersonal communication have been instrumental in shaping many theories of learning and teaching, and when combined together, reveal the bare bones of PBL.

2.2 Defining Project-based Learning

The scope of this approach is apparent as one searches the literature. It has many other names, including experiential learning and negotiated language learning (e.g., Eyring, 2001; Legutke & Thomas, 1991; Padgett, 1994), investigative research (e.g., Kenny, 1993), problem-based learning (e.g., Savoie & Hughes, 1994; Wood & Head, 2004), project approach or project-based approach (e.g., Ho, 2003; Levis & Levis, 2003); Papandreu, 1994) and project work (e.g., Fried-Booth, 1986, 2002; Haines, 1989; Henry, 1994). The crux of what PBL encompasses is that it is not just a grab bag of available methods, but that it is an “educational philosophy which aims at providing the direction, and some possible routes, to a more democratic and participatory society” (Legutke & Thomas, 1991, p. 158). There are several key characteristics of PBL which are generally agreed upon by researchers which Legutke & Thomas (1991) summarize in the following eleven points:

1. Themes and target tasks derive from ‘life.’

2. The educational value of project learning is fostered through the process of discussion, experimentation, reflection, and application of new insights to new cycles of experimentation.
3. Plan of action is jointly constructed and negotiated. Project ideas become operational tools which define sub-topics, problem areas, and predict outcomes derived from hypotheses.
4. Project learning is investigative and follows a cyclical model of experiential learning.
5. Project learning is learner-centered. It has a great variety of modes of operation which allow learners to discover their specific strengths, interests, and talents.
6. Successful completion of project tasks depends on the cooperative abilities of small groups of learners. Group members are accountable to their team and group.
7. Project work assumes a basic ability for self-direction and learner autonomy in the learning process itself.
8. Project learning takes a broader view of product or outcome, as products can appear in a great number of representational forms, represent the holistic and multi-sensory nature of learning, and are integral parts of the process because of their *use* value.
9. Project work necessitates an interdisciplinary approach to learning.
10. Project work increases roles for teachers and learners. Teachers may act as manager, facilitator, researcher, participant, or monitor. Learners may also act as manager, actor, writer, secretary, teacher and researcher.

11. Learners as partners, who are provided with the space and skills to contribute to the content and process of learning, and allows for an open, process-orientated curriculum. (Legutke & Thomas, 1991, p. 158-160).

In order to further clarify the definition of project work, I have also provided Stoller's (1997, p.4-5) six features which either elaborate on or overlap the concepts suggested by Legutke and Thomas. These are as follows:

1. Project work focuses on content learning rather than on specific language targets. Real-world subject matter and topics of interest to students can become central to projects.
2. Project work is student-centered, though the teacher plays a major role in offering support and guidance throughout the process.
3. Project work is cooperative rather than competitive. Students can work on their own, in small groups, or as a class to complete a project, sharing resources, ideas, and expertise along the way.
4. Project work leads to the authentic integration of skills and processing of information from varied sources, mirroring real-life tasks.
5. Project work culminates in an end product (e.g., an oral presentation, a poster session, a bulletin board display, a report, or a stage performance) that can be shared with others, giving the project a real purpose. The value of the project, however, lies not just in the final product but in the process of working towards the end point. Thus, project work has both a process and product orientation, and provides students with opportunities to focus on fluency and accuracy at different project-work stages.

6. Project work is potentially motivating, stimulating, empowering, and challenging. It usually results in building student confidence, self-esteem, and autonomy as well as improving students' language skills, content learning, and cognitive abilities.

In examining these main points according to Legutke & Thomas (1991) and Stoller (1995), there are many commonalities which help define the approach. Haines (1989) articulates projects in the following quote:

“...[Projects are] multi-skill activities focusing on topics or themes rather than on specific language targets. Of crucial importance is the part which the students themselves play in the initial choice of subject matter and in the decisions related to appropriate working methods, the project timetable and the eventual ‘end product.’ Because specific language aims are not prescribed, and because students concentrate their efforts and attention on reaching an agreed goal, project work provides students with opportunities to recycle known language and skills in a relatively natural context. Projects can be intensive activities which take place over a short period of time, or extended studies which may take up one or two hours a week for several weeks” (p. 1).

Skehan (1998) characterizes PBL in the following quote,

“Project work enables the gradual development of autonomy with progressively greater responsibility being taken by the learners...[Project work] is an excellent structure for preparing learners

to approach learning in their own way, suitable to their own abilities, styles and preferences” (p. 273).

Eyring (2001) views PBL under the following pretense,

“Project work: The quintessential experiential language learning approach...in terms of its view of learning, power relations, teacher and learner roles, view of knowledge, view of curriculum, learning experiences, control of process, motivation and evaluation” (p.336).

Another quote that summarizes PBL is from Fried-Booth (2002),

“Project work is student-centered and driven by the need to create an end-product. However, it is the route to achieving this end-product that makes project work so worthwhile. The route to the end-product brings opportunities for students to develop their confidence and independence and to work together in a real-world environment by collaborating on a task” (p.6).

There are also several types of projects to consider when defining PBL. One type is the *structured* project. It has the following characteristics: the topic is prescribed by the teacher (with students having some choice of options), the methods for collecting and analyzing the information is specified, or it can also offer students several topics from which students choose. A *semi-structured* project offers the project area and methodology, but requires the students to take on more responsibility; they are organized by both the teacher and the students. *Unstructured* projects are defined by the students themselves. Differences in the way data is collected and where information is found is seen in various projects such as research projects, requiring library research; and with text projects, which use encounters with texts such as literature, reports, news, media, video

and audio material, or computer-based information. *Correspondence* projects necessitate communication with individuals or businesses through the use of letters, faxes, phone calls or email. *Survey* projects require students to create the survey instrument and then go out and collect the information for analysis. *Encounter* projects require direct contact with native speakers or outside the classroom people. There are also *production* projects, which involve students creating bulletin boards, videos, poster sessions, radio programs, written reports, oral presentations, handbooks, travel itineraries, menus, letters, and brochures. *Performance* projects lead to things such as debates, oral presentations, theatre, food fairs or fashion shows. Lastly, *organizational* projects involve planning and forming a club or conversation table or partner program (see Stoller 1997; Henry 1994; Haines 1989 and Legutke & Thomas, 1991 for more details on this topic).

There are many teaching approaches in the field of applied linguistics, and it is important to make a distinction between PBL and other approaches. As Legutke & Thomas (1991), Stoller (1997), Haines (1989), Skehan (1998), Eyring (2001) and Fried-Booth (2002) have so succinctly observed, projects involve several aspects which can quite possibly be confused with other approaches. The overarching fact that projects are primarily content-driven may lead some to ask, what is the difference between PBL and Content-based Learning (CBL)?

To more clearly answer this question, we must first take a look at a definition of Content-based Learning (CBL). The word 'content' may have many different interpretations, but has generally become accepted as the use of subject matter for second/foreign language teaching purposes. Subject matter is topics or themes based on student interest or need in adult EFL settings, or can be much narrower, such as subjects

children study in their school classes (Snow, 2001). French immersion in Canada is a prime example of CBL. CBL also fits in well with English for Specific Purposes (ESP), where learners are given specific job training and curriculum and materials suited to their vocational or occupational needs. CBL also complements an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) orientation, as it prepares learners for the specific types of tasks they will encounter in their academic studies. CBL differs depending on its educational setting, program objectives and target population. The common goal is to integrate language teaching objectives with subject matter instruction (Snow, 2001). So how is it different from PBL? Project-based Learning is ultimately a natural extension of Content-based Learning, as it does require content (a theme or subject matter) in order to begin the project (Stoller, 1997). It differs mainly in the fact that PBL goes beyond just teaching through a series of informational sessions about a subject; it goes one step further in designing a series of tasks related to the content which converge to reach the end product. It is also largely group-based and acts upon student input for its direction. CBL does not take into account student input as highly as PBL, nor does it emphasize the collaborative necessity required to complete a project. PBL does rely heavily on a series of tasks, which leads me to my next discussion.

Task-based learning has been advocated in the mainstream ESL/EFL world, but differs from project work in that tasks are much shorter in time and implementation. Tasks are easier to plan for and often happen in one class, whereas projects involve much more planning and long term objectives. The term 'task' has a number of definitions. Breen (1989) states that a task is a 'structured plan for the provision of opportunities for the refinement of knowledge and capabilities entailed in a new language and its use

during communication,’ he also states that a task can be ‘a brief practice exercise’ or ‘a more complex work plan that requires spontaneous communication of meaning.’ (in Ellis, 2003, p. 4). Nunan also provides a definition of ‘task’ as follows, “...a communicative task is ‘a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right” (in Ellis, 2003, p.4). This definition can set it apart from Project-based Learning in that it does not explicitly discuss anything outside of the classroom, which can be a major part of project work, as well as the limited scope of a task being a communicative act. From my research, I feel that projects are a series of communicative acts with the ‘completeness’ not coming until the completion of the project. According to Willis (1996), tasks are “...always activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome” (p.23). Willis provides a variety of sample tasks in her book *A Framework for Task-based Learning*. The following table outlines some of the tasks discussed by Willis and compares them with some examples of projects.

Table 1

A comparison of types of projects and tasks

Examples of projects	Examples of tasks (Willis p.149-154)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A scrapbook collection of writing and pictures • A formal written report • A collection of figures or statistics • A newspaper • A book club • Out of class surveys • A guidebook for a town or city • Marketing strategies (i.e. sell/market an item from a garage sale) • A student performance or presentation • A radio or video program (news story scripts/ads) • A fundraiser • An interview with someone in the community • A web-based project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classifying words into categories • Odd word out • Memory challenge and Yes/No games • Jumbled spelling dictation • Ordering and sorting (Sequencing) • In class surveys • Tasks based on familiar songs (i.e. matching words to song lines) • Picture puzzles (find the differences or similarities) (p.156) • Pair or group work, story telling, sharing experiences • Reading + discussion • Brainstorming • Fact-finding • Comparing, matching • Problem-solving (i.e. puzzles, logic problems, incomplete stories etc.)

From an examination of the types of things teachers and students do for tasks and what they do for projects, it is clear to see that projects require effort beyond one class and also often beyond the classroom as well. Project-based learning is in effect, a series of connected tasks which are focused on content and which elicit students' autonomous decisions. There is a continuum occurring and the flexibility of its definition should be permitted, as it reflects in part some of the flexibility of the approach itself. If we tried to put PBL into a neat little box so to speak, we would be going against the very fabric of PBL's roots in democratic and participatory learning. As long as the basic components

(as outlined by Stoller (1997) and Legutke & Thomas (1991)) are upheld, the approach lends itself as a flexible, motivating, and empowering vehicle for learning.

Aside from Content-based Learning and Task-based Learning, PBL does not have any other approaches which are as similar. They all fall under the Communicative Approach, as all require learners to be active participants in the negotiation of meaning (Savignon, 2001). These three approaches are truly complementary, as PBL would not be complete without either of them. The real challenge is to recognize the benefits of each approach and how a more integrated approach can offer the most benefits to students and provide a maximal learning environment. The next section will discuss examples of research conducted which used Project-based Learning in its many forms.

2.3. Research in second language education using projects

This section discusses some key studies which have used Project-based Learning in its various forms and implementations. Different instructional settings, diverse student populations, instructional objectives, institutional constraints and available resources may cause PBL to be translated into many different practices (Stoller, 2006).

One example of PBL which occurs frequently in the literature was undertaken in Germany in the early 1980s, with a group of elementary learners (age 11) of English. This is known as the *Airport Project* (Humberg et al. 1983; Thiel, 1984; Legutke, 1985). These students set out to explore the communicative use of English at the Frankfurt International Airport. The students spent three weeks before the trip to the airport preparing to interview English-speaking passengers and airline employees about their destinations, jobs, and opinions about Germany. These interviews were to be recorded

and edited so that they could be used in future classes as sources of input. The elementary learners worked together and were able to greet the challenge of the project task with success. According to Legutke (1993), “They interacted successfully with a variety of English speakers from different parts of the world, generated, organized and processed input that was much more complex and interesting than what was offered by the school curriculum, and they prepared and provided input for fellow learners during follow-up lessons (e.g. their edited best interviews)” (p. 314). The approach of this project included a task-based focus, along with a team approach that involved interpersonal interaction and training in social, managerial and media skills as part of the overall language education. One particular comment of interest is the comment made by a German cameraman (who was filming the project for TV), “I wish I could have learned English like this!” (Thiel, 1984, p. 141). According to Legutke (1985), “Learners have always come back to their classrooms with an increased sense of achievement and self-confidence – the impact of which could be felt and perceived immediately” (p. 29). Papandreou (1994) states that projects are a form of collaborative learning which “contributes not only to cognitive learning outcomes but also provides the opportunity for students to learn together, sharing views and problems, respecting each other’s feelings, and developing group and social skills” (p. 42). These positive reviews are part of the driving force behind the intentions of this study and in investigating the use of projects in ESL classrooms.

Carter and Thomas (1986) discuss the organization of various small projects that included ESL students teaching native English-speaking elementary students in the

United Kingdom. They had an overall successful experience, and saw their ESL students contributing to cross-cultural knowledge.

Hilton-Jones (1988) discusses a six-week project-based English language course in the U.K., which had a group of West German teenagers practicing listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in English. They were able to improve their language learning needs through the use of a project.

Gardner (1995) implemented a video documentary project at the University of Hong Kong which was intended to allow students to exercise their academic listening comprehension and note-taking skills. The results were generally positive in that students improved not only their listening and note-taking skills, but also their writing skills.

In one systematic research study, Beckett's (1999) doctoral dissertation explores the implementation of project-based instruction in a Canadian secondary school class. Her study examined ESL teacher goals for, and ESL teacher and student evaluations of, project-based instruction. Analysis of the observation and interview data of two teachers indicated that the teachers favored project-based instruction because it allowed them to take a multi-skill approach to language teaching. Positive feedback was given with regards to project work as providing contexts for their students to learn English functionally, and that the learners were able to find out their strengths and weaknesses. Beckett observed 73 students from Taiwan, Hong Kong and China who were interviewed upon completion of their project work. According to observations and analysis of students' written work, they learned a large amount of knowledge and skills through the use of projects. However, the analysis of observations, interviews and students' written work found mixed evaluations. Only 18% of the 73 students said they liked project-based

instruction, whereas 25% said they had mixed feelings, and 57% said they did not like it. They may have been used to a more teacher-centered educational culture from their home countries (e.g. China) (Beckett, 2002, p. 63), which may explain why they did not like this approach. These results help establish a significance for the current study, as it allows for another student population to express their views about PBL.

In another systematic study, Eyring (1989) found teacher evaluations to be mixed, although this was a case study documenting only one US teacher's experience implementing project-based instruction for the first time. The teacher, Susan (pseudonym), was impressed by the students' oral presentation skills, their design of a real-life activity as part of the project, and writing a thank-you letter to some guest speakers. She also reported some frustrations and tension, however, as negotiating the curriculum with the students was often complex and demanding. She found that students were complaining that they were not learning enough academic skills while conducting projects. In the end, she reverted to "more traditional, teacher-directed activities" (Eyring, 1989, p. 113). This study also examined 11 Asian, European, and Latin-American students' attitudinal and proficiency responses to this form of instruction. Although students made their own plans, and seemed to have completed all the tasks as required, they felt a great deal of tension. They commented that, "allowing so much input and 'authority' was not good in an academic class" (p.176). Many of the students reported a desire for a more traditional way of learning (teacher-centered instruction, studying vocabulary and grammar points separately). I find these comments particularly interesting, as in my own experience as an ESL teacher, and a PBL supporter, I have attempted a project in class and have experienced similar results (in June of 2007). My

students (all adults in their 20s, from Brazil, Mexico and Korea) seemed interested in the project at the outset, but after a week and a half, they started to ask for more grammar practice and more traditional teaching methods. This was also discouraging for me, as I felt my students were lacking the realization of how great a learning opportunity the project could be. When the literature and research is clearly representative of my own experiences, it seems valid, but also raises questions about how to make Project-based Learning a viable and desirable method of instruction for students.

One other empirical study focusing on teacher experiences while implementing a project work approach in an adult setting has more recently been completed. This is Doherty and Eyring's (2006) case study which focuses on the experiences of three instructors, a university professor, a graduate student, and an adult ESL teacher who collaboratively taught a multi-skills project in adult ESL. The students researched the effects of the "post-911" attack on the United States and how it affected their lives. The instructors documented their experiences throughout the project. The researchers found that this learning situation was very diverse, with a range of multi-level and multicultural adult students. They noted that project work created challenges for the teachers as well as provided sociocultural and pedagogical insights. The instructors also abandoned or adjusted lesson plans more often than would be normal in a more traditional classroom. Learner input and feedback provided them with the basis with which to introduce resources, scaffold information and adjust to learner preferences while facilitating group work. Overall, Doherty and Eyring (2006) stated that "...implementing project work required a flexible attitude toward plans on the part of the instructors" (p. 103). Material selection was also an issue, with difficult authentic texts being abandoned, or adapted,

which surprised the more inexperienced teacher and teacher who had been out of the ESL classroom for some time. Supplementary materials supporting progress towards their goals also had to be designed. All three instructors agreed with narrowing the initial topic choices as to allow students to move more quickly into a more formal organization of ideas (due to time constraints of the course). This article also provides ten easy to understand and useful suggestions for future implementations of project work in the adult ESL setting. The discussion and collaboration between the three instructors also allowed them to work through the problems in a more dynamic and positive way than in Eyring's (1989) case study documenting the ESL university project.

Case (2006) also did an empirical study examining how teachers face students from a variety of racial, linguistic and religious backgrounds. It is focused on how teachers adapt their beliefs and practices while using project work for science instruction. Data was drawn from a previous 2-year study done between 1999 and 2001 examining the practices of middle school teachers of newcomers. Follow up interviews were also included, which took place in 2004. The diverse conditions teachers face when dealing with a variety of ethnicities, religions, classes and literacy levels has been noted as causing teachers to become imbalanced, and forces them to question how to enact constructivist-based instruction and project work (Case, 2006, p. 9). This article also discusses project work as a conduit for change, specifically, how one teacher of newcomers used a project-based, constructivist framework in order to teach science. This study provides instructional excerpts from the teacher, Ms. Smith, and examples of student work such as journals, written work and drawings. Overall, project work was successfully adapted for the newcomers' classroom.

There are other examples under experiential learning in the literature which are closely related to the notion of project work. One such study is exemplified by Hill and Martyn (2004), which was done with adults in the workplace in Hong Kong. The focus of the language learning in Hill and Martyn's (2004) study was on business writing and communication skills. Students were given the opportunity to experience a two-week work placement with companies in Hong Kong. It was intended that the experiential nature of the work placement would strengthen the learners' knowledge of English in a realistic work setting. The seven students who were selected for the course were matched with employers who had given positive feedback previously (Hill & Martyn, 2004, p. 76). There were three workshops during the course, which helped with oral and written skills. Details of the students' activities, experience and feedback were collected in the form of journals, course evaluations, as well as video-taped reflective commentaries. Evaluation forms and teacher-conducted interviews were the feedback forms from hosts, and were collected during visits to the workplace. The study provided summaries of each of the students' experiences, all with positive remarks about the program. There were a few downfalls, such as matching hosts to students was time-consuming and expectations were not always clearly articulated; arranging placements was also difficult; and the course was also a non-credit bearing which may have had an effect on student's motivation. However, overall, it was very successful and resulted in a win-win situation for both the students and the employers.

Experiential language learning can also be realized by providing opportunities for students in the community as volunteers. Beck & Simpson (1993) report on some of the benefits of experiential learning, and describe a volunteer-work program, along with a

case study which provided opportunities for both language learning and personal growth. Students in this study were sent out individually once a week to volunteer at selected organizations and to perform tasks equal to those of Canadian volunteers. The learning of culture was one of the main objectives of the school in this study. The school found their first attempt at placement was not a success, as the student reported that she did not get to interact with the residents at the retirement home, and was given menial tasks. Upon further inspection and preparation of the program, the school called for a more rigorous approach. Clear job descriptions for the students were mandatory, as well as a choice of placement. Monitoring procedures were also put in place, as well as visits to a variety of organizations in order to reduce student anxiety when stepping into a new volunteer position. After these improvements were made, students gave much better evaluations, having high satisfaction and admitting they benefited from the experience in a variety of ways. The case study student, Naomi, also improved dramatically over the 7 week placement period. She was able to complete difficult tasks in translating tourist materials for Japanese visitors at Goldstream Provincial Park as well as gain confidence in her English speaking ability. According to Beck & Simpson, “While Naomi’s case might be more spectacular than most, her case is typical in the way her learning experience branched out into so many different and unexpected areas of personal and psychological growth” (p. 117). The community service program allowed students to become active planners in their own language learning, creating a more autonomous and motivated environment for learning. Naomi took part in preparing an assignment of addressing a group of students from her school at the park (in English) and to take them on a gold-panning expedition. This project was given in the seventh week of her placement, and

required a week of preparation, plus adding to her content knowledge gained previously (p. 116-117).

Another significant study pertinent to this study is Miles Turnbull's (1999) thesis, which examined French immersion and the multidimensional project-based curriculum. Turnbull believes the next best language learning situation to full immersion is an intensive classroom in which French is learnt through the medium of content or in a multidimensional project-based core French program. In this approach, the teacher organizes activities that promote the use of the target language in a meaningful and purposeful way by using subject matter or themes relevant to the students' lives. Students work towards the completion of an educationally relevant final project, with the activities leading up to completion being primarily needs-based. Turnbull examined if a multidimensional approach led to more satisfactory outcomes in language proficiency and achievement than a less multidimensional approach. He also examined the attitudinal, cultural and general language education objectives of core French in each type of classroom. Turnbull's thesis is a case study, and examined four different classes. His study suggests that multidimensional project-based teaching in core French is an effective teaching approach to realize the linguistic and communicative objectives of core French. The test scores indicated that the students in the multidimensional project-based core French classes were more proficient and got higher test results in French than those in the less multidimensional classes. The data from his questionnaires also suggests that a more multidimensional project-based approach may lead to more satisfactory outcomes with respect to the general language education objectives for the program. Turnbull's thesis is

interesting in that it provides evidence for the benefits of the use of a multi-dimensional project-based approach in one language learning context.

Another area that is growing within the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the use of technology and media for learning. The use of the World Wide Web as a resource and as a focus of a project is becoming increasingly prevalent, and is exemplified in Robb's (2000) study which focused on teaching writing with Web projects. Robb created a Web-based collection of almost 300 essays on famous personages in Japan. University students majoring in English had to create Web pages as part of their course work as well as create the biographical profile on a famous individual in Japan. The class had to brainstorm a list of famous people, choose three people to write about, take a hypertext markup language (HTML) template and substitute their own information for that in the template. The teacher (Robb) would then view the Web page and check it for errors and content and upload it to the main page. Some of the students still experience responses or questions to what they posted, requiring further responses from the student to messages generated by the project. This was one major benefit of the project which was not an anticipated outcome. This slow but steady flow of unsolicited email provides practice for those students in an EFL context and appears to be motivating for them as well. Robb also provided his students with the server's log to show how many hits a day their site received, which also convinced the students of the project's worth. In the questionnaire at the end of the course, the project was the most highly valued aspect of the course. Robb also provides some practical ideas for the use of projects and helpful advice about citing sources, maintaining pages, considering webpage design and a few other aspects of HTML use.

Warschauer (1998) and Fang & Warschauer (2004) are two more examples of using technology for projects. Warschauer's (1998) paper on technology and Indigenous language revitalization created one of the first bulletin board systems operating entirely in an indigenous language. He reports on two years of ethnographic research on the results of the project and addresses issues about the role of the internet in promoting or hindering linguistic diversity, among others. One of the students who was involved with the internet-based activities reported, "It's like a double advantage for us, we're learning how to use new tools, like new technology and new tools, at the same time we're doing it in Hawaiian language, and so we get to learn two things at once..." (p. 146). It is this duality of doing a project which can be so beneficial for students. In Warschauer's (1998) words: "In my view, the work of Hawaiians represents an excellent model of a group of people working to positively amplify existing cultural practices in an on-line environment" (p. 157). This paper represents some of the overarching ability of a project (such as building a bulletin board system on-line) to unite and build a social network capable of preserving a language.

Fang & Warschauer (2004) also report on the effects of project-based courses which incorporate technology into traditional lecture courses. There was a technology-enhanced reform initiative at a university in eastern China, and a faculty team used a change in pedagogy and curriculum in order to better prepare English majors for international communication, collaboration and research. Two project-based courses were examined using participant observations, surveys, interviews and text analysis. The study was an embedded case study occurring between 1998 and 2003. Overall, they found that project-based instruction affected instructional methods and materials as well as learning

processes and outcomes (p.308). There was a definite increase in authentic interaction, learner autonomy, and relevance of the course's content to students' lives and careers. There was a negative side to the findings, as faculty found that teaching using a project-based approach required more time and effort and there were issues with student-centered learning clashing with more traditional teaching methods and incentives in Chinese universities. The following table adopted from Fang & Warschauer (2004, p. 309) shows how the courses changed with the project-based revisions.

Table 2

Comparison of Pedagogy in Traditional and Project-based Courses (Fang & Warschauer, 2004, p. 309)

Aspect of Pedagogy	Pedagogy in traditional courses	Pedagogy after project-based revisions
Reading materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course textbook (97%) • Occasional extra reading materials (3%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course textbook (20%) • Reference books, Websites, community data (80%)
Time spent on specific tasks (lesson plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture (75%) • Grammar exercises (15%) • Class discussion (10%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture (10%) • Project work (85%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Extensive reading (10%) -Social investigation (30%) -Academic writing (40%) -Electronic presentation (5%) • Evaluation (5%)
Assessment procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written test (90%) (Midterm 30% + Final 60%) • Class performance & Attendance (10%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student portfolios (80%) • Evaluation sheets (20%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Personal evaluation (10%) -Group evaluation (10%)

Moving slightly beyond the World Wide Web, but still within the realm of technology and media is photography. The use of photography is also a common tool used in PBL, as photovoice, or photo novella, is an approach to PBL which uses students' photography combined with their written accounts of the images. Photovoice provides learners with the opportunity to locate the activities present in the photos within a context of special social, economic, and political concerns (Brydon-Miller, 2006). There have been numerous studies under this pretense, and although they may not be represented in the literature as PBL specifically, they do exemplify Freire's (1983) practice of critical pedagogy and the use of language central to the student's own experience. Some studies include improving health care for women in rural China (Wang, 1999; Wang & Burris, 1994; Wang, Burris & Ping, 1996); Mayan women in Guatemala using photovoice to address violence, poverty and political disenfranchise (Lykes, 2001; McIntyre & Lykes, 2004); photovoice for at-risk middle school students (Meyer, Hamilton, Kroeger, Stewart); and also with recently arrived refugees documenting their own lives (Brydon-Miller, 2001b). These various projects are examples of PBL as a "truly liberatory process for educators and learners alike" (Brydon-Miller, 2006, p. 46).

In line with the concepts of democratic learning and acceptance through an examination of one's own understanding of the world is culture learning. Andrews (2000) also incorporated the World Wide Web as a tool for teaching and learning culture. This was done in a first-year university elective unit on French and francophone cultures. Two French classes of students, six and eight respectively, used the Web for research and presentations as their primary resource in order to further their knowledge about French culture. They produced Web pages on topics relating to French or francophone cultures

and some had Web forums which corresponded with partners at the University of Rouen. Teachers' involved with the projects kept weekly logs, interviewed students, and created 'portraits' or 'vignettes' of the 1998 classes. Andrews (2000, p. 360) discusses authenticity and proposes that the "...use of the Web may make language study more rewarding and effective in the 'here and now' of the classroom." One of the drawbacks mentioned was that contact with the target culture in a project-oriented CALL classroom was also less filtered than in a traditional classroom, with less teacher control as a selector and adapter of target language input. However, despite there being more authentic contact with the target culture, doing the project did not necessarily restructure the students' cultural knowledge. Overall, Andrew found that a project-oriented use of the Web provided more authentic contact with the target culture, gave students freer access to new information, and allowed them to communicate with native-speaking informants in real-time. It did not change their understanding of the target culture as quickly as a teacher-centered approach may have done, but did foster critical reflection on the Web as a medium.

Similar in topic to Andrew (1998), is Allen's (2004) article on implementing a culture portfolio project to identify stereotypes about the cultures of French-speaking countries. Thirty-one intermediate students of French at a Midwestern university took part in completing a culture portfolio project, which involved reading authentic French documents, posting messages on an online newsgroup and in French chat rooms, and corresponding with their key pals. Students had to also give a poster session displaying their findings and cultural comparisons. Overall, there were positive results in that students restructured their existing understandings about French culture, as well as

recognized the impact of their own culturally conditioned perceptions on their understanding of other cultures. Students became more aware of their own metacognitive processes and developed critical thinking skills. The student self-evaluation showed positive results with regards to student perceptions of meeting the project's objectives.

Global Simulation (GS) is also another area which lends itself to Project-based Learning. In fact, separating the two approaches is very difficult, as there are examples of Global simulation projects which exemplify the types of things done using PBL. Levine (2004) considers GS to be made up of three main elements: "(1) reality of function, (2) simulated environment, and (3) structure, as well as it must be task-based, contain a briefing and debriefing phase and be based on a single situation or premise" (p. 27). Levine (2004) shares three different "Global Simulation" courses, which I think could also be considered project-based courses. He discusses courses which were implemented in second-year university German. The course format required students to work collaboratively and complete a long term task organized around a single scenario. During these global simulations, students were to learn about the target culture as well as language through content knowledge. The three courses were as follows: Virtual Museum of German Cultures, German Language Film Festival, and www.technomode.de, an Internet-based retail company. Levine interchanges and connects GS with the term project on more than one occasion (see pp. 29 & 30) for each of the global simulations he discusses.

Another study related to Global Simulation and project work is Dupuy's (2006) article *L'Immeuble: French Language and Culture Teaching and Learning Through Projects in Global Simulation*. Dupuy discusses a foreign language and content learning

project using Debyser's (1996) creative GS workbook, *L'Immeuble* (the apartment building). This article discusses the theoretical basis for GS and how it can accommodate the changes in foreign language teaching and learning so prevalent in today's age. She describes students in a third year, intermediate-high level French course at a large university in the U.S. She discusses their reactions to the workbook, reporting positive feedback from students. They enjoyed the collaborative work, opportunities to engage in creative writing and having a say in the direction and shape of the project. This project also allowed students to realize they could recycle previous knowledge they had acquired in previous and current classes and experiences. This article provided another source of primarily positive opinions regarding GS and Project-based Learning which were evaluated as being mixed in Beckett's (2002) study. While this article is mainly about an implementation model for *L'Immeuble*, (a GS project designed for a French setting, Paris) it can be applied and transferred to other L2 contexts as well.

2.4 Summary of literature review

As I have discussed previously, Project-based Learning has taken many forms and has been used in many contexts. The foundations of this approach are rooted in Dewey, Kilpatrick, Kolb and Freire's theories of action-based learning, experiential learning and democratic principles. Tying in closely with these concepts are Buytendijik and Vygotsky's ideas about the importance of group dynamics and the value of culture and interpersonal communication for learning. Piaget's work has also provided a basis for the development of PBL, as without a strong tendency for cognitive development and

creativity in learning, we would find ourselves confined to more traditional, linear theories of learning. Without these underlying concepts from these educational researchers, we would not have arrived at our current understanding of modern education.

Defining PBL within a second language context has relied upon the foundations, but also requires knowledge of second language pedagogy and practice. While there are many other names for PBL, it is important to understand that there are key ingredients which contribute to the whole picture. Ultimately, PBL requires a theme-based, experiential cycle calling for learner autonomy and cooperative necessity. PBL has an interdisciplinary approach to learning, and uses a process and product orientation. It should also mirror real-life tasks. It goes beyond Content-based Learning and Task-based Learning, but connects them all together in an effort to use content and tasks to achieve a final end product.

Examining some of the key studies within the context of PBL, I have found a few distinctive areas with which PBL fits. These include experiential learning and out-of-the-classroom experiences (Humberg et al, 1983; Thiel, 1984, Legutke, 1985; Carter & Thomas, 1986; Beck & Simpson, 1993; and Hill & Martyn, 2004). By providing opportunities for students to interact with speakers of the target language, whether it is through work placement (Hill & Martyn, 2004) or volunteering opportunities (Beck & Simpson, 1993), these types of studies have shown very positive outcomes for students' personal and psychological growth as well as language learning. Turnbull's (1999) thesis also provides further evidence for the positive effects of a more multi-dimensional, project-based approach within a French immersion context.

Another area prospering from the use of PBL is in technology and media for language learning. Studies such as those by Robb (2000), Warshauer (1998), Fang & Warschauer (2004), Andrews (2000), Allen (2004) and Levine (2004) can also provide us with an understanding of the challenges for teachers in using the WWW in a project-based approach. Within the realm of technology and use of the WWW is another overlapping concept closely associated with PBL, and that is culture learning. Andrews (2000) and Allen (2004) both used the WWW to help their students further understand stereotypes about the target culture (in both studies, it was on French and francophone culture).

Photography is another area rich in the use of PBL, and many studies using photo voice or photo novella have an interdisciplinary approach which call upon Freire's notions of critical pedagogy and generative themes (Brydon-Miller, 2006). By combining students' photography with their written accounts, students' are empowered and can relate more directly to their community and its relevant political, social or economic concerns. See Wang, 1999, Wang & Burris, 1994, Wang, Burris & Ping, 1996, Lykes, 2001, McIntyre & Lykes, 2004, Meyer, Hamilton, Kroeger, Stewart, & Brydon-Miller, 2004 and Brydon-Miller, 2001b for further discussion of these types of projects.

The last area related to PBL is the very similar method of using Global Simulation (GS). Levine (2004) and Dupuy (2006) both used GS to learn about the target language and culture. By re-creating situations in a collaborative atmosphere, students in these studies were able to create their own representations of the target culture and in turn, become more proficient language learners.

Last, but not least, are the systematic studies done by Eyring (1989), Beckett (1999) and Doherty & Eyring (2006) which examined ESL teacher evaluations and goals for PBL as well as student reactions to this approach. All three studies found positive and negative aspects while using PBL, with some of the main findings being mixed. This leads me to my next section, my research questions which strive to further add to this mixture of results and help shed some light in this area by providing direct evidence from teachers and students. The questionnaires, interviews and artifacts used in this study will provide opinions about PBL, using quotes and Likert scales to provide this evidence.

2.5 Research Questions

There were five main questions examined in this study, these are as follows:

1. What are English as a second language teachers' and students' perspectives about project-based learning (PBL)?
2. Are teachers' and student's perspectives about PBL the same or different? (What are the similarities and differences?)
3. Are there any differences in the way teachers and students view PBL at different institutions?
4. What aspects of PBL are more favorable to teachers and students?
5. What aspects of PBL are being used more often by teachers in classrooms?

Research questions one and two are intended to explore, in general, teachers' and students' perspectives about the various components of Project-based Learning (PBL) and to determine if there any discrepancies or significant differences between the two.

Question three focuses on the results of teachers' and students' perspectives according to their institution, in order to more fully understand what type of teaching situation PBL is most fully represented or utilized. Questions four and five were included to separate what aspects of a project-based approach were favorable to teachers and students, whereas question five examines the extent to which the different aspects of PBL are actually being used in the classroom.

Chapter three – Methodology

3.1 Participants

This section will discuss the participants involved in this study. This study involved a total of 118 participants. There were 88 student participants and 30 teacher participants. The students were from two different ESL institutions in the Greater Victoria region. The teachers were from three different ESL institutions also in the Victoria area. At the two schools for student participants, the students ranged from upper-intermediate to advanced levels. School A was the first school where I collected data and consisted of primarily international students, 65 in total, with 28 males and 37 females. This school has a four month semester. I did not ask for their specific age, but rather their age group, as I wished to avoid any students feeling shy about their age. It was not important for me to know their exact age. In terms of the age groups, 47 students fell between the 18-25 age group range, 17 students were in the 26-35 age group range, none fell in the 36-45 or 56+ age groups range, and only 1 fell in the 46-55 age group. This shows that the students at School A were primarily younger students, whose main aims for learning English included things such as: getting a job, traveling, having conversation with English speakers, and studying at a university in North America. The multicultural make-up of the students at School A was as follows: 25 Japanese, 21 Koreans, 5 Taiwanese, 5 Chinese, 4 Mexicans, 1 French-Canadian, 1 Indonesian and 1 Italian student. The students had been studying English in Canada for varying lengths of time, ranging from two months up to 1 year and 3 months, with only one student being a resident of Canada for 10 years.

There were 23 students at School B, which consisted primarily of immigrants living in Canada. This was a much smaller school as classes had 2 to 9 students per class. There were 5 males and 18 females. With regards to age range, 5 students fell in the 26-35 age group range, 15 in the 36-45 age group, 2 in the 46-55 age group and 1 in the 56+ age group. There were no students in the 18-25 age group range. There was also a diverse cultural mix at this school, with 8 Koreans, 5 Chinese, 2 Japanese, 2 Mexicans, 2 Taiwanese, and 1 Syrian, 1 Portuguese, 1 Thai and 1 Colombian student. The students at School B have resided in Canada for a various lengths of time, ranging from as little as one month, up to 6 years. The majority of students at School B have been in Canada for over a year (only 5 had been in Canada for less than a year). The following table summarizes the main characteristics of the student participants.

Table 3

Student Characteristics

Participants: Students	Total	Gender		Age Range					Nationalities
		M	F	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	
School A	65	28	37	47	17	0	1	0	21 Korean 5 Chinese 25 Japanese 4 Mexican 5 Taiwanese 1 French-Canadian 1 Indonesian 1 Italian
School B	23	5	18	0	5	15	2	1	8 Korean 5 Chinese 2 Japanese 2 Mexican 2 Taiwanese 1 Syrian 1 Portuguese 1 Thai 1 Colombian

There were 30 teachers involved in this study from three different schools. Originally I had planned to only have teachers participate from the same two schools as the students, however, I felt that the lack of teacher participation would affect the overall results, with too few a number for quantitative analysis, so I went to a third school to collect more data from teachers for the general analysis. There were 12 teachers from School A, 6 from School B, and 12 teachers from the third school, School C. The teacher group consisted of 13 males and 17 females. The age group range of teachers was as follows: none in the 18-25 range, 4 in the 26-35 age group, 13 in the 36-45 age group, 5 in the 46-55 age group, 6 in the 56+ range and two unknown. Their teaching experience ranged from 3 years to about 30 years. The following table outlines the teacher participants' characteristics in more detail, according to their school.

Table 4

Teacher characteristics

Participants: Teachers	Total	Gender		Age Range					
		M	F	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	Unknown
School A	12	5	7	0	2	4	1	4	1
School B	6	2	4	0	1	3	1	0	1
School C	12	6	6	0	1	6	3	2	0

The teachers from School A had a variety of backgrounds, but there were 5 males and 7 females, with the majority of teachers in the 36-45 and 56+ age groups. All had at least a university bachelor's degree. The majority of teachers (4) have a BA plus some other English teaching certification (i.e., TESOL, CELTA, RSA, Cambridge and TESL). Three teachers at School A have Master's degrees (two of which have another English teaching

certification), and three have Bachelor's degrees with no extra certification indicated on the background section of the questionnaire. One teacher has two BA degrees and a diploma in Applied Linguistics.

I have treated teachers and students as homogenous groups, teachers are one group despite their gender, various ages and teaching backgrounds, and students are one group, despite differences in gender, age, language proficiency, and language backgrounds.

Teachers were recruited in three ways, first, a general email was sent out via the school director, informing them about the research project. Secondly, I went to a general staff meeting to introduce myself in person and explain the requirements and ethics involved. Lastly, I would occasionally visit the main teacher's room and talk to teachers in person, encouraging them to partake in the study.

Students were recruited through participating teachers. If their teacher had agreed to participate with the questionnaire and interview, he or she would then ask his or her class if they would be willing to also participate by filling out the student version of the survey. Some teachers allowed class time for the students to fill out the survey, whereas others gave it to students as an optional homework activity, as participation was entirely voluntary. The recruitment for student interviews was done through one question on the survey itself, which asked if they would be willing to be interviewed. If the student checked yes, he/she would then write his/her contact information and I would then follow up. Most students were contacted via email, but some interviews were arranged in person while I was visiting the class.

3.2 Research Design

The design of this study is both quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative data comes from the Likert scale questions on the survey. Qualitative data was collected in three forms; 1) open-ended questions on the survey 2) one-on-one interviews and 3) the collection artifacts (any available worksheets or handouts from the classes). This study had a significant amount of quantitative predetermined questions (26 in total), so it is not entirely descriptive. It is deductive in nature, as specific reactions to the elements of Project-based Learning are explored. Decisions were made prior to the start of data collection, thus making this study leaning towards the analytic side (Seliger & Shohamy, 2008). The data collected are naturalistic as there was no treatment given and there was no interference with the participants' natural behaviours.

3.3 Questionnaire Design

The main instrument in this study is the questionnaire. A single questionnaire was designed and then modified by altering the instructions and wording of the items according to its audience (see Appendix C for teachers and Appendix D for students). The questionnaire aimed to obtain perspectives about Project-based Learning, and offer insight into the positive or negative side of various components of Project-based Learning. The questions were based on definitions and overviews of the various components of a project-based approach.

The questionnaire did not include any questions about sensitive issues such as specific age, race, income, state of health, marital status, educational background, sporting achievements, social standing, criminal behavior, sexual activity or bad habits

(Dornyei, 2003). A cover page at the beginning of the questionnaire discusses general instruction with a reference to the participant consent form. The questionnaire did not take more than 30 minutes to complete by teachers or students. This is a good length of time as suggested by Dornyei (2003). I piloted the questionnaires first in order to check the length of time and ease of questions. The pilot will be explained in more detail in section 3.4. The questionnaires are a highly structured data collection instrument, with questions asking about very specific pieces of information regarding Project-based Learning. Various response options on a Likert scale from 1 to 6 were available for the respondents to choose from. This enabled the questionnaire data to be suitable for quantitative, statistical analyses.

The questionnaire consists of 5 main sections, a background questionnaire, an opinion section, a frequency section, a project examples section, and finally, 3 open-ended questions. The final section with the open-ended questions also thanked participants for their help.

3.4 Pilot Study

Upon completion of the initial questionnaire, it was modified (reworded) to suit both teachers and students. The questionnaires were piloted at a private ESL school in the Greater Victoria area during August, 2007. The purpose of the pilot study was to examine if any of the questions proved to be problematic and to estimate the amount of time the questionnaire would take to complete for teachers and students. The students' questionnaire was administered during regular class time to intact classes. It was completed with 23 students at the intermediate and upper intermediate levels, in two

different classes. There were 9 teachers who took part in the pilot study, for a total of 32 participants. There were no restrictions on the levels taught by teachers due to a small number of participants available at the appropriate levels. All of the teachers were asked to write on the front of his/her questionnaire the time it took to complete, with the average time being between 20 and 30 minutes, depending on how much the teacher wrote in the open-ended section. It was the same for students, with the intermediate level taking about 25 minutes to complete the questionnaire and the upper intermediate class taking about 30 minutes.

There were minor changes made to the teacher and student questionnaires, which included some aesthetic appearances. I changed some of the text fonts and moved text and directions around to be on the same page. There were also a few questions which were reworded for the students, making them more clear and simplified.

The results of the pilot study gave me some initial feedback about the general opinions and usage of a project-based approach. Teachers' overall mean for the opinion section was 4.76, closer to the 'agree' answer than the 'partly agree' answer. In the frequency section, teachers had a mean of 3.85, which was closest to the 'often' answer. These results showed that the teachers at the pilot school were favorable to the approach, but do not implement aspects of PBL as much as they would like. Students from the intermediate class had a mean of 4.14 (partly agree) in the opinion section. Their respective teacher had a mean of 4.65, slightly more agreeable to the components of PBL than his class. In the frequency section, the intermediate class had a mean of 3.66 which lay between 'sometimes' and 'often.' It was encouraging to note their teacher had a mean of 3.89, slightly closer to the 'often' response; these results showed that there was

consistency in what the teacher thought he was doing in class and what his students think he does in class. The intermediate class showed a more favorable attitude towards PBL than the extent to which it was being used by their teacher in the classroom (4.14 and 4.65 to 3.66 and 3.89).

The results from the pilot study initially lead me to believe that students and teachers would be receptive to handling a project-based approach. The upper intermediate class had a mean of 4.72 in the opinion section, slightly higher than the intermediate class. These results suggest that higher level students who are capable of handling more demanding tasks may be better candidates for a project-based approach. The pilot study showed some interesting results with regards to attitudes about PBL and was beneficial in providing me with participants with which to try out the questionnaires.

3.5 Interview Questions

I also used one-on-one, semi-structured (Seliger & Shohamy, 2008, p. 167) interviews to collect interview data regarding opinions on Project-based Learning (PBL). The goal of the interviews was to further explore teachers' and students' opinions about PBL in more depth. I also wanted the participants to provide spontaneous answers beyond the scope of the questionnaire. According to Seliger & Shohamy (2008), "Interviews are personalized and therefore permit a level of in-depth information-gathering, free response, and flexibility that cannot be obtained by other procedures. The interviewer can probe for information and obtain data that have often not been foreseen" (p. 166). The interviews were chosen as a form of data collection because they are personalized, and allow for a certain level of in-depth information-gathering, flexibility

and free response which cannot be collected by other means (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). It is also important to note, however, that using any self-reporting qualitative methods such as interviews or open-ended survey questions must be carefully considered. They can have disadvantages such as the potential for subconscious bias, potential inconsistencies, not anonymous and scheduling is somewhat restricted (Brown, 2001, p. 75).

The interview was semi-structured, with a set of specific questions pre-selected, but still allowing for some elaboration in the questions and answers. Brown (2001) states that "...interviews are relatively flexible and personal, and provide for relatively rich data in written or spoken forms. The flexibility of interviews allows the interviewer to explore new avenues of opinion in ways that a questionnaire does not...The richness of the interview data also leads to more possibilities in terms of exploring the issues involved..." (p.78). These interviews were audio-recorded using a SONY microphone and recorder. Students and teachers were aware they were being recorded and had signed the appropriate consent forms before participating in this part of the research. They had also been asked on the questionnaire in section V if they would be willing to be interviewed. This was how I got participants for this part of the study. I felt this allowed them to decide freely without pressure and in an entirely voluntary manner if they would like to participate in the interviews. The interview questions were also designed to be as parallel as possible, with some questions being the same. Please see Appendices E and F for differences. Number 12 was the only question which was not included in the student questions, as I felt it was not relevant to students in any way. It is ultimately the teacher's decision about what kind of teaching approach he or she will use, and the constraints

placed by the school or teaching situation would then affect the teacher's ability to carry out the approach or not. Students usually do not have a direct decision in what kind of teaching approach they receive.

3.6 Artifact collection

A third form of data collection was also used, in keeping with research theories of triangulation. The ability of the researcher to confirm findings, either by re-inspection or by demonstrating the same findings through different sources is a process referred to as 'triangulation' (Long, 1983). I felt having artifacts (handouts or lesson plans) from the teachers whose classes I surveyed would enable me to compare what they said they were doing with what types of things they were actually doing in class. This qualitative method was put in place as another means to collect data so that a more complete picture of their reports on Project-based Learning could be analyzed.

This part of the main study proved to be rather inconsistent, as some of the teachers were very willing to provide me with artifacts from their classes, and others were less inclined to do so. I took what was offered and wrote several email reminders to the teachers; however, I felt this section of the research was unfortunately not brought to its full potential due to a lack of participation from teachers. I was given several handouts pertaining directly to projects that were conducted in some of the teachers' classes during the research, which I will discuss more in Chapter Four, in the analysis Section 4.14.

3.7 Data Collection and Procedures

The data collection for the main study took place from October 2007 until February 2008. The reason it was so lengthy was due to a lack of teacher participation for the general surveys. I had a goal of obtaining at least 30 surveys in total, so after only receiving 12 surveys from School A and 6 surveys from School B, I had to amend my ethics application and go to a third school, School C, to get more teachers to complete the survey. I then received 12 more surveys, at which time I was satisfied with the number of 30 total teacher surveys.

The surveys for the teachers were left with the head teacher of School A, the director of School B and the director of School C. The surveys had the participant consent forms attached as well, so that I could also collect the signatures at the same time. The cover sheet made specific mention of importance of the consent form. The consent forms explained the purpose of this study and assured participants that their participation was entirely voluntary and that there were no risks involved. It also stated that their names would remain anonymous and their data protected. Teachers could take the surveys home or complete them at the school, whichever was more convenient for them. I contacted the teachers through email and also in person at the schools.

As for the students, they were asked by their teacher if they would be willing to participate, and then I went to their class during class time to have them complete the surveys. I did a short presentation of how to fill out the survey and explained that their participation was voluntary. The students did not take more than 30 minutes to complete the survey in School A, during their class. School B was slightly different, in that 2 of the 4 classes asked if they could take the survey home to work on. I did not survey any

students at School C, as I felt 88 student participants were sufficient. School C also consisted of primarily international students (School A), not immigrants and refugees (School B), so in relation to the research question number 3 (Are there any differences in the way teachers' and students' view PBL at different institutions?), a third school for students was not relevant for the purposes of this study. After I collected the surveys for each class, I would take note of the students who had said yes to questions 4 and 5 in Section V, please see Appendix D for this.

I emailed or called the students according to their desired form of contact. The interviews were done in a private room in the same building as their classes. The interviews were on the student's own time and took anywhere from 10 minutes to 30 minutes, depending on how much they had to say about each question. Artifacts (handouts, class exercises, etc.) were collected from participating teachers at various times throughout the data collection period.

Chapter Four – Data Analyses and Results

4.1 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.1.1 Quantitative data from questionnaire

This section discusses the quantitative data from the questionnaire and the statistical analyses of each question. It will cover the overall results between teachers and students, as well as comparisons between the participants at each school. This section focuses on opinions about various components of PBL, the frequency of use of the various components of PBL, and also opinions towards two examples of projects. SPSS 16.0 was used for statistical analyses.

In order to answer the research questions, several analyses needed to be conducted. Research question 1 is: What are English as a second language teachers' and students' perspectives about project-based learning (PBL)? This question required the summation of results for both teachers and students at both schools. A non-parametric test was run, using 2 independent samples. Non-parametric tests were run because the Likert scales were only 1-6, so the data does not represent an interval or ratio scale of measurement. Non-parametric tests also do not make assumptions about the shape of the distribution (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p.204). The alpha level was set at $p=.05$ because it can increase the chance of finding a statistically significant difference. The data is also two-tailed because there is no theoretical or common sense basis for suspecting one mean will be higher than another (Brown, 2001, p. 151). The results addressing research question 1 are discussed in the following section, 4.1.2.

4.1.2 Overall Teacher and Student Perspectives from Questionnaire

In answer to research question one, the opinions of teachers and students regarding PBL were analyzed by examining questionnaire items 1-10 in section II of the questionnaire. This section was designed to elicit perspectives about the various aspects of PBL, but when combined, provide a more complete picture of their opinions overall. There were 5 significant results and one marginally significant result in the opinion Section II, which can be seen in table 5 and figure 6. The aim of the first questionnaire item was to explore whether teachers like using activities that encourage students to reflect upon their classroom activities and learning process, and to make students think about whether they like reflecting on things they do in class. Teachers had a mean of 5.43, between agree and strongly agree. Students had a mean of 4.75, between partly agree and agree. The t-test showed a significant difference ($p=.001$) between teachers' and students' opinions on this item.

Another statistically significant result was regarding working on projects in groups. In questionnaire item 3, teachers had a mean of 5.12, between agree and strongly agree, and students had a mean of 4.35, between partly agree and agree. The t-test showed that the difference was statistically significant ($p=.001$).

Questionnaire item 6 examined opinions about content or theme-based classes rather than linguistically focused ones and had a marginally significant result, where $p=.051$. Questionnaire item 8 was concerned with the teachers taking on many roles (e.g., facilitator, sharing, and/or instructor). The purpose of this question was to examine if teachers and students were receptive to the teacher taking on a multiplicity of roles. (Legutke & Thomas 1991, p. 159). Teachers had a higher mean of 5.23, between agree

and partly agree and students had a mean of 4.69, between partly agree and agree. The t-test showed a statistical difference ($p=.035$) with regards to the teacher's role.

Questionnaire item 9 also examined opinions about roles, but about students taking on more than one role within the class. Teachers had a mean of 4.93, slightly below agree, and students had a mean of 4.08, slightly above partly agree. Question 9 also had a significant result, where $p=.002$.

The last significant result in the opinion Section 2 (Q10) concerned working on a project for more than a single class session. As projects are meant to last for more than one class, this was a particularly important question to determine if teachers and students enjoyed the continuity of a project. Teachers had a mean of 5.13, between agree and strongly agree and students had a mean of 4.08, slightly above partly agree. The significance was $p=.001$. The following table 5 and the bar graph in figure 6 show the overall results from teachers and students.

Table 5

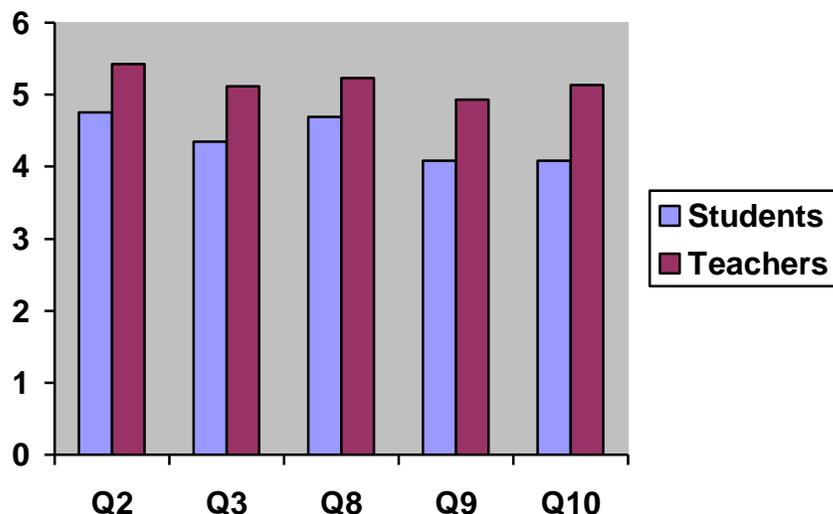
Results of teachers and students overall opinions

Section II Opinions	Teachers n=30		Students n=88		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	4.2	1.215	4.38	1.086	.485
Q2	5.43	0.504	4.75	1.009	.001**
Q3	5.12	0.944	4.35	1.125	.001**
Q4	5.37	0.765	5.14	0.886	.228
Q5	4.87	0.973	5.08	1.053	.211
Q6	4.57	1.135	5.00	1.050	.051
Q7	4.57	1.104	4.26	1.023	.133
Q8	5.23	0.679	4.69	1.188	.035*
Q9	4.93	0.980	4.08	1.349	.002**
Q10	5.13	0.776	4.08	1.096	.001**

Note: * $p < .05$ and ** $p < .01$ This applies to all tables with significant results.

Figure 6

Overall teacher and student means for significant results in opinions



4.1.3 Overall teacher and student use of PBL components

Section III was designed to examine whether teachers and students had similar perspectives with regards to the frequency of occurrence of various components of a project-based approach in the classroom. The overall frequency results help answer research questions 1, 2 and 5. Only questionnaire items 8 and 10 had statistically significant results.

Questionnaire item 8 for teachers was: My classes are learner-centered; for students it was: The teacher is the one talking in the classroom. Teachers had a mean of 5.03 and students had a mean of 2.52. Teachers said they usually had learner-centered classes, whereas students were between almost never and sometimes. However, this result is actually NOT significant as the wording is opposite. This then shows that the classes are generally learner-centered, so the $p=.001$ actually does not apply on this question due to the difference in question wording.

Questionnaire item 11 was with regards to practicing listening and speaking in small groups. Teachers had a mean of 5.60 and students had a mean of 5.19. Teachers were slightly closer to the answer *almost always* than students. Questionnaire item 11 was also statistically significant, at $p=.025$. The results of the overall teacher and student frequency section can be seen in table 7, as follows.

Table 7

Overall teacher and student frequency of use of PBL

Section III Frequency	Teachers n=30		Students n=88		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	3.73	1.258	4.15	1.543	.130
Q2	4.13	1.167	4.56	1.312	.065
Q3	4.24	1.244	4.12	1.222	.707
Q4	4.63	1.098	4.49	1.174	.657
Q5	2.57	1.357	2.52	1.371	.804
Q6	3.67	1.325	3.38	1.588	.454
Q7	3.13	1.252	2.98	1.479	.471
Q8	5.03	0.850	2.52	1.524	.001**
Q9	5.10	0.803	4.64	1.120	.072
Q10	4.80	1.324	4.33	1.564	.165
Q11	5.60	0.621	5.19	.882	.025*
Q12	4.63	1.245	4.19	1.359	.111
Q13	4.42	1.352	4.19	1.346	.452
Q14	3.85	1.397	3.74	1.393	.614

The fact that there were not many statistically significant results from the frequency section suggests that students' perceptions of what their teachers are doing in class are congruent with their teachers' perceptions. This is encouraging, as we would not want students to be saying they are experiencing things differently than how their teacher intended.

4.1.4 Overall teacher and student opinions of project examples

Section IV asked teachers and students to rate how favorable they were to trying each project. This section had two examples of projects and was identical for teachers and students. On questionnaire item 1, teachers had a mean of 4.73, between slightly in favour and in favour, and students had a lower mean of 4.11, closer to the slightly in favour answer choice. There was a significant difference ($p=.008$) between teachers and students.

There was no significant difference on question 2; however, teachers had a rather neutral view on this question, with a mean of 3.62, between slightly against and slightly in favour. Question 2 was based on the Airport Project (Humberg et al. 1983; Thiel, 1984; Legutke, 1985). As one teacher pointed out to me about this project, in today's age, this may be seen as a dangerous outing for students and may be difficult to do considering all the security and issues we face today surrounding travel and the airport, which may be reflected in the lower score on this question. The results can be seen in the following table 8.

Table 8

Overall teacher and student opinions of project examples

Section IV Project examples	Teachers n=30		Students n=88		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	4.73	1.173	4.11	1.284	.008**
Q2	3.62	1.374	4.02	1.505	.184

4.1.5 Questionnaire data compared within schools

This section discusses the results which seek to answer research question number 3: Are there any differences in the way teachers' and students' view PBL at different institutions? As the student population was different, and the goals of each school also different, I hypothesized that teachers' and students' perspectives and usage of Project-based Learning would also differ.

4.1.6 Within-school comparisons between teachers and students

This section discusses the differences between teachers and students within their school. School A has primarily international students, many of whom are studying English in order to get better jobs in their home country, whereas School B had all immigrants residing in Canada.

There were five statistically significant differences between teachers and students at School A. The first statistically significant difference ($p=.001$) was regarding the use of reflective activities (Q2). School A teachers had a mean of 5.67, between agree and strongly agree, and students had a mean of 4.66, between partly agree and agree.

Questionnaire item 3 was about working on projects in groups. Teachers had a mean of 5.42, between agree and strongly agree, and students had a mean of 4.2, closer to the partly agree answer. Questionnaire item three was significant ($p=.002$) between teachers and students at School A.

Questionnaire item 9 was about students having to assume different roles in class as well. Teachers' mean was 5.00, agree, and students' was 4.09, closer to the partly agree answer, with the significance being $p=.020$. Questionnaire item 10 was regarding

working on a project for more than a single class session. Teachers had a mean of 5.42, between agree and strongly agree, and students had a mean of 4.06, closer to the partly agree answer. Questionnaire item 10 was also significant at $p=.001$.

These results had some similarities with the first analysis in section 4.1.2, comparing the overall results of teachers and students. There were significant differences for questionnaire items 2, 3, 9 and 10 as well as with the comparison between teachers and students at School A. The overall analysis did, however, have question 8 as also being statistically significant ($p=.035$). The results of a within-school comparison between teachers and students at School A in the opinion section can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9

School A comparison of opinions of PBL

School A Opinion Section II	Teachers N=12		Students N=65		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	4.58	.996	4.2	1.135	.326
Q2	5.67	.492	4.66	1.079	.001**
Q3	5.42	.996	4.2	1.133	.002**
Q4	5.58	.793	5.12	.893	.065
Q5	4.92	.996	5.26	.923	.214
Q6	4.25	1.288	4.91	1.100	.080
Q7	4.50	1.382	4.17	1.009	.258
Q8	5.25	.866	4.72	1.153	.144
Q9	5.00	1.206	4.09	1.343	.020*
Q10	5.42	.669	4.06	1.088	.001**

The data from School B were also compared between teachers and students.

Interestingly, there were actually NO statistically significant differences between teachers and students at School B. Remember that School B consisted of all immigrants living in Canada. The results can be seen in table 10, as follows.

Table 10

School B comparison of opinions of PBL

School B Opinion Section II	Teachers n=6		Students n=23		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	4.17	1.169	4.87	.757	.192
Q2	5.17	.408	5.00	.739	.655
Q3	5.17	.753	4.43	1.121	.174
Q4	5.50	.548	5.17	.887	.546
Q5	5.33	.516	4.57	1.137	.192
Q6	5.00	.632	5.26	.864	.384
Q7	4.00	.632	4.52	1.039	.212
Q8	5.00	.000	4.61	1.305	.773
Q9	4.33	.816	4.05	1.397	.764
Q10	4.83	1.169	4.13	1.140	.212

The next discussion examines whether teachers' and students' perspectives of what was happening in class was congruent. School A had five significant differences between teachers and students; however, question 8 does not apply. Due to the opposite wording of the question as mentioned in 4.1.2, this result is not significant. I do not discuss significant results on questionnaire item 8, Section III further within this thesis.

There were other significant results for School A in Section III, frequency of use of various aspects of PBL. These were on questionnaire items 3, 9, 10, and 11.

Questionnaire item 3 was concerned with working on one project for more than one class session. Teachers had a mean of 5.08, above the usually answer, whereas students had a mean of 4.11, just above the often answer, where $p=.007$.

Questionnaire item 9 was regarding the participation and contribution of everyone in class in order to complete activities or projects. Teachers had a mean of 5.42, between usually and almost always, and students had a mean of 4.75, between often and usually, where $p=.042$.

Questionnaire item 10 was concerned with grading through an ongoing collection of work. Teachers had a mean of 5.42, between usually and almost always, and students had a mean of 4.23, closer to the often answer, where $p=.012$.

The last significant result between teachers and students at School A was on question 11, regarding students practicing listening and speaking in small groups. Teachers had a mean of 5.83, and were closer to the almost always answer, whereas students had a mean of 5.12, also between usually and almost always, but significantly lower, where $p=.010$. The following table 11 shows these results.

Table 11

School A data frequency of use of PBL

School A Frequency Section III	Teachers n=12		Students n=65		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	3.58	1.379	4.03	1.600	.312
Q2	4.42	1.564	4.35	1.351	.812
Q3	5.08	1.084	4.11	1.201	.007**
Q4	5.00	1.279	4.4	1.183	.107
Q5	2.50	1.314	2.37	1.232	.678
Q6	4.42	1.240	3.69	1.550	.170
Q7	3.17	1.586	3.29	1.508	.767
Q8	4.83	.835	2.63	1.516	.001**
Q9	5.42	.669	4.75	1.046	.042*
Q10	5.42	.996	4.23	1.637	.012*
Q11	5.83	.389	5.12	0.944	.010*
Q12	4.67	1.303	4.11	1.393	.237
Q13	5.58	1.443	4.29	1.284	.462
Q14	3.50	1.567	3.78	1.420	.616

School B also had some significant results between teachers and students in the frequency section; these were on questionnaire items 2 and 7. Questionnaire item 2 showed students saying that they had more reflective activities than what the teachers

said. Teachers had a mean of 4.00, often, and students had a mean of 5.13, above usually, where $p = .012$.

A significant difference was also found on questionnaire item 7, concerning students proofreading each others work. Teachers had a mean of 2.83, just below sometimes, whereas students had a mean of 2.00, almost never, where $p = .029$. Teachers at School B felt they did this more than what students perceived. The results of the comparisons in frequency of use of PBL components can be seen in the following table 12.

Table 12

School B data frequency of use of PBL

School B Frequency Section III	Teachers n=6		Students n=23		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	3.83	1.169	4.48	1.344	.257
Q2	4.00	.894	5.13	1.014	.012*
Q3	3.83	1.169	4.14	1.315	.502
Q4	4.50	.837	4.74	1.137	.594
Q5	3.83	1.472	2.95	1.676	.230
Q6	2.80	.837	2.43	1.326	.362
Q7	2.83	.408	2.00	.837	.029*
Q8	5.33	.516	2.22	1.536	.001**
Q9	4.83	.753	4.32	1.287	.402
Q10	4.17	1.169	4.71	1.213	.295
Q11	5.50	.548	5.39	.656	.786
Q12	4.17	1.722	4.43	1.248	.880
Q13	4.67	1.506	3.91	1.505	.282
Q14	4.00	1.265	3.59	1.333	.469

Results on teachers' and students' opinions about the project examples were also examined. Questionnaire item 1 in Section IV was about debating skills and a violence in the media project. Teachers at School A had a mean of 5.00, in favour, whereas students had a mean of 4.09, closer to the slightly in favour answer, where $p = .017$. Teachers had more favorable attitudes towards trying this type of project than students. There was no

other significant result between teachers and students in this section. The results can be seen in table 13 for School A.

Table 13

School A opinions about project examples

School A Project Examples IV	Teachers N=12		Students N=65		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	5.00	.953	4.09	1.271	.017*
Q2	3.36	1.690	4.02	1.463	.211

There were also no statistically significant results between teachers and students at School B in Section IV. The following table 14 shows the similar responses.

Table 14

School B opinions of project examples

School B Project Examples IV	Teachers N=6		Students N=23		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	4.83	.408	4.14	1.352	.194
Q2	3.50	1.049	4.05	1.682	.346

4.1.7 Comparison of teacher opinions between schools

This section examined whether there were any divisions in opinion or frequency of use within the teachers at different institutions. I wondered if teachers who had a different kind of student population would be more or less inclined to use the various components of a Project-based approach. School A and School C for teachers had a very similar student base, with students being primarily all international students staying in Canada for a limited amount of time, whereas School B students were all immigrants living in Canada permanently.

The first comparison is between teachers at School A and School B. In the opinion section II, there were no significant differences. In the frequency Section III, there were three significant differences between teachers at School A and School B on questionnaire items 3, 6 and 10.

Questionnaire item 3 for teachers was about working on one project for more than one class session. Teachers at School A had a mean of 5.08, close to the usually answer, whereas teachers at School B had a mean of 3.83, between the sometimes and often answers, where $p=.046$. Teachers at School A let students work on a project for more than one class session more often than teachers at School B.

Questionnaire item 6 was regarding students outside the classroom during class time to collect information for homework assignments. Teachers at School A had a mean of 4.42, between often and sometimes, and teachers at School B had a mean of 2.80, between almost never and sometimes. The significant result was $p=.023$, and allows us to see that teachers at School A send their students outside the classroom more often than teachers at School B.

The last significant result for the frequency Section III was on questionnaire item 10. This question was regarding the grading of students through an ongoing collection of their work with less emphasis on tests. As portfolio collections are often a large part of a Project-based approach, (Stoller, 1997) this question sheds light on the way teachers are grading their students. School A teachers had a mean of 5.42, between usually and almost always, whereas teachers at School B had a mean of 4.17, between often and usually. School A teachers use a more varied approach with regards to the collection of student

work and grading than teachers at School B. These results can be seen in the following table 15.

Table 15

Teachers' frequency of use of PBL at School A and School B

Teachers Section III Frequency	School A n=12		School B n=6		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	3.58	1.379	3.83	1.169	.728
Q2	4.42	1.564	4.00	.894	.498
Q3	5.08	1.084	3.83	1.169	.046*
Q4	5.00	1.279	4.50	.837	.389
Q5	2.50	1.314	3.83	1.472	.089
Q6	4.42	1.240	2.80	.837	.023*
Q7	3.17	1.586	2.83	.408	.763
Q8	4.83	.835	5.33	.516	.192
Q9	5.42	.669	4.83	.753	.116
Q10	5.42	.996	4.17	1.169	.034*
Q11	5.83	.389	5.50	.548	.148
Q12	4.67	1.303	4.17	1.722	.663
Q13	4.58	1.443	4.67	1.506	.922
Q14	3.50	1.567	4.00	1.265	.666

There were no significant differences in teachers at School A and School B with regards to opinions of the project examples Section IV.

I also compared teacher results between School A and School C, which both had international students living temporarily in Canada. Again, there were no significant results in opinion about Project-based Learning aspects. There were only two significant differences between teachers at School A and School C. These were on questionnaire items 3 and 6. Questionnaire item 3 was about students working on one project for more than one class session. Teachers at School A had a mean of 5.08, closest to the usually answer, and teachers at School C had a mean of 3.58, between sometimes and often, where $p=.003$.

Questionnaire item 6 was regarding sending students outside the classroom after class to collect information for homework assignments. Teachers at School A had a mean of 4.42, between often and usually, whereas teachers at School C had a mean of 3.29, between sometimes and often, where $p=.033$. The following table 16 shows the results of this comparison.

Table 16

Teachers' frequency of use of PBL at School A and School C

Teachers Section III Frequency	School A n=12		School C n=12		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	3.58	1.379	3.83	1.267	.655
Q2	4.42	1.564	3.92	.793	.338
Q3	5.08	1.084	3.58	.900	.003**
Q4	5.00	1.279	4.33	.985	.178
Q5	2.50	1.314	2.00	.953	.336
Q6	4.42	1.24	3.29	1.252	.033*
Q7	3.17	1.586	3.25	1.215	.790
Q8	4.83	.835	5.08	.996	.412
Q9	5.42	.669	4.92	.900	.156
Q10	5.42	.996	4.50	1.508	.060
Q11	5.83	.389	5.42	.793	.148
Q12	4.67	1.303	4.83	.937	.811
Q13	4.58	1.443	4.12	1.245	.358
Q14	3.50	1.567	4.12	1.316	.362

There were no significant differences in opinion about the project examples between teachers at School A and School C.

Lastly, a comparison between teachers at School B and School C was done. There was only one statistically significant difference between teachers at School B and School C in the opinion Section II. This was on questionnaire item 7, which was concerned with the class producing a final product (e.g. a scrapbook collection of writing and pictures, a formal written report, a classroom display, a newspaper, a student performance, a radio or

video program). Teachers at School B had a mean of 4, partly agree, whereas teachers at School C has a mean of 4.92, closer to the agree answer, where $p=.034$. Teachers at School B seemed less willing to have their class work on a final product than teachers at School C. The results can be seen in the following table 17.

Table 17

Teachers' opinions of PBL at School B and School C

Teachers section II Opinions	School B n=6		School C n=12		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	4.17	1.169	3.83	1.403	.559
Q2	5.17	.408	5.33	.492	.470
Q3	5.17	.753	4.79	.940	.404
Q4	5.50	.548	5.08	.793	.287
Q5	5.33	.516	4.58	1.084	.141
Q6	5.00	.632	4.67	1.155	.583
Q7	4.00	.632	4.92	.900	.034*
Q8	5.00	.000	5.33	.651	.174
Q9	4.33	.816	5.17	.718	.054
Q10	4.83	1.169	5.00	.603	.917

There was only one statistically significant result between teachers' opinions at School B and School C on the frequency section. This was concerning sending students outside the classroom during class time to collect information for class-related work. Teachers at School B had a mean of 3.83, between sometimes and often, and teachers at School C had a mean of 2.00, almost never, with $p=.012$. Apparently teachers at School C do not go outside the classroom as often, nor do they use the community or resources beyond the classroom as often as School B teachers. The results of the frequency Section III for teachers at School B and School C can be seen in the following table 18.

Table 18

Teachers' frequency of use of PBL at School B and School C

Teachers Section 3 Frequency	School B n=6		School C n=12		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	3.83	1.169	3.83	1.267	.748
Q2	4.00	.894	3.92	.793	.842
Q2	3.83	1.169	3.58	.900	.660
Q4	4.50	.837	4.33	.985	.679
Q5	3.83	1.472	2.00	.953	.012*
Q6	2.80	.837	3.29	1.252	.511
Q7	2.83	.408	3.25	1.215	.365
Q8	5.33	.516	5.08	.996	.761
Q9	4.83	.753	4.92	.900	.881
Q10	4.17	1.169	4.50	1.508	.439
Q11	5.50	.548	5.42	.793	1.00
Q12	4.17	1.722	4.83	.937	.462
Q13	4.67	1.506	4.12	1.245	.388
Q14	4.00	1.265	4.12	1.316	.846

There were no statistically significant differences between teachers at School B and School C in Section IV, project examples.

4.1.8 Comparison of student opinions between School A and School B

This study also examined any differences or similarities between the two student groups. This also helps answer research question 3. As previously mentioned, School A consisted of international students and School B had all immigrants. The age groups were one distinguishing factor as well, as the majority of the students at School A were in the 18-25 (47/65) age group range, whereas School B students were mostly (15/23) in the 36-45 age group range. In the opinion Section II, there were two significant results, one on questionnaire item 1, regarding giving the teacher ideas for topics to discuss in class; and one on questionnaire item 5, regarding going outside the classroom to do activities or get hands-on

experience. School A students had a mean of 4.2, just above partly agree, and School B students had a mean of 4.87, closer to the agree answer. Questionnaire item 1 had a significant result where $p=.011$ and questionnaire item 5 was $p=.012$. These results and the can be seen in the following table 19.

Table 19

Students' opinions of PBL at School A and School B

Students section II Opinions	School A n=65		School B n=23		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	4.2	1.135	4.87	.757	.011*
Q2	4.66	1.079	5.00	.739	.228
Q3	4.2	1.133	4.43	1.121	.620
Q4	5.12	.893	5.17	.887	.808
Q5	5.26	.923	4.57	1.237	.012*
Q6	4.91	1.100	5.26	.864	.185
Q7	4.17	1.009	4.52	1.039	.131
Q8	4.72	1.153	4.61	1.305	.820
Q9	4.09	1.343	4.05	1.397	.948
Q10	4.06	1.088	4.13	1.140	.679

Only questionnaire items 5, 8 and 9 for School B students had means that were lower than the students at School A, which may suggest that they were slightly more receptive to the various components of a Project-based approach, but there were only two statistically significant results.

The frequency section had three significant results, those being on questionnaire items 2, 6 and 7. Questionnaire item 2 was concerned with the teacher getting students to reflect on classroom activities and their work. Students at School A had a mean of 4.35, between often and usually, whereas students at School B had a mean of 5.13, above the usually answer, where $p=.011$. This result shows that teachers at School B do more reflective exercises or activities with their students than teachers at School A.

Questionnaire item 6 was about sending students outside the classroom after class to collect information for homework assignments. School A students had a mean of 3.69, between sometimes and often, whereas School B students had a mean of 2.43, between almost never and sometimes, where $p=.002$. Teachers at School B do not send their students outside the classroom after class for homework assignments as often as teachers at School A. The last significant result was on questionnaire item 7, regarding proofreading their classmates' written work. Students at School A had a mean of 3.29, between sometimes and often, whereas students at School B had a mean of 2.00, almost never, where $p=.001$. School A teachers get their students to read and correct each other's work more often than teachers at School B. These results are shown in table 20, as follows.

Table 20

Students' frequency of use of PBL at School A and School B

Students Section III Frequency	School A n=65		School B n=23		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	4.03	1.600	4.48	1.344	.282
Q2	4.35	1.351	5.13	1.014	.013*
Q3	4.11	1.201	4.14	1.315	.754
Q4	4.4	1.183	4.74	1.137	.263
Q5	2.37	1.232	2.95	1.676	.170
Q6	3.69	1.550	2.43	1.326	.002**
Q7	3.29	1.508	2.00	.837	.001**
Q8	2.63	1.516	2.22	1.536	.220
Q9	4.75	1.046	4.32	1.287	.169
Q10	4.23	1.637	4.71	1.213	.382
Q11	5.12	0.944	5.39	.656	.337
Q12	4.11	1.393	4.43	1.248	.317
Q13	4.29	1.284	3.91	1.505	.283
Q14	3.78	1.420	3.59	1.333	.549

The last quantitative analysis of this section was between students at the two schools and their opinions about the project examples. There were no significant results in opinion between students in this section. Students had very similar opinions regarding the two types of project examples. The results can be seen in table 21.

Table 21

Students' opinions of project examples at School A and School B

Students section IV Project examples	School A n=65		School B n=23		Sig.
	M	Std.	M	Std.	
Q1	4.09	1.271	4.14	1.352	.971
Q2	4.02	1.463	4.05	1.682	.840

4.1.9 Summary of quantitative results

The questionnaire has shown some interesting quantitative results with regards to various aspects of Project-based Learning (PBL). Teachers and students overall had significant differences in opinion in five main areas, those being 1) using reflective activities; 2) using project-based group work; 3) the teacher assuming different roles in class; 4) students assuming different roles in class; and 5) working on a project for more than one class. In terms of the frequency of use of various aspects of PBL, there was only one significant difference in how students were viewing how often they practice listening and speaking in small groups. Teachers think they do this more than students perceive this. As mentioned previously, this is encouraging for this section, as the fact that there were not many statistically significant results from the frequency section suggests that students' perceptions of what their teachers are doing in class are congruent with their teachers' perceptions.

The within-school analysis saw no significant differences in opinion in Section II between teachers and students at School B, but there were 4 significant differences between teachers and students at School A. These were in the following four areas: 1) using reflective activities; 2) using project-based group work; 3) students assuming different roles in class; and 4) working on a project for more than one class.

School A also saw different significant results between teachers and students in the frequency Section III. These were in 5 main areas; 1) working on a project for more than one class; 2) having learner-centered classes (where the teacher is not always the one talking); 3) completing activities or projects requires class participation of all students in the class; 4) grading is done through an ongoing collection of work (not only by using tests); and 5) practicing listening and speaking in small groups.

Between School A and School B teachers, there were 3 main frequency differences. These were in three areas, as follows; 1) working on a project for more than one class session; 2) sending students outside the classroom for homework assignments; and 3) grading students through an ongoing collection of work (and not relying on tests only).

A comparison between teachers at School A and School C also showed that teachers at School A do more in the areas of 1) working on a project for more than one class session; and 2) sending students outside the classroom for homework assignments.

The analysis between students at School A and School B showed two significant differences in opinions in two areas in Section II. These were in the areas of 1) having students decide on the topics for discussion; and 2) going outside the classroom to do activities or get hands-on experience. There were three significant differences between teachers at School A and School B in three areas. These were 1) using reflective

activities; 2) going outside the classroom after class to collect information for homework assignments; and 3) proofreading each other's work. Students at School A do not experience as many reflective activities as students at School B. Students at School A go outside the classroom more often to collect information for homework than students at School B as well as read and correct each other's work more often than students at School B.

As the data have shown, there are several key areas which have significant differences. The differences between teachers and students can be used to match more closely the desires and needs of students to make a more agreeable teaching environment on the whole. Further benefits and a discussion of the results will be discussed in Chapter five, in section 5.1.

4.2 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.2.1 Teacher open-ended question data from questionnaire

This section will cover the qualitative data in this study, which includes the three open-ended questions from the questionnaire in section 5. Answers were hand-written by both teachers and students and were recorded into the Excel program exactly as they were written. Please see Appendices C and D for the questions in section five. This section also relates the answers on the open-ended questions to some of the questions on the questionnaire. The means of the teachers' and students' answers in relationship to their open-ended answers are examined in order to confirm and back up the quantitative data.

I first present the teachers' answers to question one: What is your opinion of getting the students to help plan the *what*, *how* and with *whom* they are going to learn

(e.g., planning a project, choosing the grammar you want to cover, selecting teammates, etc.)? There are clear divisions about allowing students to choose their own topics. Out of the 30 teachers, 8 used the words ‘good,’ ‘great,’ or ‘in favour,’ and ‘wonderful idea,’ demonstrating positive attitudes towards this aspect of PBL. There were 11 comments which were mixed, with comments such as ‘leary, it depends, sometimes, careful choosing, conflicting interests, certain aspects better determined by teacher, isolation of some classmates, cliques in the class or exclude anyone, and I’m not convinced.’ These types of comments were the most prevalent in this question, which is perhaps reflected in the lower mean score of 4.2 on questionnaire item 1 from section II. There was a trend that teachers liked this concept, but were hedging on whether to fully use it or not. One teacher from School A wrote:

In theory, it’s great, but the reality of an intensive ESL program is that you often don’t have the time to allow student input to a great degree (i.e. determining curriculum). Even choosing partners can be problematic – after you have students who shouldn’t work together (bad influences)...

Other recurring themes on this question were the notions of time restrictions, with 3 teachers commenting on this, as well as motivation and autonomous learning, with 5 teachers commenting on this.

Question 2 of the open-ended question was: In using projects, ultimately the ‘end product’ is the goal. Do you think collaborative work towards achieving an end product is a good thing to use in your classes? Please elaborate. This question was designed to elicit teachers’ reactions to the idea of a collaborative end product, which lies at the heart of PBL. There were several themes emerging again in response to this question. The most

prevalent theme is based on positive answers, with 13 teachers commenting about how collaborative work and end products are ‘*crucial, empowering, highly motivating, highly beneficial, a very good thing, teamwork can help achieve goals, healthy, constructive, teambuilding and real.*’ Teachers were also very quick to point out that it is the process, not just the end product which is important, as this came up 9 times in the data. One teacher wrote:

The language generated throughout the process is the objective, cooperation and sharing of ideas, verbal interactions are crucial. The end product is assessed, but not the goal of learning...

Another teacher stated:

Yes, it’s [collaborative work] a very good thing. It makes learning language and classroom language more authentic because there is a purpose, a goal.

Students aren’t just using the language because the teacher told them to...

There were also 6 comments which were not as steadfast in their support, leaning more towards a flexible and ‘*it depends*’ attitude. One teacher wrote:

To some degree, yes. Again, it depends on the product. If the product is a recorded discussion or group presentation, then collaboration is essential. If the focus is on a written product for evaluation (especially for a major part of course evaluation), then there may be some collaboration in early parts of a project (choosing a topic, doing research, etc., but the final written product will be individual...

Three teachers mentioned that collaborative work is motivating. Teachers primarily had positive attitudes towards the concepts of collaborative work and final products.

There were no other consistent themes on this question.

The third and final open-ended question for teachers was: What do you think about implementing a project in your class? Is this something you have tried or do regularly? If yes, please explain. If no, please explain why not. This question was concerned with adding to the frequency section on a more general level. There were 18 teachers who said they had done some kind of a project, 5 who said they had not done any projects and 5 who had done it sometimes or were not clear if their activities were actually projects. There were 2 no response. A few of the examples they provided included the following; presentations, seminar discussions, photo-novel project (like a comic book with captions and text), community volunteer work, symposiums, news programs, current events, collecting food for the food bank, and a newspaper project. These results are encouraging for PBL supporters, as more than half the teachers admitted to having done some kind of a project, which shows that it is a desirable form of instruction.

4.2.2 Student open-ended question data from questionnaire

The students also had to complete an open-ended section on the questionnaire. Their questions were slightly different from the teachers' questions as they had to be reworded for comprehensibility. The first question was the most different from the teachers in that it asked on a general level if the students liked to do projects as classroom activities. It did not include anything about helping plan their learning. The second question elaborated on this, asking if they thought working on projects in groups is a

good thing. The third question for students asked if they had done any projects in any of their ESL classes and to explain if they had.

The first open-ended question had an overwhelming 70 students who said yes, they liked doing projects as a classroom activity. Students used a variety of words to describe their positive feelings towards doing projects, including the following: '*interesting, motivating, helps you with English skills, dynamic, increase the participation of the students, confident to speak, learn what teamwork is, and achievement.*' Opportunity was mentioned 5 times, fun 6 times, and improve was mentioned 9 times good as well. One student stated:

Yes, I do. Through many projects. I can improve speaking skills as well as get many experiences. I'm sure that it makes me confident...

In their comments on the open-ended questions, there was a variety of answers exhibiting a positive, neutral or negative stance on projects. The word '*share*' came up 3 times, as in the following quote:

Yes, it is a good opportunity to share time with your classmates and it helps you with your English skills...

There were only 7 students who expressed a negative view towards this question, 7 students who expressed mixed views, and 4 no response. One student remarked:

No, I prefer to do projects by myself, in a quiet place...

And another negative result can be seen in this quote:

I like to do projects, but in a regular university class. In ESL I think it is not really helpful...

There were no consistent themes from these students.

The second open-ended question for students was: Do you think working in groups on a project is a good thing? If yes, why? If no, why not? This question was more focused on the group aspect of a project. There were very similar responses to question 1 of the open-ended questions, with 63 positive, yes answers. There were 11 no answers, 8 mixed response and 4 no response. There were more negative and mixed answers here, as some of the students felt group work was difficult due to lack of participation of effort of all the group members, a common complaint in any teamwork situation. One student wrote:

Sometimes it is good, but sometimes it is not good. Because some of my group members don't participate and they don't make an effort. So the other members have to do that by themselves...

Another student remarked:

No, I don't think working in groups on a project is a good thing because there will have too many opinions from groups. Sometimes, it will make a difficult situation to make a project...

Some students just straight up do not like group work, most likely for personal reasons. Another brought up the point of making mistakes and error correction:

No because we have almost same level of English. We can't help each other to correct the mistake we usually do...

One student also remarked:

No, I think the language is different from other subjects...

The mean (4.35) for the question on working on projects in groups may be slightly lower than what would be expected from just examining the open-ended questions, which

appeared to be much higher on the positive scale (63 positive responses out of 88 student responses).

The third and final open-ended written question was: Have you ever worked on a project in any of your ESL classes? If yes, please explain what you did. Upon further inspection of the data from this question, there was a distinctive split in answers according to which school the students were from. Almost all of the students at School A had experienced some form of project in their eyes, whereas almost all the students at School B had not experienced any projects. 50 School A students said that they had experienced a project, with 22 citing presentations as their form of project. Some of the things students from School A mentioned as being 'projects' or related to projects were the following: interviews, book club, make a map, make a TV program, natural resources research, annotated bibliography, seminar discussion, business project, early childhood care education, restaurants, Canadian lifestyle, break-ups and effects, a video clip imitating Pirates of the Caribbean, a marketing project and design a future recreation center. These examples demonstrate the versatility of this approach and how many different topics and activities can be incorporated into a project-based approach. At School B, only 6 out of 23 students said they had experienced a 'project,' however, one mentioned a field trip to a local park and talking with people there, one did a poster to help collect food for a charity, one mentioned doing a presentation on woman abuse, one did a presentation on famous Canadians (and stated he did not like it) and one did interviews on the street about birth control. The project experiences of the immigrants at School B were far more limited than those of the students at School A.

4.2.3 Teacher interviews

This section discusses the teacher interviews. I interviewed 12 teachers total, 6 at School A and 6 at School B. The teacher interviews proved to be very rich in data, but there were several key concepts focused on from the questions. These were in the following areas: definitions, examples, goals, strategies used to implement PBL, effectiveness, length of time of a project, comparisons with traditional (teacher-centered) teaching, student autonomy in planning, and the advantages and disadvantages of it. Please see Appendix E for the complete teacher interview questions.

In terms of the teachers' definitions about PBL, all of them combined give a complete picture of some of the theoretical definitions as mentioned in chapter two. Several teachers mentioned the idea of a theme and having tasks or activities leading up to that theme, as well as the idea that a project should be collaborative. There were 7 of the 12 teachers interviewed who mentioned that a project often involved some form of outside class experience, whether it was through volunteer work, speaking with a study center (native speaker) helper, or just finding information in the community. Some of the other comments about defining a project included ideas that it is hands-on, involves research, a presentation, high interest, kinesthetic, information sharing and that it is cooperative. Another comment was made that it has an '*aim which is not primarily linguistic.*' Overall, there seemed to be a continuum of answers, all of which were included in the overarching definitions in some way or another.

Examples of projects were also asked for during this phase of the data collection in order to more fully understand the practical side and actual use of projects. This leads back to research question 5: What aspects of PBL are being used by teachers in

classrooms? The majority of teachers at School A described some kind of presentation project. These included travel symposiums, which involved reading a travel article and using the internet for research, and making a current event video using a reporter and character in the story complete with a written script. This also involved the students making advertisements to put in between the news stories. Another teacher at School A explained graphic organizers (comparing or doing surveys in the community), having a book club with students getting together every week and assuming different jobs (i.e., summarizing, analyzing questions, etc.) as well as creating a marketing strategy to sell a product. Another teacher at School A had his students present individually a comparison between something unique or interesting in their own culture with something similar in Canada. Another project mentioned by a teacher at School A was a Canadian provinces and territories research project in pairs, which had rotating groups on the day of the presentation, so that one student presents and one student listens to all the presentations about the various places in Canada. The students in this project also had to prepare a list of vocabulary for other students to learn, a poster with facts and pictures of their place, and get a study center slip signed by a native speaker stating they had spoken with them about the assignment. A similar process was used by this teacher for other topics, such as the grammar pair one, which involved them teaching each other different grammar concepts. Another School A teacher implemented a seminar discussion on alternative energies as well as one that had the government with an excess of 100 million in the budget, and where to spend it (poverty, education and health care).

School B teachers had much less experience with projects, due to their ever fluctuating classes (continuous intake) and students' demanding lives outside of school.

There were only three true forms of projects at School B. One involved a food bank drive, which began with reading stories in the newspaper about a local crisis at the food bank near the school. The students in this teacher's class ended up getting the whole school involved, and made posters advertising the days of collection, as well as visited all the classes to let other students know. They also went to the actual food bank place where they took a tour. Afterwards, they used the pictures they had taken there to make a display board with short write-ups about their experiences and feelings throughout the project. This teacher also did a photography assignment, and gave all his students a 12 picture role of film. They had to go around Victoria and take pictures to put on a display with writing to explain the pictures. This teacher stated:

...they came back to the class and they organized their posters, and some of them were very creative. Some of them went after, were more interested in the tourist sites in Victoria. Some went after things that surprised them, like the homelessness and the panhandling. So they took a different approach to the assignment...

The other form of a project was done under the theme of health care. This teacher had her students do readings beforehand about health care, and also provided authentic materials such as over-the-counter drugs, and the side effects sheets that come with them. The difficult vocabulary on them proved to be very useful and real for her students, as they also visited the pharmacy to practice asking questions.

The other teachers I interviewed at School B mentioned the idea of themes and field trips quite often, but were not engaged in any true Project-based Learning.

With regards to the goals of PBL, this ties in with the first research question, perspectives about PBL. Teachers at School A and School B all had similar opinions about the goals. Among these is group communication, to produce and improve language, to give students confidence to speak in front of people, to work collaboratively, to be able to collect information, understand it and be able to present it in a clear, unified and cohesive way as well as learning vocabulary and sharing it with others, to use authentic language, to negotiate with each other to accomplish a task, to focus on issues on one theme, to learn from each other, to promote self-efficacy and responsibility, to promote enthusiasm and to help students integrate into the community. This is a wide variety of goals, all of which are positive attributes in the learning process.

In terms of the interview question about the extent that these teachers actually implement PBL, this is partially answered in question two, regarding their examples. Teachers' who gave examples of projects obviously use PBL or projects as part of their teaching repertoire. All the teachers at School A indicated they had done some form of a project, whereas only two teachers had done any kind of substantial project at School B. One interesting comment was from a teacher at School A who had recently begun to teach at School A. He stated,

I was teaching in Asia for a long time, and Europe, before I started teaching at [School A].¹ Those schools tended to be far less project-based in classroom activities. Canadian ESL is much more project-based...I have taught in a language school...and there has never been as much project stuff down there because the syllabus seemed to be more

¹ School A's name has been changed as to ensure anonymity

hung off of Azar²...so I just went in and did grammar-based lessons with lots of activities hung on that syllabus...

I found this interesting, as this further supports Beckett's (2002) findings about teaching methods and Asian students' reactions.

Teachers' strategies used to implement a project were also researched. This also ties in with research question one concerning perspectives on PBL. Teachers at School A primarily use modeling techniques to get their students started on a project. A few mentioned using previous students' work, such as a DVD of previous presentations, examples of really good graphs, or funny ones. Other teachers at School A simply give a handout with the directions clearly written out, and one told them, "this is worth this much of your grade," stressing the importance of completing the project for course marks. Other teachers mentioned giving examples, a reading, or having a discussion on the theme before beginning to start on the project. One teacher at School B stated,

I think what you need, I think with any activity, is that you don't want to give it to students cold. So you want to do some kind of lead in work that brings up the topic, and this kind of work or activities allows you to gage interest...

Another teacher at School B mentioned the idea that picking a topic for a project should be a "democratic process" and requires students to vote on their choices. This supports Freire's (1983) notions of democratic learning. This teacher's strategy also includes discussion following and then thinking of the steps required to fulfill the final outcome, whatever that may be. Lastly, brainstorming is also a method used by several of the teachers.

² A grammar text book commonly used in ESL schools

Another concept interviewed for was about the effectiveness of project-based learning. The majority of the answers to this question had already come up at some point in the interview, particularly in the definition question. There were 11 out of 12 teachers who answered yes to this question. Some of the reiterated thoughts include ideas of collaboration, discovering new things, retention of language due to personal involvement, meaningful content, integration of skills in an authentic way, and motivation. All of these things were thought by teachers to encourage language learning, thereby being effective in its goals.

Another question in the interviews was about the length of a project. This also fits in with research question one, perspectives on PBL. Due to the very flexible nature of the approach, I felt it would be interesting to examine whether teachers had any consistent opinions regarding how long they implement projects for. There were a wide range of answers in this area, anywhere from 1 day to 10 weeks. The length of a project, according to the teachers, depends on three things, the teacher, the students and the project itself. There was no consensus on this question.

The next question asked teachers to give comparisons between a project-based approach with more 'traditional' teaching. The teachers' answers were quite varied, so the table 22 summarizes the points they made about each approach.

Table 22

Teacher comments comparing traditional teaching with project-based learning

Traditional teaching comments	Project-based learning comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In strands • Singular focused • Passive learning • Controlled • Teacher-centered • Reinvent the wheel to make it exciting • Students expect it • Completely focused on language • Not interactional at all • Anyone can teach it • Students know what is happening next due to textbook and find comfort in that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated • Active learning • Communicating something of relevancy • If students teach something they'll learn it better • Free • Student-centered • Fun, raises energy • Variety change • Good for fluency and listening practice • Think on feet, grammar goes out the window • More engaged, more enjoyable, more interesting, more relevant • More challenging for the teacher • More memorable

The following quote from a teacher at School A exemplifies the delicate balance between giving students what they think they need and want, with what teachers think is good for them:

We do by necessity a bit of that [grammar and traditional teaching], partly because students expect it, partly because there are things to be learned, so hopefully all of that kind of work leads to either discussions or language development that they can use in their projects. So in the end, I would probably do more projects, but I think I would have a revolution on my hands in class, you know I don't want to have a mutiny! So there's a limit.

You have to sort of gage how much project work they want to do. I like them. But, it's not always a shared like...

The next topic for discussion was also included in the questionnaire, in the open-ended section and also question one in the opinion section. Deciding whether to allow students to give input is a hot topic of debate, as it would seem from the data. Three teachers thought allowing the students freedom to choose topics and help plan the project is a good idea. One teacher supporting this idea at School A remarked,

I think that's good, oh yeah absolutely. I always give my students a Needs Assessment at the beginning and that includes: What kinds of things do you want to work on? What kinds of things do you need to do? And I run out of ideas, so they like to have a hand in it...

Contrasting this opinion was only one solid negative answer, which can be seen in the following quote,

I don't do that, the traditionalist in me wants a fair amount of control in terms of choosing the topic, and the due date and the process as far as things are going to work. Because I find with our students, particularly Asian students they feel more comfortable with a certain amount of structure. If you just say, ok...just go, they're not really going to do well with it and may not even give you much respect...

The above quote is also represented in Beckett's (2002) study, as he states "project-based instruction prevented them [students in his study] from learning from the teacher and the textbooks and from focusing on language skills. The ESL teacher felt a loss of student respect and noted a drop in student attendance" (p. 52). Five teachers had mixed answers,

stating factors such as level of students or having a teacher plan along with student ideas was the best approach. One teacher at School B stated,

I think it's a great idea actually. I think the more involved the students are, the more motivated they are. I guess within reason, I guess sometimes we say ideally, is that we have students do the planning, and they're involved in the whole planning as well, but you have to be realistic as well, because it is a lot of work too. Especially in this program³ too, I don't know how that is different than others, but I am guessing that we have a lot of families, so we have a lot of children, and I mean, sometimes just getting them to homework is a challenge because they are so busy in the evenings. They don't have time...

Four teachers did not provide data suitable for analysis.

Another area interviewed which provides more answers in part to research question 1, perspectives on PBL was to learn about the advantages and disadvantages of a teaching approach. This is something which drove me to this thesis topic, as to be more aware of why teachers choose or do not choose a certain method of instruction. Teachers' comments and answers to this question were wide-ranging, and can be seen in the following table 23.

³ The program was geared for upper intermediate to advanced levels, all immigrants integrating into Canada and learning various Canadian themes (i.e. health care and law).

Table 23

Teacher comments about advantages and disadvantages of doing projects

Advantages of projects	Disadvantages of projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal growth and a sense of accomplishment • Integration and confidence-building • Less teacher-dependent • Hands-on way of learning • Generated by students • Community-based • Get language that you can't think of in a classroom (authentic language use) • Real content • Collaborative • Creativity encouraged • Creates responsibility • Ability to meet deadlines • Cuts down on preparation time for teachers and the need to reinvent the wheel every day • Motivates students • Fun (not boring!) • Develops fluency • Projects keep things rolling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It’s like air traffic control compared to my normal teaching approach” • Getting a substitute is complicated • Interaction between students can be problematic due to cultural or personality differences • Can be a heavy workload for students’ lives • May be a new approach to students different than in their home country • Lower levels may not understand authentic materials, difficulty speaking with native speakers in community • Requires all group members to be accountable for their attendance (project can fall apart if all do not contribute) • Need to be a really organized teacher • Pacing – some groups finish project faster than others • Keeping students on task can be difficult • Technological problems and/or access to resources • Timing can be difficult to regulate

I decided not to include the data from questions 11, 12 and 13 from the interviews, as it does not directly answer any of the research questions. These

questions are more concerned with the challenges in organizing a project and institutional constraints, and do not pertain to this thesis.

4.2.4 Student interviews

Students responses to the interview questions were more limited, due to their language ability, however, as they were all upper-intermediate and advanced, they did have some insightful comments which I will share in this section. I interviewed 7 students from School A and 8 students from School B. The questions were almost the same as for the teachers, with the only major differences in numbers 3 and 12. Number 3 for teachers asked about the goals of PBL, whereas for students, it asked what they thought their teacher wanted them to learn by working on a project. I do not discuss question 12, as it does not pertain to the research questions.

Students' definitions of a project tended to lean towards the idea of doing research, or a presentation of some kind. Other responses about projects included having to develop something over time, also doing it in groups or individually (students were unclear as to whether projects should be individual or group-based), doing something with a plan, making posters and that a project is work you do with a specific purpose. Three students gave very weak definitions, as perhaps they had not experienced a project in their ESL class, or even in their lives for that matter.

Examples of projects students did are the same as the ones mentioned by their teachers in section 4.2.3, so I will not discuss these here. The next area of interest for students was focused on what they thought their teacher wants them to learn by working on a project. Students at School A had an easier time answering these questions, as they

had had more experience with projects. In general, students felt their teacher wanted them to practice speaking more often through the discussions surrounding the project. They also felt their teachers wanted them to learn researching skills (including the internet and outside resources such as brochures from places in the community). One student also commented on specific skills learnt in the project, such as persuading skills in order to convince prospective “residents” of a Canadian province or territory that their place was the best place to move to. One student from School A also commented,

...how to do this project before we go to university, it's very helpful for us to do research paper or project in university course...

Another thing students recognized as arising out of projects is the connection with native speakers through volunteer jobs. Practicing to speak with native speakers was also a perceived goal of teachers in implementing a project for students. Three students at School B just felt that teachers used projects (if there were any) in order to get them speaking, writing and learning new vocabulary, as well as the ability to work with other people. One student from School B commented,

Work with a group, work with peers, and deal with people, deal with different culture. Mainly working as a group...

The other 3 students at School B did not have any project experience and were unable to answer this question.

Question two in the student interviews asked if their teacher used projects in their classroom. This question is largely overlapping on question 2 of the questionnaire, examples of projects, so if the students answered, they discussed the actual projects they did with their teachers (which is also discussed in section 4.2.3). The next area of interest

was concerned with how their teachers got them to start working on a project. Students also recognized that teachers use examples to demonstrate what they are asking the students to do. A student from School A remarked on the teacher's handout with all the details explaining how to do the research. This is mostly related to research question 1, as it is concerned primarily with students' perspectives about how their teachers implement projects. Students generally seemed to be aware of their teachers' actions, but I think they simplified them to some degree, breaking it down into two main parts – the teacher telling them and showing them. One student remarked,

I think the teacher first will give us an example and illustrate how to do it in class, and then the teacher will order us to... oh first then they will take us to the lab, and teach us how to do the research, how to search it on the internet by search engine and another way is to use the data base of UVic. That's X way we learned this semester. When we have the research they will teach us the writing part.

Students at School B did not have as much to say about this, as their experiences with projects was limited. Only one student commented, but it was regarding group work more than an actual project.

The next question was regarding the effectiveness of using projects. One student at School B mentioned learning new grammar, vocabulary and more about their topic as being the main reasons for a project's effectiveness. A few students from School A discussed effectiveness in terms of sharing opinions and working in groups, as well as the critical thinking required in doing a project:

Working on a project requires us many different ways to use English, like reading, writing, and communication. A lot of skills, because if we use it, if we just do our homework, it will just what we learn, but if we do a project we find some resources somewhere else about different topics and we have to determine whether it's good to use or not...

Another student at School A brought up the point that speaking with native speakers stresses the importance of listening very closely in order to understand, and then after using reflection to write it down. This student did, however, comment on the fact that she was a higher level now and felt comfortable doing this:

...before I am 490⁴ I don't think it is helpful because at that time my English skill is not so good, I am afraid to talk with native speaker, but I am fine now...

While her comment is not directly related to effectiveness, I included it because it shows how going out and speaking with native speakers is viewed as being helpful at a higher level, thereby being effective in helping to learn English.

In terms of how long a project should take, students had a few different opinions in this area. Two students felt one week was enough, 2 felt two weeks was enough, 1 felt two to three weeks was good, 1 felt three to four weeks was good, 1 distinguished between a small project taking one week and a big project taking one month and 1 felt four weeks was enough. Five students from School B did not respond due to lack of project experience, and 1 from School A did not know.

The next question was designed to find out about students' perspectives about project-based learning in comparison to traditional, teacher-centered methods. I gave

⁴ An intermediate level class at School A

them examples of ‘traditional’ things, such as learning grammar from a textbook, or memorizing vocabulary lists and asked what kind of learning situation they preferred (which was also in number 9). Out of the 15 students I interviewed, only 2 preferred learning grammar and a traditional approach to teaching. One student from School B commented:

Ah, for me, grammar...because ah, in my age⁵, it is hard to learn English, but I speak, ah...I follow the person, always, but sometimes not correctly, I understand, but when I try to say something I start to think in Spanish and it's not right, and my grammar, is oh...<makes a sigh as if it's terrible>

(Me: So you need more grammar?) Yes!...

There were 7 students who said they preferred project-based teaching and along with that, group activities were mentioned as being a particularly enjoyable part of PBL. One student from School A said,

I prefer the project because in the project, you have to speak, read, summarize, you have to do a big work, and every day you have to use all the skills...

Another student from School A who preferred project-based teaching remarked,

...during the project we also learned vocabulary. For example, we also learned vocabulary from the news, and I think those vocabulary is more useful. We can read, we can read in newspaper or listen from news, so those word is more useful. And I think if we learned vocabulary from the text book, it will be, + those word are...we can see many many times, so they are from text books. Yeah so it's a little different. (So I am just curious, if

⁵ She is in the 46-55 age group range

you had a choice of a class that did a lot of grammar, and the teacher was talking all the time, and students taking notes, versus a class where you're doing projects all the time, working together, which would you prefer?) Maybe second. Now I prefer project to learn English. (What about when you were in a lower level?) I prefer textbook. I can follow. Yeah...

In this comment, the student makes reference to the authenticity of reading materials, as well as the fact she preferred using a text book when she was in a lower level. Four students (3 from School B and 1 from School A) had mixed comments and appreciated a mixture of grammar, teacher-centered methods alongside the use of projects. Two students from School B did not respond, as they had no project experience.

The next area asked students about their opinion on helping the teacher plan a project. In the interviews, things were more mixed, perhaps representing a more equal balance as there were 7 and 8 students from the schools, rather than 65 from School A and 23 from School B. Three students said they preferred it if the teacher gave them topics, 3 students said they would rather pick the topics, 2 said it depends, 4 had no response and 3 were not sure.

The interviews also delved into what students thought were the advantages and disadvantages of doing projects. The disadvantages are limited, and two of them are primarily issues people tend to have on a day to day basis in the 'real world' anyway (deadlines are stressful and can take a long time). The first disadvantage, about listening to other students' incorrect speech is a problem not just with projects, but with any group or pair work, teaching method aside. As the comments were also quite varied, I have

provided table 24 which summarizes the students' comments about the advantages and disadvantages of projects.

Table 24

Student comments about advantages and disadvantages of doing projects

Advantages of projects	Disadvantages of projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn research skills, how to explain something clearly • Learn new vocabulary and expressions • Requires many skills, critical thinking • Sharing of opinions • Learn more than just language • Talk to real people, not just textbook • Presentations are fun • Use listening and speaking a lot • NEED to pay attention (listen) in order to complete project • Builds interpersonal communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other students' grammar is incorrect, so listening to them is not good • Different cultures have different standards (work ethics) • Only focused on one topic • Deadlines are stressful • Can take a long time

One student at School B expressed frustration with doing a project in a group,

...Advantage, we could know each other in the classroom, so that's easier to communicate with them after the project. Disadvantage is we are from a different country, we have a different standard, like ah...some student didn't come on time, some student didn't do their job. It's quite frustrate[ing]...

Another student at School A commented about the advantages of projects,

Project presentation was really fun, I like it. So...maybe it's a good chance to learn English. Because when I went to private school, they almost never gave me a presentation, it was just kind of following textbooks, that's why I,

I went there, but I just sit down at the desk and just listen to the teacher. That's it. Maybe depends on the school I think, but my school was that. [School A]⁶ was totally different and at first I was really surprised. The teachers make us lots of pair work, and group discussions...

The last two interview questions for students will also not be included, as they are not relevant to the research questions.

4.2.5 Artifacts

This next section discusses some of the artifacts I collected during the data collection phase. I received a few handouts from 6 teachers, 4 teachers from School A and 2 teachers from School B. The handouts were from things they did with the students, including things such as a reading, a vocabulary exercise or a project assignment. Two teachers from School A also provided me with their course outlines.

The first teacher I will review is Paxton.⁷ He provided me with the most substantial amount of data for this section. Paxton had 2 classes at School A, with 14 students in each of his classes, all intermediate level. He used a local event magazine and did a reading, as well as used an article focused on slang. He provided me with the following handouts: a song sheet and word study with stems and affixes sheets (there were 4 pages), as well as a copy of a story they did. The story had the target vocabulary words in bold, and had an accompanying vocabulary sheet. The other handout he provided me with was more project-based, as it was outlining a presentation the students had to prepare. Students had to present posters on Canadian provinces and territories. The class would

⁶ School A's name has been changed as to ensure anonymity

⁷ All the teacher's names are pseudonyms as to ensure anonymity

then be organized to rotate around the classroom, to each poster, while one person does the presenting and the other watches and asks questions. The students were supposed to switch after presenting, and become the listener/questioner after they hear all the presentations. The handout had clear guidelines, including five main steps, as follows: 1) brainstorming; 2) research and preparation; 3) vocabulary list; 4) poster(s); and 5) oral information presentation. Each of these steps was further broken down for students to follow. He also had an interesting addition to this handout, which was a self-evaluation form asking about various parts of the project and the student's partner experience. For example, on this sheet there were questions such as the following: 1) Do you think you chose a good province or territory [the topic changed according to the project] to 'sell' for your presentation? Why do you think so? or 4) What was the best part of your participation in this presentation? What have you learned from this positive aspect of your experience? Paxton also used some self assessment on this sheet, as he asked the students to give themselves a mark out of twenty, as well as a mark for their partner. This type of project is a structured project (Haines, 1989; Stoller, 1997) and supports Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning, with a reflective element being one of the final stages. Paxton had a similar process in place for several other projects he uses at the intermediate level and provided me with eight other handouts following a similar format. Paxton also gave me a few other worksheets with poetry which did not pertain to any project work. It was interesting to see the projects also clearly stated on the course outline. There were five projects on his course outline for the 4 month term.

I also received four artifacts from Jamie at School A regarding some project presentations she does with her advanced class of 12 students. She had a similar style to

Paxton, as she also provided her students with a handout outlining the steps. One handout was for a 'Travel Symposium.' It was broken down into the following sections: 1) Day 1: Choose a place you would like to visit from a choice of articles (made available by her); 2) Monday to Thursday, do research on the place that they had chosen, find out about accommodations, recreation/facilities and air fare; 3) Day 2, meet with your partner to share the information you have found and develop a short presentation on your city/country; and 4) Day 3, present in a symposium (one person is a travel agent and the other is a customer who wants to buy a vacation, the agents have to try and convince the customer that their destination is best, afterwards students switch roles). Each student was given 'money' to buy their vacation, and the pair with the most 'money' at the end would win a prize. This handout also had the purpose, including the following things for students to learn: to practice all skill areas in this project; reading, writing, listening and speaking; to do research, either by using the telephone, the internet or any other method; to work cooperatively in sharing information; to use language of persuasion, description and explanation; to have fun. The other three handouts had similar format, with different topics. One was focused on a local destination presentation, and one was a personal passions mini-presentation. This was an individual presentation, and had an accompanying sheet asking for the topic, a summary of the presentation, method of presentation, two new vocabulary words, two questions for the audience and any equipment needed. The fourth handout provided was one on job interviews, where students had to use resumes with a partner and make up interview questions. The class would be divided in half, with interviewees and interviewers. The interviewee is supposed to leave the room while the panel of interviewers look at his/her resume and

discuss questions they want to ask. This was a two day mini-project, and included brainstorming to describe qualities to have (or not have) in the work place. Whether to call this activity a project is perhaps debatable, as it was only done over 2 days and did not produce a final, tangible product for all to see.

Another similar project from Jamie's class asked students to produce a formal newspaper or magazine style interview. There were 6 main steps on this handout, and included: 1) Brainstorm with a partner all the occupations they would love to know more about; 2) Decide which profession to research; 3) Write at least 10 questions to interview a person from that profession; 4) Secure a time to interview the person; 5) Interview; and 6) Write up a formal newspaper or magazine style interview.

Dan was another teacher at School A who provided me with some information about his class of 8 students. As this was a highly academic class, any projects done were focused on writing paragraphs and essays. Dan only provided me with one handout, which was about discoveries in academic writing, with three readings, and activities identifying things from the readings. It also had some discussion questions. Overall, there was nothing from Dan's class that was very project related, other than the tasks involved in producing an essay.

Another School A teacher was James, who taught an elective class on intercultural communication which had 13 participating students. One interesting thing about this class was the evaluation scale. Attendance was worth 50%, participation was 20% and presentations were worth 30% of the total grade. The handouts were not conducive to project work, however, in James' interview he mentioned doing a cultural exchange presentation, which is also mentioned in section 4.2.3, teacher interviews. The

handouts consisted of a discussion sheet on family, a reading about banning the Canadian forces from the school's career fair along with accompanying reading comprehension questions, vocabulary list and discussion questions based on the reading. One other handout I received from James was directions for students to design a questionnaire to ask other students about student life, values, interests and lifestyles in their home country's universities. After, they were asked to organize this information into a paragraph report of 75-100 words.

School B was significantly smaller, so artifact data was only collected from 2 teachers. Both Laurie and Jason taught the upper intermediate classes, and had 5 and 8 students, respectively. At the time of artifact collection, Laurie had been focused on an employment theme. The handouts she provided consisted of the following: a reading and writing worksheet about reasons to not be a workaholic, a listening on an interview about small business, a fact sheet about small business in Canada with comprehension questions, a group activity reading resumes and deciding on the best person for the job, a conversation management and clarification strategies worksheet about setting up a job interview, a handout with pictures of various jobs and a list of comprehension questions, a worksheet for students to fill out about a guest speaker (a police officer), a vocabulary sheet with various expressions on employment (i.e., get laid off, on strike, etc.), a sheet with a list of websites to explore and to prepare an application (resume and cover letter) for one of the jobs from one of the websites, a list of job interview questions, factors to consider when choosing a job, and a few other vocabulary sheets. Laurie's class was largely theme-based according to the artifacts, but she did not have the students work together to make one product or one specific goal. Ideally, she wanted her students to be

able to apply for a job confidently and have the background knowledge necessary to do so.

Lastly, at School B, Jason provided me with a few handouts from his class of upper intermediate students. Again, there was nothing in the artifacts from Jason which lent itself to Project-based Learning. I received handouts on idioms, vocabulary discussion practice, pronunciation practice of large numbers, a reading on a Canadian athlete with cancer (Terry Fox) complete with comprehension and discussion questions, and a listening worksheet about a famous boat (the Bluenose).

4.2.6 Summary of qualitative results

The qualitative findings have shown a few trends which this section will summarize. First of all, the open-ended questions from teachers provided a few tendencies towards various aspects of PBL. There were clear divisions about allowing students to choose topics and help with the planning, with the majority of teachers hedging about whether to do this or not. In terms of using collaborative work towards an end product, the results were primarily positive. There was a noticeable theme from teachers that it was the process, not only the end product that is important, as well as the motivation factor. There was also a strong camp of flexible, “it depends” attitudes towards this as well. As for the open-ended question about actually implementing projects, more than half the teachers admitted to having done them, demonstrating support for a PBL approach.

The students had slightly different questions, but exhibited an overwhelming positive response to doing projects as classroom activities. When asked about doing

projects in groups, the results were slightly lower, but still the majority was positive. There were more mixed responses towards group work due to things such as lack of participation from other group members and too many opinions. As for whether the students had any experience working on projects, almost all the students at School A said yes, whereas students at School B had not. The most common form of project cited by students was the presentation. There was a wide range of examples of projects given by the students, demonstrating the versatility of projects.

The interviews asked questions which sought to delve deeper into current perspectives about PBL. Teacher interviews helped further define the approach as seen through their eyes. The majority of teachers felt project work involves some kind of outside class experience, is hands-on and cooperative. There was a continuum of answers, which when examined all together, included most aspects of the definitions given in Chapter two (Stoller, (1997); Legutke & Thomas, (1991)). School A teachers used projects much more than School B teachers, and provided many examples of them. As for goals, group communication, producing and improving language were among many listed. Strategies used to implement projects largely included providing examples, brainstorming and handouts for students to use as a guide to start their own projects. The effectiveness of PBL was also examined and 11 out of 12 teachers felt PBL positively towards this, citing things such as collaboration, discovering new things, language retention, meaningfulness, and integration of skills as factors contributing to the effectiveness of using projects. Teachers also had distinct views about separating traditional teaching methods from PBL. Please refer back to table 22 for details. Results for getting students to help plan the project were mixed again, with most having mixed

feelings about it. Teachers also provided a rich list of advantages and disadvantages about PBL. Please refer back to table 23 for details.

Student's ideas about project work were also interesting, and provided insight as to what they consider to be a project and their feelings about them. Students primarily had experience with projects in the form of a presentation. Most recognized that projects involve making something with a plan. School A students had more experience with projects and due to this, were better able to discuss what they thought their teachers wanted them to learn by working on a project. Most mentioned that practicing speaking and listening were key goals surrounding project work, as well as researching skills. Students at School B, if they had had any experience with a project, felt they helped practice speaking, writing and learning new vocabulary, as well as working with other people. As for how teachers get them to start working on a project, students at School A were aware of their teacher's actions, and mentioned the use of examples and modeling before actually beginning the project themselves. Teachers and students had similar opinions about the effectiveness of projects, citing sharing opinions in group work, critical thinking, speaking with native speakers and learning new vocabulary and grammar. With regards to traditional teaching or project-based teaching 7 out of 15 students in the interviews preferred a project approach, with almost all the students at School B leaning towards projects. School B student results were more mixed and 2 were unable to respond, due to a lack of project experience. Students had very mixed opinions in terms of choosing topics and helping plan. Advantages and disadvantages were also varied, but the comments about advantages outweighed the disadvantages. Please refer back to table 24 for details.

Artifacts were extremely diverse, and were limited. Three of four teachers at School A had examples of projects, mostly in the form of a presentation, whereas the two teachers from School B did not have any projects, but were more theme-based in their lessons and delivered more traditional type activities (i.e. vocabulary worksheets, discussion questions, readings with comprehension questions, etc.).

Chapter Five - Results and Discussion

5.1 A return to the research questions and implications for pedagogy and practice

I have presented the data from three sources, the questionnaires, the interviews and the artifacts. This section refers back to the results of each of these forms of data in relationship to the research questions. The first research question was the following: What are English as a second language teachers' and students' perspectives about project-based learning (PBL)? This question was the most general of the research questions and was put in place to discover whether teachers and students had positive, negative or mixed views towards Project-based Learning. According to the overall quantitative results in the opinion section of the questionnaire, teachers showed more positive attitudes than students overall towards most aspects of PBL (see also Table 5, p. 54). Slightly stronger agreement from teachers was most recognized in the following areas of PBL: the use of reflective activities for students, getting students to work on projects in groups, using a variety of materials, producing a final product, assuming different roles (for teachers and students), and working on a project for more than one class were all aspects preferred more by teachers. Students also had positive results in these areas, but had slightly lower overall means suggest that they are not as supportive of PBL as the teachers involved in this study. Teachers and students were, however, still supportive of most things. Teachers may have agreed more to PBL attributes than students due to their need for a dynamic and interesting classroom, and to provide meaningful situations to learn language (Savignon, 2001). Teachers' tendencies to be flexible individuals as well as the fact the teachers in this study are Canadian and used to

a multi-cultural make-up in general may have also affected their positive response to trying different teaching methods.

The data just mentioned also pertains to research question 4: What aspects of PBL are more favorable to teachers and students? The above mentioned areas had the most agreement, but it is also important to note that there were no negative answers from teachers and students when asked about their level of agreement. Letting the students determine discussion topics had the lowest result in agreement, with a mean of 4.2. The interview data showed more mixed opinions than on the questionnaire, especially when students at the two schools were paired more evenly (7 at School A and 8 at School B). All the teachers' opinions were between partly agree to agree or above. This provides evidence that teachers' perspectives about PBL are generally positive. There were 5 significant results between teachers and students in the opinion section, which included using reflective activities, using project-based group work, assuming different roles in class (for teachers and student variety of roles) and working on a project for more than one class. In all these cases, teachers were more agreeable than students towards these aspects. Group work seemed to be a debatable topic for students, as well as taking on a variety of roles. In a study by Nunan (1989), teachers were also found to be more positive about communicative activities than students. Students were positive towards taking on a variety of roles, but not as much as teachers. This may be due to teachers trying to encourage autonomy, which has been cited as improving language learning by raising motivation (Huntley, 1998). The use of reflective activities is also a key factor in creating autonomy. Students may have had some reservations about being responsible for their own learning and critical thinking about it. Again, it is important to note that there were

no negative responses from teachers or students in this section, which is encouraging for PBL supporters.

From the open-ended questions, perspectives from School A teachers on PBL showed that using collaborative work towards an end product was generally a good idea. Eighteen of the thirty teachers said yes, they had tried implementing a project. This leads one to believe that current perspectives are supportive of using projects in the adult ESL classroom. As for the students' open-ended questions, an overwhelming 70 students said yes, they liked doing projects as classroom activities, using words or phrases such as: share time with classmates, interesting, motivating, and dynamic, increases participation, improvement, fun and good opportunity. The number of 70 however, may be misleading, as mentioned in section 3.5, at this point in the questionnaire, students may have been tired and just put any positive answer, with little or no thought, or may have answered in a certain way in order to please the interviewer (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). Students' responses to doing group work (collaborative work for teachers) were less strong, but nevertheless, strikingly positive in their responses. Any negative or mixed responses were focused more on difficulty with group work than with a project specifically. There was a distinct split regarding previous experience with projects according to which school they were from. This is important for helping answer research question number 3: Are there any differences in the way teachers' and students' view PBL at different institutions? Yes, there are clear differences, as students at School B, primarily immigrants, did not have as many project experiences as the international students. Fifty out of sixty-five School A students said yes, they had done some form of a project, whereas only 6 out of 23 students at School B said yes. This is particularly significant for teachers when

considering their teaching situation and student background. School A students, all international, are primarily learning English for instrumental reasons (Jacques, 2001), as in their background questionnaire, most listed getting a better job as their reason for studying English. Due to their shorter time in Canada and learning English, they are most likely more inclined to use their time wisely and most efficiently, as well as be more enthusiastic about using out of class experiences to their full advantage. The students at School B seemed to be much more preoccupied with integrating into a Canadian lifestyle while maintaining their own busy lives, which made it difficult for the teachers to assign out of class assignments pertaining to a project. Getting the students at School B together was often very difficult. The age difference between the two student groups could also be a factor in this result.

Going back to research question one again, perspectives about PBL were also analyzed in the interviews in several key areas, including the following: definitions, examples, goals, strategies used to implement a project, effectiveness, length of time of a project, comparisons with traditional teaching, student autonomy in planning and the advantages and disadvantages of project-based teaching. Teachers' perspectives about the definition of PBL often included outside-class experience. When all the comments were combined, the teachers had almost attained the whole picture and definition of what PBL is. Individually, however, many teachers missed key facts about it, (i.e., a series of tasks connected to achieve a final product) which makes it difficult to say whether they actually use a project-based approach sometimes or not. Examples of projects were rich, but the primary type of project being used by teachers in this study was the presentation. The more frequent use of the presentation may be due to the communicative qualities of

presenting, and the listening and speaking practice involved. The stages of a presentation could be easier to organize than more complicated projects such as fundraising or creating things using multi-media. In a presentation, students are responsible for finding facts and ordering them in a suitable way, rather than having to deal with many people as in a fundraiser or deal with complicated technology. This also answers in part research question 5: What aspects of PBL are being used by teachers in classrooms? Having some kind of presentation seemed to be the norm for teachers at School A. This may be due to the tight-knit nature of the teachers at his school and that they do a lot of team teaching. Sharing ideas and lesson plans is common practice at School A, which may be a reason why many of the projects shared similarities. Teachers also mentioned many goals arising out of using projects, such as group communication, to produce and improve language, to collect information through research, to present information clearly, to learn new vocabulary and to promote self-efficacy, among others. There were no distinct similarities or differences with regards to goals between teachers at the two schools, as teachers offered a variety of answers. Strategies were also similar, with teachers providing students with examples of previous students' work, or a handout clearly stating the requirements. School A teachers (who provided me with artifacts) fell into the structured or semi-structured project type (Stoller, 1997; Henry, 1994). Teachers at School B did not provide me with any handouts with projects, which again adds weight to the argument that there are indeed differences between the two schools in terms of using projects. As for effectiveness, 11 out of 12 teachers in the interviews said that project work is effective for reasons of collaboration, discovering new things, retention of language due to personal involvement, meaningful content, motivation and the

integration of skills. Perspectives about the length of a project differed, as teachers felt it depended on the type of project. Most teachers in the interviews, regardless of school, had a clear distinction between traditional teaching and project-based teaching and were also able to clearly state the advantages and disadvantages of using projects (see Table 23).

Research question two is: Are teachers' and student's perspectives about PBL the same or different? (What are the similarities and differences?). There were 4 significant differences in opinion between teachers and students at School A in the within-school analysis. There were no significant differences of opinion between teachers and students at School B. Out of the 10 questions, to have only 4 significant differences leads me to believe that opinions between teachers and students are not that different regarding various aspects of PBL. School A had diverse cultural backgrounds, but did have a heavy Japanese population of students, which could be cause for some of the differences. Beckett's (2002) findings about Asian students expecting a more teacher-centered approach may be reflected in this result. School B also had diverse cultural backgrounds, but without a concentration of any one cultural background; so one could hypothesize that cultural make-up is an affecting factor. Further research is needed in this area.

Research question 3 is: Are there any differences in the way teachers and students view PBL at different institutions? There were more differences in opinion between teachers and students at School A than at School B. One main difference was that teachers at School B do not send their students outside class as often as teachers at School A. Evidence for this is given in the following quote,

...so in terms of assigning stuff for them to do, it's hard enough for us to get things back written in their journals, so for me to ask them to actually get some, a larger project done, I am not sure. I will try in the New Year, because we are going to do government, and so we are going to give it a go. But with continuous intake, again, it's a very difficult idea that you can send them away.....so continuous intake. Ah, hmmm, (Me: Teacher One told me some of the students are really busy, and it's really hard to get them to do homework even outside of class.) Yeah, that is a good point. You'd have to be on class time, and even though it is continuous intake there are also a lot of absents. So you get students with kids who are sick, they have to stay home, or they have jobs, they are too tired to come in every odd day. So it's hard to get any real consistency as far as pairing somebody up and hoping that their partner is going to be there the next day.

Due to the student population being largely different and the continuous intake present at School B, this affected these teachers' ability to implement projects in their classes, thereby explaining a large portion of the data and lack of project experience by the students at School B. Also, perhaps a difference in School policies would need to be explored in order to understand the differences here, as School A could be more lenient with sending students outside the classroom. Further research is also needed in this area.

Also helping to answer research question 3 are the 2 significant differences between the students at both schools in terms of deciding about a topic for discussion and going outside the classroom to do activities or get hands-on experience. Students at School A were less agreeable to deciding their topics than students at School B, but much

more interested in going outside the classroom to get hands-on experience. Perhaps this is due to the fact that international students are only in Canada for a limited time and want to experience as much of Canada as possible, whereas the immigrant students were already living in Canada and viewed their classes as being more crucial to really learn English. Also, as the age group of students at School B was much higher, it is likely they would want to have more input or control over the decision making (with regards to choosing topics for discussion or helping plan).

Research question 5 is answered through examining the frequencies about how often different aspects of PBL are used. The aspects with the highest scores were regarding having learner-centered classes, completing activities or projects in class with everyone contributing and also participating and practicing listening and speaking in small groups. The last point mentioned was the only significant result between teachers and students in the frequency section. These were the highest scores perhaps due to the fact that these aspects are part of many types of teaching approaches, whether it be Task-based Learning (Breen, 1989; Willis, 1996; Ellis, 2003), the Communicative Approach (Savignon, 2001) or Content-based Learning (Snow, 2001). These types of things would be used most often in classes as they are more general and less focused on project work specifically.

There were 6 frequency questions for both teachers and students which were high on the scale, between often and usually. These were on questionnaire items 2, 3, 4, 10, 12 and 13. This shows that teachers are using and students are experiencing many of the different aspects of a project-based approach. The things to notice, however, are the lower scores. Allowing students opportunities to pick topics was a debatable topic, with

teachers hesitant to do this consistently due to time factors and conflicting interests. Sending students outside during class time was also low, which is understandable for reasons of time as well. Students are also most likely expected to be in class during class time and heading out of class would have to be an organized trip with clear expectations. Sending students outside after class to collect information for homework assignments was higher (3.67 and 3.38) overall. Using the community and resources outside of class is heralded as creating more motivation for learners (Eyring, 2001), so it is curious that this is a lower result.

In conclusion, perspectives on PBL are generally positive, with some mixed results within certain areas. Teachers' and students' perspectives were not that different, which is encouraging for those interested in using projects. Although teachers scored slightly higher in most cases, there were no stark contrasts between negative and positive attitudes. There were distinct differences between schools, as School A used project work more often due to different student backgrounds and needs. Teachers and students were the most favorable to more common practices in ESL classes, but still exhibited positive perspectives towards aspects of PBL as well. And lastly, the most common type of project being used in adult ESL is the presentation of some kind, falling under the production or performance project type (Stoller, 1997).

In terms of second language teaching theory and practice, this study can help in several ways. It has provided further evidence supporting Project-based Learning and added to mixed reviews as previously found by the other two systematic studies by Eyring (1989) and Beckett (1999, 2002). Eyring (1989) reported that student attitudinal and proficiency outcomes were not predictable and that although students felt generally

satisfied with the approach, they did not significantly gain in overall language learning strategies or proficiency. While this study did not examine proficiency, it does support findings from Eyring that “students felt generally satisfied with the approach” (p. 199). This result can help educators decide on methods of instruction, as giving students lessons which are enjoyable and viable is an important aspect of teaching.

Some of the negative findings from Eyring’s (1989) study included divisions between ethnic groups, few long-term friendships and no heightened self-esteem, as well as exhibited resistance, collusion and indolence (p.199). These were not found in this study, but the different methodological research design would explain this, as Eyring did a case study done over a 6 week period. Eyring also found that students in her study felt that “allowing so much input and ‘authority’ was not good in an academic class” (p. 176). There were only a few students in this study who felt choosing topics and helping plan a project was not a good idea. There were no truly negative results from students in this study, but there were issues with group work expressed. Group work is a key component of collaborative project work (Legutke & Thomas, 1991; Stoller, 1997) and it is common practice in today’s classrooms according to teachers in my interviews. It still presents issues for students who simply do not like it. I do not think there is any way around it, no matter what teachers do to make group work desirable, there will always be differences in individual learning preferences.

Beckett’s (1999) study found that students carried out projects successfully, but that their evaluations “expressed dilemmas, frustrations, and tensions” (Beckett, 2002, p. 60). No such comments were found when interviewing students about their project work presentations at School A, as most students felt that they were ‘interesting, motivating,

dynamic, and fun,' among other comments. These results, along with means in the quantitative section exhibiting positive results reveals more support for the use of projects in adult ESL.

It is also important to note that teachers need to consider for what type of teaching situation project work is most beneficial. Before beginning this study, my initial assumption was that School B would have more projects as they were more community-based and that immigrants would want to work on more projects connecting them to the surroundings they live in. I was surprised that they did not do more projects, and was faced with the reality that teachers need to take into consideration hectic lives outside of school and family obligations of immigrant students. The international students were younger and seemingly more devoted to learning language through a variety of methods within their time in Canada. Perhaps the teachers at School B felt a more bare bones approach was necessary with the immigrant students in order for them to feel like they were getting the necessary language and thematic content necessary for life in Canada. Nevertheless, the teaching situation should be carefully considered before implementing a project-based approach. What type of learners you have is crucial for teachers to consider before embarking on any teaching approach, method or technique. Teachers must first consider the backgrounds and needs of the students in order to have lessons and activities which suit them and their daily language learning needs. This is one very important result of this study which should be carefully considered regardless of the teaching approach, method or technique used.

5.2 Directions for future research and conclusion

Upon inspection of the survey and teacher interview data, there are a few aspects of PBL which are not being used as often as others, which makes it difficult to say whether teachers (who said they use projects) are using a truly project-based approach. It would appear that teachers in adult ESL classes implement projects, but as an addition to regular teaching methods and curriculum. Further research could be done by taking out any overlapping concepts and focusing only on the project aspects of the approach. This could be done by removing some of the questions on the questionnaire I designed. This is one limitation I recognize from this study, as it includes aspects of other approaches as well. I included aspects of PBL which encompassed the approach in its entirety, but when analyzed separately, there were some interesting trends in the frequency means which overlapped with other approaches as well. This is a problem with many of the issues surrounding applied linguistics, as there is often a continuum present in many of the theories and approaches. Further research is needed here in separating what truly distinguishes PBL from other approaches and how to measure if teachers and students use it or not.

Further research is also needed to examine the effects of a project-based approach on language proficiency. As experimental or quasi-experimental studies are difficult to set up, this is an area which would require much more time and length than what is allowable for the scope of this paper. I would like to also suggest that an observation scheme for PBL be made, such as the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) (Allen, Frölich & Spada, 1984; Frölich, Spada & Allen, 1985; Spada & Frölich,

1995) or Turnbull's (1998) Multi-dimensional Orientation of Language Teaching Observation scheme (MOLT).

Another area I considered before beginning this study was examining perspectives according to nationality, as there have been comments in this study and in Beckett's (1999) about an Asian predilection for traditional methods. I would like to see if students from other cultures are more or less enthusiastic about the use of projects. This would require a larger student base and many schools involved in order to get representative samples, but would be interesting for EFL purposes.

Furthermore, more studies need to be conducted examining factors which inhibit teachers' commitment to student-centered, project-based teaching. I did start in on this aspect in the interview questions (see Appendix E), but found it was not relevant for the current research questions. Also, motivational variables could be examined between project-based classes and more traditional classes.

There are many aspects of PBL which are agreed upon by teachers and students so far, which is encouraging for teachers interested in using the approach or those wanting some assurance that what they are doing with projects is accepted by students. Clear differences were found between the two schools which can also affect the use of projects.

Project-based Learning can offer students memorable ways to learn language in an integrated, holistic way. Motivation was a common thread mentioned in this study by teachers and students, which in turn can improve learner autonomy. In order to further knowledge and prepare future educators to become effective, more systematic research is needed to solidify current perspectives on old adages.

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APPENDIX A: Teacher Consent Form

University of Victoria
Linguistics department

Participant Consent Form
Teachers

Project-based learning in ESL classrooms: Teachers' and students' perspectives

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Project-based learning in ESL classrooms: Teachers' and students' perspectives* that is being conducted by Cristina Petersen.

Cristina Petersen is a graduate student in the department of Linguistics at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by phone (250)744-8112 or by email Cristina4202000@yahoo.ca.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Applied Linguistics. It is being conducted under the supervision of Hossein Nassaji. You may contact my supervisor at (250)721-7432.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to explore teachers' and students' perspectives on project-based learning at two different schools. I also wish to explore if there are any differences in the way students and teachers at the two schools perceive project-based learning.

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important because it will be beneficial to investigate project-based learning in an ESL context in Canada, and to find out about where teachers and students are in their current opinions and knowledge about project-based learning. It will add to the literature and offer insight into perspectives in two different teaching contexts. It will add to the debate in second language pedagogy about the use of project-based learning in ESL or EFL contexts, as project-based learning has been portrayed as having mixed reviews in the literature.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because your opinions are important in understanding current viewpoints about project-based learning. Teachers teaching English as a second language in Canada from various educational backgrounds can provide important information to researchers like myself in understanding preferences about certain teaching approaches. I have chosen you to participate in this research study because I value your perspective.

What is involved

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include filling out one questionnaire asking about your opinions about project-based learning.

The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes, one time only. I will be available to assist you with any questions should you have any. Also, there is an opportunity to be interviewed about the same topics as on the questionnaire. Please indicate on the questionnaire if you are willing to be interviewed. The interviews will be AUDIO-RECORDED, but ONLY the researcher will listen to it. If you choose to be interviewed, I will be requesting lesson plans and any handouts or worksheets you give your students. This will allow me to compare what you say about project work with some of the activities you do in class. For this you will just need to copy one extra handout etc, and provide me with your lesson plans. I may wish to be in contact with you throughout to discuss your classes, but will keep any time outside of class to a minimum. I may just need clarification about the handouts or lesson plans. If you just wish to do the questionnaire, you will not be asked to do any more work beyond class. Your participation is entirely voluntary in either case. Your participation is in no way related to your employment at your school.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including the possibility of fatigue when filling out the questionnaire. Assistance will be available to help minimize any problems causing fatigue or stress when answering questions. The questionnaire is designed to be as easy to answer as possible, so any inconvenience should be kept to a minimum. Should you decide to be interviewed, you may have to spend a maximum of 30 minutes outside of class with the researcher. The researcher will make a time convenient for you if you decide to participate in this part of the study.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include increased knowledge and awareness of project-based learning and students' perspectives about it. By consenting to participation in this study you will help contribute to research in applied linguistics. Society can benefit by knowing about the current views about project-based learning. State of knowledge regarding project-based learning will also be increased, as the goal of research such as this is to add to the literature and help teachers make informed decisions about how they teach.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will only be used with your permission.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants

The researcher may have a relationship to potential participants as researcher/teacher and researcher/student. To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the following steps to prevent pressure have been taken. The researcher will have spoken with your director and made it clear that your participation in this study will

in no way affect your employment. The researcher will also make it clear that this is entirely voluntary, it is not a mandatory part of your employment, but your participation is greatly appreciated.

On-going Consent

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will ask for your permission in this letter to possibly interview you at a later date, should you indicate on the questionnaire that you are willing. I will maintain an open line of communication, and will be available through email or phone if there are any questions.

Anonymity

In terms of protecting your anonymity I will code all names using pseudonyms.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by a password on my personal computer and questionnaires and interviews will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: through my Masters thesis and a presentation at a scholarly meeting. I may also try to publish an article on this topic upon completion and approval of my thesis.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of carefully after completion of my Masters degree. Electronic data will be erased 1 year after completion of my degree. Paper copies will be shredded and any audio or video tapes will be destroyed.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the researcher, Cristina Petersen, at (250) 744-8112, or through email at Cristina4202000@yahoo.ca or lovelife@uvic.ca. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Hossein Nassaji, at (250) 721-7423 or email nassaji@uvic.ca.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

APPENDIX B: Student Consent Form

University of Victoria
Linguistics department

Participant Consent Form *Students*

Project-based learning in ESL classrooms: Teachers' and students' perspectives

You are invited to participate in a study called *Project-based learning in ESL classrooms: Teachers' and students' perspectives* that is being conducted by Cristina Petersen.

Cristina Petersen is a graduate student in the department of Linguistics at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have any questions by phone (250)744-8112 or by email Cristina4202000@yahoo.ca.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a MA degree in Applied Linguistics. Dr. Hossein Nassaji is my supervisor. You may contact him if you have questions at (250)721-7432.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to learn about teachers' and students' opinions on project learning at two different schools. I also wish to learn if there are any differences in the way students and teachers at the two schools see projects.

Importance of this Research

This research is important because it helps us understand ESL classes in Canada, and to find out about teachers' and students' current opinions and knowledge about projects. By researching topics like this, we can learn about how students like you view certain types of teaching approaches, and in particular, what you think about the use of projects in class.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because your opinions are important in understanding current viewpoints about projects. Students studying English as a second language in Canada from different countries and backgrounds can provide important information to help understand preferences about certain teaching approaches. I have chosen you to participate in this research study because I value your opinions.

What is involved

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include filling out one questionnaire asking about your opinions about projects. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes, one time only. I will be there to assist you with the questions, as well as your teacher. If you choose not to volunteer, you may leave class and take a break, or sit in class and read or study quietly. ALSO, there is an opportunity to be interviewed about the same topics as on the questionnaire. Please check on the questionnaire YES if you are willing to be interviewed. The interviews will be AUDIO-RECORDED, but ONLY the researcher will listen to it. It is important for me to listen to your comments and to not miss anything. If you decide to be interviewed, I will arrange a convenient time to meet. If you only want to complete the questionnaire, you will not be asked to do any more work beyond class. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Your participation is in no way related to your course mark.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including the possibility of fatigue (becoming tired) when filling out the questionnaire in English, as it is not in your native language. Your teacher and I will be there to help if you need help understanding any of the questions. The questionnaire is designed to be as easy to answer as possible, so any inconvenience should be kept to a minimum. If you decide to be interviewed, you may have to spend a maximum of 30 minutes outside of class with the researcher. Again, the researcher will make a time convenient for you if you decide to participate in the interviews. Your help with the interviews would be greatly appreciated.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks (dangers) to you by participating in this research.

Benefits

The possible benefits of your participation in this research include increased knowledge and awareness of project learning and the teaching approach used by your teacher. By consenting to participation in this study you will help add to research in applied linguistics (the study of teaching languages). Society can benefit by knowing about the current views about project learning. State of knowledge regarding project learning will also be increased, as the goal of research like this is to add to the literature and help teachers make informed decisions about how they teach.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may stop at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do want to withdraw (not participate) from the study, your data will only be used with your permission, which I will ask for privately.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants

The researcher may have a relationship to potential participants as researcher/teacher and researcher/student. To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the following steps to prevent pressure have been taken. The researcher has spoken with your teacher and made it clear that your participation in this study will in no way affect your class mark. The researcher also will make it clear that this is entirely voluntary, and is not a mandatory part of your course.

On-going Consent

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will ask for your permission in this letter to possibly interview you at a later date, if you indicate on the questionnaire that you are willing. I will be available through email or phone at any time if there are questions.

Anonymity

In terms of protecting your anonymity (privacy) I will code all real names using pseudonyms (fake names).

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by a password on my personal computer and questionnaires and interviews will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.

Dissemination of Results (How I will share the results)

It is likely that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: through my Masters thesis and a presentation at a scholarly meeting. I may also try to publish an article on this topic upon completion and approval of my thesis.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of carefully after completion of my Masters degree. Electronic data will be erased 1 year after completion of my degree. Paper copies will be shredded and any audio or video tapes will be destroyed.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the researcher, Cristina Petersen, at (250) 744-8112, or through email at Cristina4202000@yahoo.ca or lovelife@uvic.ca. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Hossein Nassaji, at (250) 721-7423 or email nassaji@uvic.ca.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C: Teacher Questionnaire

Project-based learning Opinion Questionnaire

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following survey questions concerning foreign language teaching and the use of projects. This survey is conducted by Cristina Petersen in order to fulfill the requirements of a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics at the University of Victoria. The application for ethics approval entitled 'Project-based learning in ESL classrooms: Teachers' and students' perspectives' has been approved and assigned Protocol Number 07-241.

In order to better understand current opinions about project-based learning, your participation is greatly appreciated. This is not a test so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. I am interested in your personal opinion and would like to request that you answer sincerely.

Please feel free to contact Cristina Petersen for clarification on this questionnaire. You may reach me through email at lovelife@uvic.ca or by phone (250) 744-8112. Thank you very much for your assistance. This project would not be possible without your participation.

Please also be sure to sign the participant consent form. Thank you.

Project-based learning Opinion Questionnaire**Name:****Section I:**

1. Gender M F

2. Age 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56+

3. What is/are your native language(s)? _____

4. Please tick the highest level of your educational qualifications:
None
High school
College diploma
University bachelor's degree
University master's degree
University doctorate degree
Any other EFL/ESL teaching certificates: _____

5. How long have you worked at the current institution?

6. How many hours of class a week do you teach at the current institution?

7. Approximately how many hours a week (on average) do you spend planning for the classroom?

8. How many years have you been teaching English as a second or foreign language?

9. What level(s) have you taught before at your current institution?

10. What level(s) do you currently teach at this institution?

Section II:

In the following section, please indicate your opinion after each statement by circling the number that best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

For example, if you **strongly agree** with the statement, **circle 6**. If you **strongly disagree** with the statement, **circle 1**. Please circle one (and only one) whole number after each statement and answer all. Thanks.

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Partly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I like the students to determine topics for discussion when I assign group work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I like to use activities that encourage reflection.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I like to use group work which is focused on a theme or is project-based.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I like to use a variety of materials in addition to textbooks (e.g., films, internet, and people from the Victoria area).	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I like students to experience hands-on and real life tasks or activities which involve going outside the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I like it when my classes are focused on content and an ongoing theme rather than individual linguistics items or skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I like it when my class produces a final product (e.g., a scrapbook collection of writing and pictures, a formal written report, a classroom display, a newspaper, a student performance, a radio or video program).	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I like it when I assume different roles in class, (e.g., facilitator, sharing, and/or instructor).	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I like it when students have to assume different roles as well (e.g., manager, actor, writer, secretary, teacher, and/or researcher).	1	2	3	4	5	6

10. I like students to work on a project for more than a single class session.	1	2	3	4	5	6
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(This was all on one page originally)

Section III:

In this section, I am interested in the *frequency* of how you use or do not use the various aspects of teaching. Please **circle 6 if you almost always do** this type of activity in your class and **circle 1 if you never do** this type of activity in your class.

Statements	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Often	Usually	Almost always
1. I give students many opportunities to choose topics for discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I have students reflect on their work through journals or discussions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I let students work on one project for more than one class session.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I use a variety of materials in addition to textbooks (e.g., films, internet, and people from the Victoria area).	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I send my students outside the classroom during class time to collect information for class-related work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I send my students outside the classroom after class to collect information for homework assignments .	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I have students proofread each other's written work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. My classes are learner-centered.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Completing activities or projects in class requires everyone to contribute and participate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I grade my students mainly through an ongoing collection of their work and do not rely solely on tests.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I get students to practice listening and speaking in small	1	2	3	4	5	6

groups.						
12. I have short grammar lessons based on student needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I investigate topics in the community or real-world issues (e.g., elections, the environment, public transportation etc.).	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I use the internet to research a topic.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section IV:

The following section describes examples of projects completed by ESL classes. Please read each example and decide about how favorable you would be to trying each project. Circle only one choice.

1=strongly against

2=against

3=slightly against

4=slightly in favour

5=in favour

6=strongly in favour

1. Students needed to learn debating skills. They started by discussing violence in the media. They completed project diaries, watched a documentary on violence in the media, read the newspaper daily, did an internet comparison of U.S. and Canadian TV stations, wrote letters to the local newspaper, completed an opinion survey of ten people on terrorism and gangs in Canada, prepared questions for an interview with the local news station manager, and took a trip to the local news station interview the manager.

1 2 3 4 5 6
strongly against strongly in favour

2. A group of elementary learners (age 11) embarked on exploring the communicative use of English at Frankfurt International airport. The main task they prepared for during three weeks in class was to interview English-speaking passengers and airline employees about their destinations, jobs and opinions about Germany. These interviews were to be recorded and edited so that they could function as new language input in class.

1 2 3 4 5 6
strongly against strongly in favour

3. Homelessness was a topic on the curriculum. The class started by discussing vocabulary and idioms relating to the topic. An internet search was done about various agencies in the area which help homeless people. Group work was done to decide on which agency was the most interesting for the class. How to help homeless people was discussed and the topic of fundraisers was explored. The class decided to raise money for one of the agencies by having a bake sale at their ESL school. They created posters and advertised for the bake sale, and also talked to the other classes about what they were planning. The groups were each responsible for something to contribute to the bake sale and how to set it up. They had a bake sale and then donated the money they raised. They

4. Would you be willing to be interviewed for about 20 minutes by me about your opinions on project-based learning? YES NO

5. If you answered YES to question 12, what is the best way to contact you?

Phone _____
Email _____

*Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. **If you answered YES to question 4 in Section V, I will be in contact with you shortly to discuss further details.** 😊*

APPENDIX D: Student Questionnaire

Project-based learning Opinion Questionnaire

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following survey questions concerning foreign language teaching and the use of projects. This survey is conducted by Cristina Petersen in order to fulfill the requirements of a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics at the University of Victoria. The application for ethics approval entitled 'Project-based learning in ESL classrooms: Teachers' and students' perspectives' has been approved and assigned Protocol Number 07-241.

In order to better understand current opinions about project-based learning, your participation is greatly appreciated. This is not a test so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. I am interested in your personal opinion and would like to request that you answer sincerely.

Please feel free to contact Cristina Petersen for clarification on this questionnaire. You may reach me through email at lovelife@uvic.ca or by phone (250) 744-8112. Thank you very much for your assistance. This project would not be possible without your participation.

******Please also SIGN the participant consent form attached at the back.******

****Thank you!****

Project-based learning Opinion Questionnaire**Name:****Section I:**

1. Gender M F
2. Age 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56+
3. What is/are your native language(s)? _____
4. Do you speak any other languages? If yes, please specify.

5. Where were you born? _____
6. When did you arrive in Canada? _____
7. How long do you plan on staying in Canada? _____
8. What is your current class level? _____
9. How old were you when you first started studying English? _____
10. How many months or years have you formally studied English? (Taken English classes in Canada, your home country or other countries)

11. What are your reasons for studying English?

Section II:

In the following section, please indicate your opinion after each statement by circling the number that best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

For example, if you **strongly agree** with the statement, **circle 6**. If you **strongly disagree** with the statement, **circle 1**. Please circle one (and only one) whole number after each statement and answer all. Thanks.

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Partly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I like giving the teacher ideas for topics to discuss in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I like talking about and thinking about things I did in class (e.g., journals, group discussions about projects we do in class.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I like working on projects in groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I like to use a variety of materials in addition to textbooks (e.g., films, internet, and people from the Victoria area).	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I like going outside the classroom to do activities or get hands on experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I like it when my classes have a lot of real-world topics and relate to the community. (e.g., elections, the environment, local issues, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I like working towards a final product in class (e.g., a scrapbook collection of writing and pictures, a formal written report, a classroom display, a newspaper, a student performance, a radio or video program).	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I like it when my teacher has many different roles and I see him/her as more than just a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I like having different responsibilities and roles in class (e.g. group secretary –writing down information, internet expert, presenter, or organizer, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6

10. I like working on one project for more than one class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
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Section III:

In this section, I am interested in the *frequency* of how your teacher uses or does not use the various aspects of teaching. Please **circle 6 if he/she almost always does** this type of activity in your class and **circle 1 if he/she never does** this type of activity in your class.

Statements	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Often	Usually	Almost always
1. My teacher gives me many opportunities to choose topics for discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. My teacher gets me to talk or write about what I learn in class and what I think about it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. My teacher gets me to work on one project for more than one class session.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. My teacher uses a variety of materials, e.g. in addition to textbooks, she/he uses films, internet, and people from the Victoria community.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. My teacher sends me outside the classroom during class time to collect information for class-related work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. My teacher sends me outside the classroom after class to collect information for homework assignments .	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I help read and correct my classmates' written work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. The teacher is the one who talks in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Completing activities or projects in class requires everyone to contribute and participate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. My teacher evaluates me mainly through an ongoing collection of my work and does not rely only on tests.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. My teacher gets me to practice listening and speaking in	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. Would you be willing to be interviewed for about 10-20 minutes by the researcher about your opinions on project-based learning? YES NO

5. If you answered YES to question 4, what is the best way to contact you?

Phone _____ Email _____

*Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. **If you answered YES to question 4 in Section V, I will be in contact with you shortly to discuss further details.** 😊*

APPENDIX E: Interview Questions for Teachers

1. What is your definition of a project?
2. What are some examples of projects you have done in your classes this semester?
3. In your opinion, what are the goals of project-based learning?
4. To what extent do you try to implement or use projects in your classroom?
5. What strategies do you use to implement a project?
6. Do you think project-based learning is effective? Why or why not?
7. In your opinion, how long should a project typically take?
8. How do you compare a project-based approach with “traditional” teaching?
9. What is your opinion of getting the students to help plan a project?
10. In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of using project-based learning in the L2 classroom?
11. What do you think are the challenges in organizing a project in your class?
12. What are some constraints which may prohibit you from implementing a project-based approach?
13. Do you have any other comments to add about Project-based Learning or teaching in general?

APPENDIX F: Interview Questions for Students

1. What is your definition of a project?
2. What are some examples of projects you have done in your classes this semester?
3. What do you think your teacher wants you to learn by working on a project? (what kind of skills)
4. Does your teacher try to use projects in your classroom?
5. How does your teacher try to get you to start working on a project? What are some of the steps?
6. Do you think working on projects is an effective way to learn language? Why or why not?
7. In your opinion, how long should a project typically take?
8. How do you compare doing projects in class with more “traditional” things such as learning grammar with your teacher from a text book, or memorizing vocabulary lists? Which do you prefer and why?
9. Which type of teaching do you prefer and why?
10. What is your opinion of helping the teacher plan a project?
11. In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of doing projects in the classroom?
12. What do you think are the challenges in completing a project?
13. Do you have any other comments to add about Project-based Learning or learning in general?