

## PROJECT-BASED LEARNING AS A MODEL OF TEACHING-LEARNING IN CROSS CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

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### Abstract

Learning a language is automatically learning the culture. Culture is very important to learn because the use of language derives from culture. For students of English Department CCU subject is a compulsory either for students of literature or Education. The ways in teaching and learning CCU are vary. They must be easy for students to understand the subject. One of models which can be used is project-based learning. This model demands the students to have a project in every meeting. It seems to be difficult to apply but we can ask the students to work in group. So in every meeting we have one group to present one topic. It will be challenging for students to do it. They have to share to the class about their project.

**Keywords:** cross cultural understanding, teaching-learning, project based learning

### A. INTRODUCTION

In learning English automatically we have to learn the culture. By learning the culture we know what to do; we know what to say in the real communication. Communication is something very important in terms of using the language. Understanding the use of language in communication is a must for the language learner. There are some effective ways in learning culture we can see from film, culture capsules, and many performances these is included as culture. Learning can never be separated from teaching, so in teaching culture the lecturer must have certain strategy in order to make the teaching meaningful.

Some teaching methods used are very monotonous this also happens in Cross Cultural Understanding teaching. CCU is one of specific subject which discusses about culture taught in semester VI where the students must take as the compulsory subject after joining some requirements subject. There is no other lecturer who teaches this subject so there is no model. There are so many things to do in this subject, there are so many assignments. The goal is to make the students learn as what we have to learn is something we don't have and we have to try hard understanding others' culture. That is very challenging.

In this paper the writer wants to present about what to teach, how to teach, and the target of teaching and also the reasons why they are important to be discussed. The result of the discussion will lead to the conclusion about the importance of teaching CCU using Project based learning.

### B. DISCUSSION

#### 1. What To Teach

Related to some considerations of the importance of teaching CCU we have some topics to be discussed. The topics are considered important because it deals with the students' needs in understanding culture. Those topics, by considerations, had been discussed with two native speakers who became volunteers in our university. The topics are:

1. cultural terms: to introduce the students to some terms of culture before studying it
2. cross cultural conflict and adjustment: to give description about the adjustment process coming to a new culture
3. cultural values: comparing some cultural values of Indonesians and Westerners
4. space and time: give explanation about the importance of space and time in interacting with people from different culture
5. individual and the group: explaining about the concepts of individualism and the group
6. language: describing the difference style and patterns of language

7. family: comparing the way people take care of baby, children, young adult and elderlies, also describing many kinds of family structure
8. education: describing about the educational values and comparing it
9. moral values: describing about kinds of moral values and the way people educate the children on them
10. gender: the difference role between man and woman also male and female either in family, education and social life

The consideration of teaching those topics are because there is guidance from the syllabus to make the students understand about the the cross cultural understanding by giving them knowledge and experiences on those topics. The first topic is really important to lead the students know about the importance of comprehending the cultural terms. By understanding it students will know well about generalization, enculturation, acculturation, discrimination, ethnocentrism and streotype.

The second topic is on cross cultural conflict and adjustment. People who enter a new culture almost inevitably suffer from disorientation. The physical and social environment contains much that is new and hard to understand. It may take time to learn how to get around New York, do laundry, buy food and other necessities, and become comfortable in the new society. It is exhausting and difficult to speak in a second language, understand the meanings that lie behind spoken and non-verbal language, and learn new behavior. The cultural differences encountered and an inability to comprehend them, may produce a pervasive sense of insecurity ([http://www.fordham.edu/academics/office\\_of\\_the\\_provos/international\\_educat/office\\_for\\_internati/resources/cross\\_cultural\\_adjus\\_74672.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/academics/office_of_the_provos/international_educat/office_for_internati/resources/cross_cultural_adjus_74672.asp))

Why does this topic is so important because it will give the students insight about how to behave when coming to a new place or culture. They will experience some adjustment processes both theoretical and practical. They are assigned to find foreigner to be interviewed on the adjustment process based on W pattern.

Cultural values are the third topic which is considered to be important because it compares between the values of culture in Indonesia and in the West. It is not really Western that we can refer it also refers to some other big countries which culture is dominant or can be seen clearly for example: China, Japan, Africa. The comparison of cultural values makes the students very curious they are challenged to prove whether it really happens or not in the real life. Those are about the concept of individualism and collectivism, universalism and particularist, monochronoism and polychronoism, also free will and fate.

Space and time is the next topic which we discuss. It consists of discussing about personal space, space in the classroom, space in the house and space in the city. Besides it also discusses about the concept of time. How the Indonesian uses the time compared to the way Westerners make use of their time. It is also important to give the students lesson why westerners care about time even it becomes way of life and style of their life. Their discipline can be as a model for the motivated students to keep moving and reaching what they want.

The other typical of westerners is their principle of life in handling the things alone without being accompanied by friends. It is different from Indonesians concept of being in group. This fifth topic also gives the students lesson about the value of independency. They are challenged to always do the assignment without any help from their friends they have to manage all the things done alone.

The discussion of language is interesting since it discusses on the language pattern and the language style. First it talks about the classification of verbal and non verbal language. The discussion continues to the pattern of language those are high involvement conversation pattern and high considerateness conversation patter. People coming from high considerateness will interrupt more, speak loudly and expect to be interrupted, while people from high considerateness will speak at one time, use very polite listening and waiting until the partner stop speaking. The style can be classified into two ping-pong and bowling style. In ping-pong the people are responsive while in bowling as the goal of the conversation has been fulfilled the conversation stopped.

Family will be different from western and Indonesian in the way they care. They are different in taking care of the baby, children, young adult and the elderly. Westerners have a principle of independency either for baby, children and young adult, even for elderly. They give independency to all different kinds of age level. Baby is put in the separate room, children are

educated to stand by themselves such as put on their own clothes, shoes and cap, they have responsibility in their own study.

The differences on education can be seen from the educational values. Those are active participation, honor system, grading and competition, students and teacher relationship, and students' stress. The students must be active in the class and honest in doing the schoolwork. They have to compete with their friends. They also can have good relationship with the teacher outside the class. In doing the schoolwork sometimes the students are depressed especially for those who can't manage the time.

Moral values are general for any culture. There are still differences in seeing something for example some principles of bravery, wise, loyalty, honesty, etc. The ways in teaching moral values can be various. They can be taught through religion, poems, fable, story and songs.

Gender is always interesting to be discussed but nowadays as the time changes fast because of the development of information and technology there are no significant difference in terms of gender. Women can be equal to men. They can have any job they want as far as they have the skill. They also can be leader in political affairs, society and offices.

Those are the topics in CCU. They are all important in enabling students to understand the differences of culture. They can have the information through internet, film and other media which can be used to learn culture.

## 2. How to teach

The extension of definition of Project-based learning can be defined briefly as "a model that organizes learning around projects" (Thomas, 2000: 1). Even though assigning projects to students in traditional classrooms is not a new phenomenon, project-based learning is quite different from the usual application. Thomas listed five major criteria for a method of learning to be called project-based learning:

1. project-based learning projects are central, not peripheral to the curriculum,
2. project-based learning projects are focused on questions or problems that "drive" students to encounter the central concepts and principles of a discipline,
3. projects involve students in a constructive investigation,
4. projects are student-driven to some significant degree, and
5. projects are realistic, not school-like. (Thomas, 2000: 4)

He also states that Project-based learning is a complex task based on challenging questions or problems that involve students in design, problem solving, decision making or investigative activities. It gives students the opportunity to work in a relatively independent manner over extended periods of time and resulting in realistic products and presentations.

Projects which focus on questions or problems that drive the students to connect the conceptual knowledge with the project tasks are another feature of PBL. The projects may focus on activities, products, performances and presentations that challenge the cognitive and learning skills of the students. There must be connectivity between academic work, life and the work skills of the students in completing the project (Railsback, 2002)

Further, Klein (2009: 8) defines that Project-based learning is the instructional strategy of empowering learners to pursue content knowledge on their own and demonstrate their new understandings through a variety of presentation modes.

Effective project-based learning has the following characteristics:

Leads students to investigate important ideas and questions

1. Is framed around an inquiry process
2. Is differentiated according to student needs and interests
3. Is driven by student independent production and presentation rather than teacher delivery of information
4. Requires the use of creative thinking, critical thinking, and information skills to investigate, draw conclusions about, and create content
5. Connects to real world and authentic problems and issues (Klein, 2009: 8).

The purpose of project-based learning is to provide a structure through which students can demonstrate mastery of a subject by creating, and presenting, a research-based project that is driven by their own interest in a topic and allows them to work within the same parameters as real researchers. While the projects can assess the students' knowledge of content, concepts and skills and the level of depth and complexity to which students have understood them, they

also allow students to think deeply and analytically and to question a topic which has particular resonance and meaning for them.

Another definition of PBL says that PBL is a teaching method in which students' gains knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to a complex question, problem, or challenge. Essential Elements of PBL include:

1. Significant Content - At its core, the project is focused on teaching students important knowledge and skills, derived from standards and key concepts at the heart of academic subjects.
2. 21st century competencies - Students build competencies valuable for today's world, such as critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration, and communication, and creativity/innovation, which are taught and assessed.
3. In-Depth Inquiry - Students are engaged in a rigorous, extended process of asking questions, using resources, and developing answers.
4. Driving Question - Project work is focused by an open-ended question that students understand and find intriguing, which captures their task or frames their exploration.
5. Need to Know - Students see the need to gain knowledge, understand concepts, and apply skills in order to answer the Driving Question and create project products, beginning with an Entry Event that generates interest and curiosity.
6. Voice and Choice - Students are allowed to make some choices about the products to be created, how they work, and how they use their time, guided by the teacher and depending on age level and PBL experience.
7. Revision and Reflection - The project includes processes for students to use feedback to consider additions and changes that lead to high-quality products, and think about what and how they are learning.
8. Public Audience - Students present their work to other people, beyond their classmates and teacher. ([http://bie.org/about/what\\_pbl](http://bie.org/about/what_pbl))

From those definitions and description it can be inferred that project-based learning demands the students to be active and having critical thinking in facing the problems and designing a project based on the theories and their understanding about the theories and how to implement them in real life situation. Related to the CCU the assignments in every topic demand the students to have project although the project is included in small project.

Each group is assigned to choose one topic. The members of the group must formulate their own topic derived from group's topic. They do that as small research project.

### 3. The Target

It is set in the sixth semester for the consideration that in the sixth semester the students have completed the language skills subjects so it is considered that they have comprehensive understanding about how to write and present well in term of using correct grammar and vocabulary in which diction also must be considered.

In this semester they have got reading subject from intensive reading to reading V, in speaking they also have got intensive speaking to speaking V, in listening they also got intensive listening to listening V and also writing they got intensive writing to writing V. Besides those skills, they also have completed courses on vocab and grammar. So it is considered that what they have got will be the basic in learning CCU

### 4. The Use of PBL in CCU Teaching

The concept of PBL

Outstanding projects:

1. Recognize students' inherent *drive to learn*, their capability to do important work, and their need to be taken seriously by putting them at the center of the learning process.
2. Engage students in the central concepts and principles of a discipline. The project work is *central* rather than peripheral to the curriculum.
3. Highlight provocative issues or questions that lead students to *in-depth exploration of authentic and important topics*.
4. Require the use of essential *tools and skills*, including technology, for learning, self-management, and project management.

5. Specify *products* that solve problems, explain dilemmas, or present information generated through investigation, research, or reasoning.
6. Include *multiple products* that permit frequent feedback and consistent opportunities for students to learn from experience.
7. Use *performance-based assessments* that communicate high expectations, present rigorous challenges, and require a range of skills and knowledge.
8. Encourage *collaboration* in some form, either through small groups, student-led presentations, or whole-class evaluations of project results.  
([www.edutopia.org/project-based-learning](http://www.edutopia.org/project-based-learning))

In this study, the students who attend the CCU subject were assigned to the production of a video presentation. Producing a video was chosen as a project because studies suggest that students viewed working with technology as more engaging and entertaining (Heafner, 2004). According to Hakkarainen (2006), producing a video can support the individual, allow collaboration, encourage conversation and support student emotion in the learning process. As for the CCU lesson, students were given the task to explore different types of topics. They then needed to present their experience by hunting a native speaker, recorded by video. Since the students who were given the CCU project are the first time in handling conversation with native, the task of getting them to have conversation was part and parcel of the objective in encouraging them to get to know well about the native's culture by interviewing them.

The progress of the project was reported to the lecturer every two weeks and consultation was also provided to the students. They were given guidance from time to time by the lecturer. For example, when they had to conduct interviews, the instructor briefed them about conducting an interview and guided them on how to look for more information using known interview techniques. They were given two and a half months to complete the task.

When examining the students after assigning based on the project the lecturer focuses on the development of their understanding about the culture. The form of the exercises are as follow:

1. cultural terms:
  - a. what kinds of person he/she is?
  - b. Is she/he an ethnocentric person?
  - c. Is he/she tolerant person?
2. cross cultural conflict and adjustment:
  - a. how long will you live here?
  - b. are you comfortable living here?
  - c. Do you have any problems with your daily life?
3. cultural values:
  - a. Do you like being alone?
  - b. What do you think about sharing room?
  - c. What motivate you to do something?
4. space and time:
  - a. What kind of design do you like?
  - b. Are you comfortable with this space?
  - c. Are you disturbed when someone is late for the appointment?
5. individual and the group
  - a. What do you think about the concept of individualism?
  - b. You are what you said, do you agree with that?
  - c. Sometimes being in group is interesting, do you often do that?
6. Language
  - a. Do you like to be interrupted?
  - b. The eye contact is very important in conversation, do you think so?
  - c. The conversation will be fluent if your partner is responsive.
7. Family
  - a. How do you take care of your children?
  - b. Do you always give independency to your children?
  - c. Do you send your parents to the nursing home?
8. Education
  - a. What are the differences between Indonesian and western's education?
  - b. Do you think that competition in the class is important?

- c. Honor system is high valued in your culture, what is opinion?
- 9. moral values
  - a. What is the effective way to teach children moral values?
  - b. Song is a good way to teach moral value, do you think so?
  - c. How to make students understand the moral values?
- 10. gender
  - a. The differences of men and women's role
  - b. The modern profession for women
  - c. The stay home dad

Besides those examples of questions we also discuss these questions.

1. Describe the American way in handling a conversation!
2. What culture shock will happen when Americans/westerners come to Indonesian or vice versa?
3. Give the illustration how American family taking of their children!
4. What cultural values do you feel different between Indonesia and America!  
(the word America can be changed based on the native speakers they interviewed with and it will be done orally)
5. How do you describe the difference concept of time between westerners and Indonesians?
6. What educational values of Indonesian different from that of Americans?
7. Find the ways of transferring moral values to the students!

When examining the students' answer the lecturer focuses on their way in combining what they know based on the theory and what they know based on the project so it can be seen that a student which project didn't work well or just stopped as a project will have different answer to those who did well. Besides I also consider about the time spent to answer the questions it will indicate their understanding on the project.

After distributing the questionnaire I know that the project interest the students to do or to learn by doing or not, whether they can learn from something they experience with or not whether they will reflect a silly, interesting experience in form of writing about handling a conversation with native speakers or not.

An Example of using pbl in teaching ccu

Topics in CCU	Project planned
Cross Cultural Terms and Description	Analyzing film which reflect some of the terms in cross culture: stereotype, generalization, ethnocentrism, tolerance,
Cross Cultural Conflict and Adjustment	Interviewing native speakers and record it, transcribe the conversation and analysing the conflict and adjustment
Space and Time	Finding some spaces in the class, personal space, space in the city and space in the house
Individual and Group	Differentiating between Indonesian and the West on the concept of Individualism and Group reflected in film
Cultural values	Some cultural values found in the daily life are being discussed and the students try to do the project on that topic
Language	The pattern and the style of conversation are being discussed and doing the project by observing people conversation
Moral values	Take into granted about some of moral values and how some people teach the moral values especially to the children and then doing the research on that
Family	Some of modern family structure make the students curious and they do the research on the topic
Education	The difference of educational values between Indonesia and the West raise the students curiosity by doing project
Gender	It is the hottest topic that the students like they planned to do the project by interviewing on some women who do men's job and on women leader

### C. CONCLUSION

The use of PBL is very effective in making the students learning by doing, they also will learn from their friends, native speakers, society and also their environment. It will give them benefit since it gives them experience in many things. Interaction is the important thing which they learn.

In the end students are encouraged to present what they have done with the project. It gives new experience and insight for those who are interested in certain topics.

By using PBL learners not only respond by feeding back information, but they also actively use what they know to explore, negotiate, interpret, and create. They *construct* solutions, thus shifting the emphasis toward the process of learning. In addition, cognitive research has revealed much more about the nature of problem solving. Education has benefited from this research, as teachers have learned how to effectively scaffold content and activities to amplify and extend the skills and capabilities of students.

Second, the world has changed. Nearly all teachers understand how the industrial culture has shaped the organization and methods of schools in the 19th and 20th centuries, and they recognize that schools must now adapt to a new century. It is clear that children need both knowledge *and* skills to succeed. This need is driven not only by workforce demands for high-performance employees who can plan, collaborate, and communicate, but also by the need to help all young people learn civic responsibility and master their new roles as global citizens.

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