TEACHERS’ AND STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN THE NEW TIENG ANH 6: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In the language teaching context, Project-based learning is praised as an effective method, from which both teachers and students can benefit. It is believed to develop students’ confidence and independence (Fried-Both 2002) as well as language skills (Levine 2004). Stoller (2006) also stated that PBL provides opportunities for natural integration of all four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Therefore, using PBL method effectively is of great importance to teachers in general and to students in particular. Attempting to investigate the students’ and teachers’ perceptions of PBL activities at secondary level, the current research aimed to explore how the teachers and grade – six students at Me Tri secondary school had carried out the projects in the textbook. Besides, the study discovered the advantages they had that helped them conduct these projects. Also, it found out the difficulties they met while conducting these projects. Moreover, the benefits they perceive of when conducting these projects were also investigated. Finally, it explored these students’ and teachers’ perceptions of their preference and recommendations for future projects. Data for the study were collected, firstly, by means of questionnaires with the participation of 120 grade – six students from three classes at low, medium and high English proficiency. In addition, two teachers who directly taught these classes were interviewed to gain valuable data for the research. The study found out the ways these teachers let their students conduct the projects in the textbook were quite
different, which led to the variety of the questionnaire answers about the advantages, difficulties and benefits viewed by the students while they were conducting the project tasks. Most students found that “Getting help from teachers” as their advantage while carrying out the project while “not being confident to present” was considered their difficulty. These two findings were confirmed by the two teachers in their interview. In addition, all teachers and students appreciated the benefits such as “Revising the learned knowledge, practicing speaking, presenting and communication skill”. Finally, their preference and recommendations for the future projects were discussed. Most students would like to perform in groups with broader and more creative topics which involved active tasks such as drawing, making handcrafts or outdoor activities while the teachers hoped to have separated lessons for the projects so that the students could have more time to improve their products. The paper was, therefore, expected to serve as a reference for both teachers and textbook designers.
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