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Project-Based Learning (PBL) via Segmented Lectures and Peer-Reviews: Programed
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13 August 2019

In Partial Fulfillment of the Project-Based Learning Institute, 2019-2020

Q2S Training

California State University, San Bernardino

Abstract

Twenty-first century pedagogical trends desire collaborative learning by students in and out of

the classroom environment. Lesson plans proposed here are based on multiple approaches to

actively engage students, promote proficiency, reinforce student-learning outcomes (SLO), and

attain course outcomes (CO). Advocated is a programed instruction of APA Style via segmented

lectures with interspersed student activities, and scaffold assignments with corresponding peer-

reviews and peer evaluation. Project-based learning (PBL) is facilitated because students learn to

instruct peers via sequenced reviews.

Keywords: APA style, project-based learning, PBL, Q2S, collaborative learning

Project-Based Learning (PBL) via Segmented Lectures and Peer-Reviews

Presently, one challenge many universities face nationwide is underprepared students who are often the first in their families to go to college. This is apparent in the California State University (CSU) system and to address these disparities there are a number of teaching strategies, techniques and trends currently utilized to enhance learning, elevate graduation rates, and especially create proactive and collaborative classrooms. By engaging students as active learners they are accountable for contributions to self and peer exercises in the classroom. The techniques discussed are associated with promoting attendance, participation, retention, as well as programed instruction in any subject. For this pedagogical model, Project-Based Learning (PBL) is employed to keep students on track with Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) and Course Outcomes (CO). Additionally, the methods described here have been *alpha* and *beta* tested since January 2019 and are outlined below. In relation to the PBL Institute (2018), all techniques have been discussed with and evaluated by peers. Specifically, the focus is a programed instruction for APA Style research writing combined with frequent peer interactions during segmented lectures, frequent peer-reviews for all assignments, and finally, peer-evaluation of the finished product(s).

Importance of Learning Outcomes

Student-Centered Outcomes

Ex. 1 *SLO and CO*

(1) Students' papers will be graded on clarity, precision, coherence, focus, and organization.
(2) Students must follow specific directions as well as procedural instructions to avoid issues associated with plagiarism.
(3) Students will develop summary writing skills using up to 10 sources for a literature review.
(4) Students will accurately apply APA style, especially citations and references.
(5) Students will be instructed how to 'deprogram' using others' words and focus exclusively on efficient, accurate paraphrasing.
(6) Students will work towards the target goal using Turnitin.com as the measure for Similarity/Originality reports under 5%, preferably in the 0-3% range.
(7) Students will develop collaborative skills by frequent interactions with peers.

Use Effective Tools

It is strongly recommended for instructors to use the current *American Psychological Association Publications Manual*, *Sixth Edition* (hereafter APA Manual) as opposed to often vague or unfocused web outlets such as Purdue's OWL. Because APA is both a style and a tone, it is imperative to address potential flaws in accuracy regarding citations, references, and content. Additionally, students gain confidence and develop an eye, a 'way of seeing', when the programed instruction introduces cardinal "rules" and formatting details in micro steps. As such, breaking the topic into core essentials over a three-week period in ten-week quarters has effectively improved the first written assignment, a literature review of three empirical studies. Topics for the review have varied over the years, including academic dishonesty in college students, mass shooters and mental illness, effects of social media on body image and well-being, and so on. Significantly, the first of several techniques in a scaffold approach has students work together first on citations, then references for each article by manually writing them on each article, as shown in the APA Manual.

<div align="center">

Student Interactions

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SLO Measurement Tools

Through this hands-on approach students interact early with peers sitting nearby, and eventually the rest of the class. The first few weeks feature segmented lectures where the first fifteen to twenty-minutes set up the daily lesson, then students discuss amongst themselves for a set amount of time, then the lecture resumes (See Ex. 2). By slowing down, allowing use of computers for some activities, and having students sit in a wide U-formation, attentiveness is enhanced, and collecting exit tickets (e.g. 'Ticket to Ride', or TTR) at the end of class affirms attendance and measures learning through two or more questions they must answer: (1) what did

I learn today? Students tacitly acknowledge, and do, the important lessons of the day. And (2) is anything still unclear (ACUE/ACE, 2019)? Optional questions could be used as needed to address specific aspects of a lesson plan or activity. Early on there are often questions from students such as "when do we use in-text citation versus parenthetical?" Therefore, reviewing the TTRs after the class is important, and sending an email the same day addresses questions raised, reassures students that the instructor both cares about their learning and is paying attention. It is common after a few class sessions for some students to write on the TTR: "all is clear."

Student Feedback

Below are some comments taken from a TTR collected after the initial peer-review for the three-article literature review (N=24). The question posed was "how did the peer-review help you understand APA Style?" All students said they benefited from the peer-review, save for one who arrived too late to participate. A few responses tacitly stated how the activity enhanced their foundational understanding of both APA and the review itself. One student wrote: "I was able to see my peers' mistakes, which helps me to be more critical when observing and making corrections to my own [paper]. Also, I found it helpful to understanding how to write an introduction paragraph and what to include in the discussion." A second student reported: "I found it helpful in getting a better understanding of the assignment, especially the discussion [and] abstract. It was also helpful seeing all the small details of [an] APA Style paper." Finally, a third student acknowledged: "I feel that other sets of eyes assist in understanding by getting a different perspective and seeing mistakes I may have made."

Common Assignments First

To summarize, by segmenting lectures and providing proactive student activities, the 'core rules' of APA are established, important pages and page ranges are bookmarked, and more

importantly returning to the same activities for the second assignment, another, longer review using five empirical articles, enhanced understanding and raised confidence and competence. The first peer-review requires the instructor to circulate and answer questions, but it also allows students using a common assignment to learn from helping peers and eventually mastering the essentials, as noted above in the feedback examples. It is helpful to create peer-review checklists and criteria rubric handouts. Generally speaking, a multi-pass approach where three peers review one draft is helpful and effective, providing the student brings a complete or mostly complete first draft to class. It is also recommended to have a mandatory Turnitin.com checkpoint to see if 'Similarity' is well below 10% (with a strong preference for 5% or less as shown in Ex. 1), and that no quotes are used. True analysis and effective literature reviews are centered on paraphrasing. Moreover, students leave class with constructive feedback and have another chance to submit to Turnitin.com before the deadline, usually the start of a given class.

Portfolios and Peer-Evaluation

Final drafts are presented in a portfolio that also contain the previous draft(s), the articles (preferably well annotated) as well as an Excel spreadsheet called 'The Grid' where essential columns (Hypothesis/es; Types of Participants; Method; Results; Limitations) are filled in by the students, one row per article assigned (or selected). There should also be a transparent rubric showing a checklist for required items as well as associated points to be gained or deducted. Further, a special peer-evaluation sheet allows two peers assess the final work and portfolio. The average should be accepted barring an unusually high Turnitin.com 'Similarity Report', which is information the peers are not privy to. The syllabus example below outlines suggested lesson plans, activities and corresponding readings associated with the system advocated here. Color-

coding assignments is also useful and students responded positively when this feature was first

introduced.

Sample Syllabus

Ex. 2 *The First Four Weeks*

Color Code Legend

<mark style="background-color:yellow">**Reading Assignments**</mark>   View **PowerPoint** in Information <mark style="background-color:green">**Turnitin.com Required**</mark>

<mark style="background-color:cyan">**Participation Days**</mark>   <mark style="background-color:red">**Assignments Due**</mark>

Course Schedule

Week One

Wed. July 31	Introduction, Syllabus, Logistics, and Class Policies. **Lectures-** Plagiarism, Citing Sources, Methods Proper APA Citation Styles for Literature Reviews. <mark style="background-color:cyan">In-Class Activity</mark>: APA Recommended Bookmarks in Information
	<mark style="background-color:yellow">**Reading Assignment for Monday, Aug. 5**</mark>: APA Manual, Ch. 1, pp. 9-20; Ch. 3, pp. 61-73; Ch. 4, pp. 87-91; Ch. 6, pp. 169-178; Watch PowerPoint "APA and Article Framing Starter Slide Show" in 'Information'.
	<mark style="background-color:red">**Assignment Due Sunday, Aug. 4:**</mark> One-page summary of assigned article with citations submitted to <mark style="background-color:green">Turnitin.com by 11:59pm</mark>. No hard copy necessary. Details listed in Blackboard must be applied.
Sun. Aug. 4	<mark style="background-color:green">**Paraphrase Predictor Assignment Due by 11:59pm in Turnitin.com**</mark>

Week Two

Mon. Aug. 5	Notes and Proper Paraphrasing APA Citation Styles for Literature Reviews. <mark style="background-color:cyan">In-Class Activity</mark> 1: View PowerPoint "Margin Notes to Lit. Review Procedures" in 'Information' Formatting APA Papers References for APA Papers <mark style="background-color:cyan">In-Class Activity</mark> 2: Review Sample 3-Article Review Papers Using a Grid

Reading Assignment for Wednesday, Aug. 7: APA Manual Ch. 2, pp. 23-29, 41-59; Ch. 3, pp. 77-86; Ch. 4, pp. 96-101, 104-109, 112-114; Ch. 7, pp. 193-204; Course Pack, "Three-Article Review Assignment," pp.38-40; "The Grid", pp. 36-37;

Week Three

Mon. Aug. 12

In-Class Activity 1: Peer-Review for 3-Article Review*
         * Bring completed draft and evaluation form from Course Pack
Research Proposal Requirements
In-Class Activity 2: Review Sample Papers
Five Article Review Outline and Details

Reading Assignment for Wednesday, Aug. 14: Course Pack, "Five-Article Review," pp. 44-47; View PowerPoint "How to Think Like a Literature Review Author" in Information.

Assignment Due Wednesday, Aug. 14: Final Draft and Portfolio for 3-Article Review/Tii 'Revision' submission by 8am.

Week Four

Mon. Aug. 19

Five-Article Review Peer-Review
In-Class Activity 1: Peer Assessment of 5-Article Reviews

In-Class Activity 2: Self & Peer Assessment of Research Proposals

First Draft Research Proposal Due

Reading Assignment for Wednesday, Aug. 21: Course Pack, "The Literature Review Assignment," pp. 44-47.

Assignments Due Wednesday, Aug. 21: 5-Article Review first draft (printed)/Tii Checkpoint by 8am/ Second printed draft of Research Proposal.

Wed. Aug. 21

In-Class Activity 1: Self/Peer-Assessing and Grading of 5-Article Reviews and Portfolios/Reviewing 2nd Drafts of printed Research Proposals.

The Final Literature Review and Format Details
In-Class Activity 2: Reviewing Sample Papers A & B

Importance of Sample Papers

Essentially, the second review differs by topic, length, and includes additional outline and format considerations (Level Three Headings for example). Again the students worked together on citation examples, references, and reviewed several sample papers for the assignment (ACUE/ACE, 2019). Naturally, names are redacted on sample papers, and comments written in red ink can be applied strategically. Then, the documents are scanned and placed in Blackboard for easy retrieval. For example, before the first assignment, provide up to four sample papers: one failed for plagiarism, one that clearly did not follow instructions (format or outline), one up the middle, and one that did reasonably well but feedback was still necessary. It is suggested that instructors not use a "perfect" paper as an example to avoid psyching out students. To error is human, but constructive feedback yields a better product the next time.

More SLO and CO Activities

Reinforcing APA Details

Another effective PBL assignment is a two-stage peer-review of the research proposals, which entails presenting 10 vetted studies in APA format, usually no older than three-years of the current date. Because APA reference details are so important, it is an excellent learning tool to have peers identify format issues, omitted details, possible MLA artifacts that many are unlearning, and related matters. Other than recommended spacing between assignments and scheduling office hours to meet with students individually about peer-evaluated work, this system of in-class collaboration though sequenced peer-reviews and evaluations enhanced understanding, tangibly improved first papers, and created a positive atmosphere in all classrooms (eight altogether). Sometimes informal teams of students worked outside of class, but 'stirring' things up to maximize diversity of thought in the room also helped significantly. For

instance, in a second peer-review or evaluation, students should not assess a paper they previously edited, or someone that habitually sits adjacent.

Rotate the Room

Finally, while groups can be created for pre-designated assignments such as an observation report, it is important to give students flexibility in choosing the topic within set guidelines and rubrics. Allowing students to self-select a topic for the final literature review is also encouraged within SLO and CO guidelines (ACUE/ACE, 2019). Other methods and accountability can be introduced in these circumstances, but the TTRs are highly effective barometers of daily learning. Moreover, having the entire classroom (N= 21-26) collaborate almost daily, interact in ways that encourages moving out of semi-fixed seating zones enhanced peers' familiarity with one another, created positive interactions, and most importantly, led to the fruition of all SLO and CO (see Ex. 1). This was especially tangible once the final peer-reviews occurred. Not only did students accurately assess one another's work, they got so fast that anyone coming to class late risked not being credited for participation. Ultimately, the combination of segmented lectures and in-class activities brought students up to speed using APA Style correctly. By scaffolding the assignments, and balancing points values on assignments from lower to higher (e.g. 25, then 50, then 100), it allowed students to adjust somewhat if they experienced a day early in the term or missed a lower value assignment (see Ex. 2). While the methods outlined above took place during two 10-week quarters and two 6-week summer sessions, they can be effectively applied to 15/16-week semesters where more spacing is recommended between assignments to mitigate overlapping deadlines.

References

American Psychological Association. (2010). *American Psychological Association Publications*

    Manual, Sixth Edition. Washington, D. C.

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