

Integrating community based projects in the EFL Research Methodology course: The Needed Scaffolding

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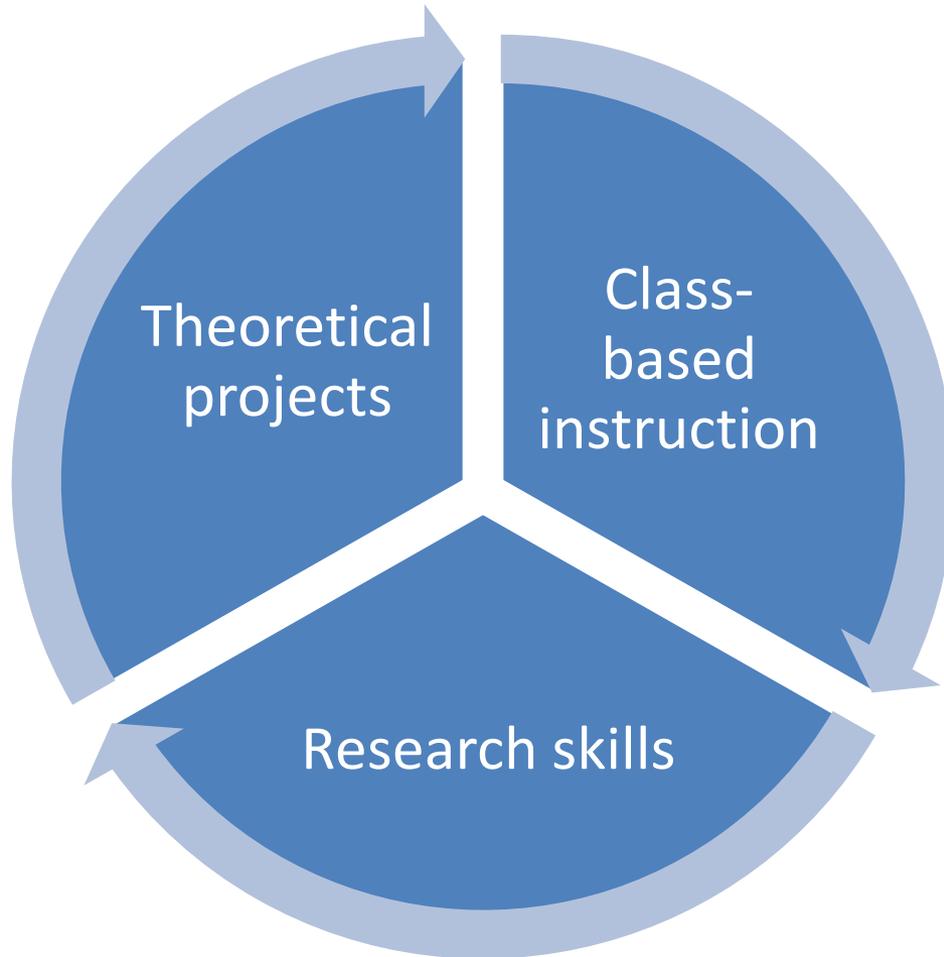
Nablus, Palestine

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Purpose

- Reflect on using CBL methodology in the research methods class and the nature and type of orientation and scaffolding required for successful project completion;
- Present process of integrating community project-supplementary material design;
- Describe the nature of procedural and quality related-challenges in each project major task;
- Discuss the types of scaffolding used to address help learners work through the various task;
- Focus on skills and accepting compromise.

Research methods Traditional practice



Experiential learning CBL methods



Project planning:

Meeting with the community

- Designing supplementary materials for grades 1-4 was defined as an essential requirement to improve the language skills for early learners by the target community.
- The course teacher organized two meetings with the primary stage language teachers, directorate English language supervisors, and two regional directors from the ministry of education. Both teachers and supervisors stressed the need for putting together both class-based and homework activities for all four levels.

Planning

Course outcomes

Old outcomes	CBL outcomes
Formulate research questions.	Perform curriculum gap analysis for the Palestinian language curriculum grades 1-4
Make use of available literature (3-5 sources).	Use available research & enrichment models to develop criteria for good practice in English supplementary material design.
Systematically use a model to solve a research problem.	Design supplementary materials to fill the curriculum gaps and justify each activity based on available literature.
Produce 10-15 pages of research in the area of linguistics, or literature, or translation.	Produce supplementary material book (60-80 activities per book per team)
Consistently follow one documentation style.	Compare your work with model supplementary materials used for the

Planning

Course assessment scheme

Old	New
Proposal and notes (15%)	Criteria for good practice 10% (individual work)
First exam (20%)	20% curriculum analysis results report (team grade)
Proposal Presentation (10%)	Product presentation 10% (individual work)
Research paper (25%)	Supplementary material product 25% (team grade)
Final exam (35%)	Final exam (35%)

Implementation

Project Major tasks

Time/week	Task specification
1-3	<p>Select grade level and the language skill you want to improve through material to be designed; Establish from theory the criteria for good supplementary material in the selected area.</p> <p><u>Team presentation 1:</u> Present findings of the literature review process especially on the criteria for good supplementary material.</p>
4-7	<p>Curriculum analysis; teacher and supervisor interviews; field visits; reporting on curriculum content and types of exercises; relating data collection results to good practice.</p> <p><u>Team presentation 2:</u> Present on the nature of the gaps in the curriculum and the types of activities needed to fill those gaps.</p>
8-10	<p>Start design of activities; document in writing purpose and outcome for each activity;</p>

Implementation

Project sub-tasks

11-13

At this point, it is important to think holistically, i.e. putting all materials from all teams in one book for each grade; this task will take much coordination of work, much cutting down on redundancy and overlap, much thought about what a reasonable length for the project for the respective grade is (you may need to again refer to literature or good practice).

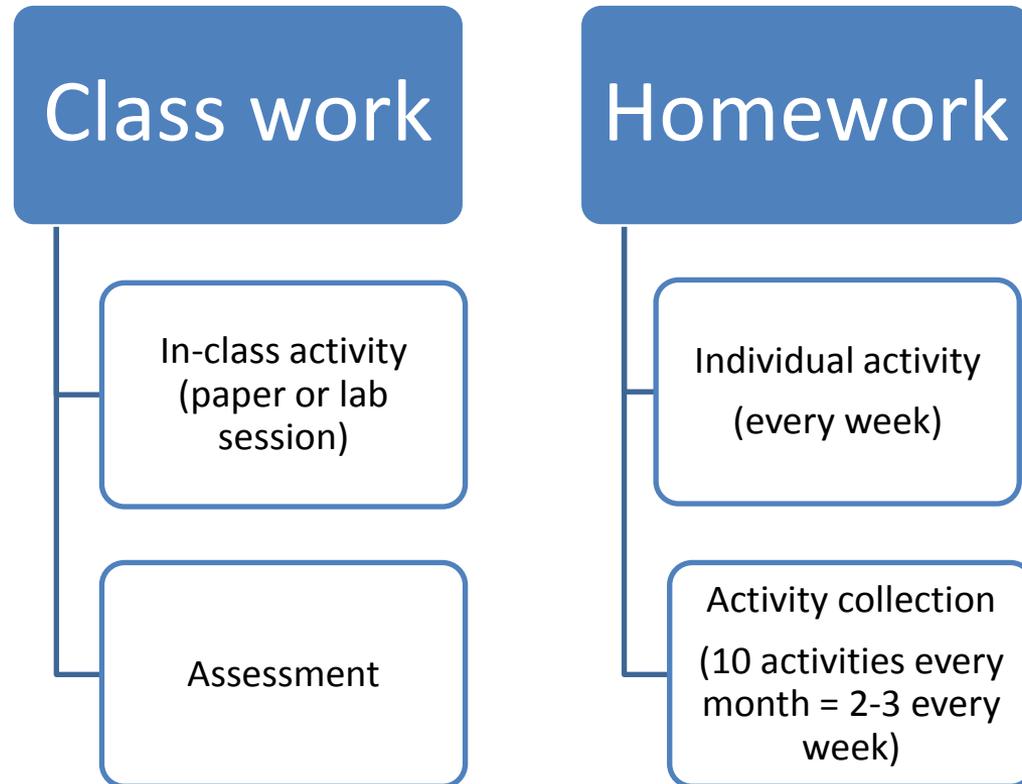
14-16

Project presentations: The teams for each grade will present their designs and rationales on each language skill in an exhibition to which representatives from the ministry of education will be invited to the presentations. The teams will shape up project and submit final copies.

Scaffolding for phase 1 Interviews

- Build trust
- Do not push for answers.
- 200-300 activities for Grade 4 for 4 skills
- University image: act formally, dress formally, and do not blame teachers for low learner achievements.
- **Instead** Convince teachers you are there to help. Do the work to save their time.

Scaffolding interviews: Why/how would the material be used?



Scaffolding Phase 1

What is the difference between presentations and reports?

In reports one should:

- Describe
- Rationalize and justify
- Explain

Scaffolding for major task 2: Unified curriculum analysis forms

Unit #	Period #	Activity #	Integration	Productive activity	Receptive activity	User friendly	Home assignment	Assessment and revision
13	2	1	X	0	X	X	0	Every 5 units

Scaffolding

- Criteria for good gap analysis reports

In reports one should:

- Describe
- Rationalize and justify
- Explain

Scaffolding Criteria

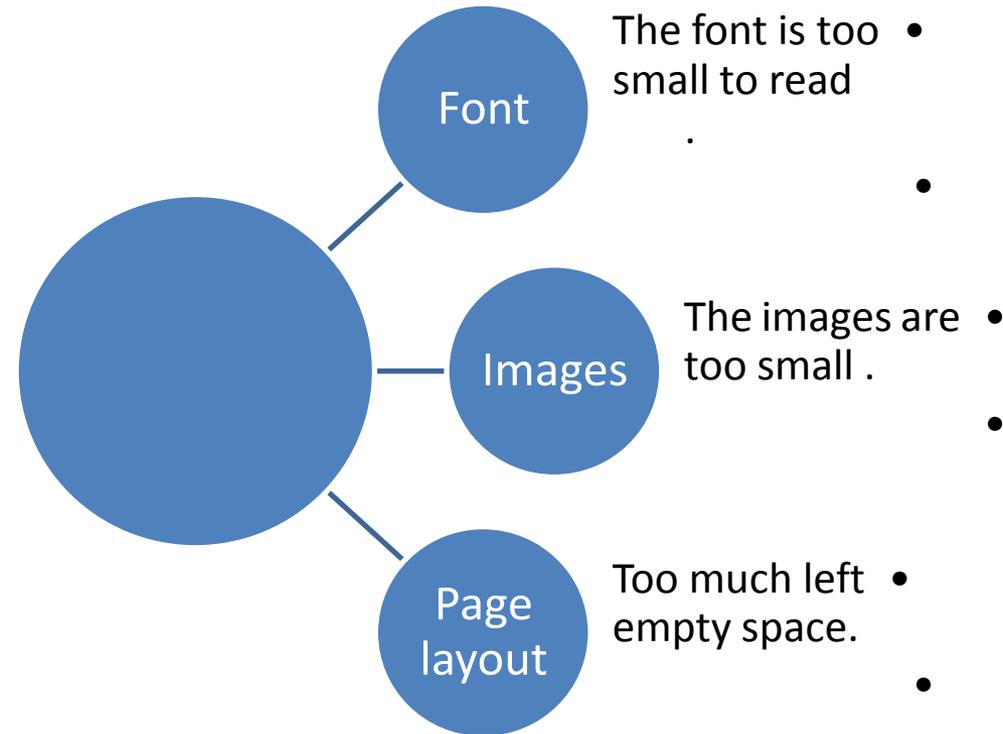
Adapted from Howard (2004):

- Material is user friendly
- Target skill is integrated with other skills
- Design is attractive and appealing
- Material is outcome oriented
- Material includes productive and receptive activities
- Material includes assessment activities following every two units
- Activity is well-contextualized
- Activities develop progressively
- Material does not overload pupils

Scaffolding on curriculum analysis with example Gap and solutions & curriculum design

- Appeal: Use large pictures ; vary the activities presented ; reduce the number of pictures.
- Contextualization: It can be done through pictures.
- Progression : The activities should be gradual ,say, from easy to difficult.

Scaffolding by example from reading Fourth grade/ hens and horses ex



Gaps in the assessment questions:

Grammatical mistakes in the question itself.

Example:

The farmer **have** a cat and a dog ()

Attempting personalization

Without giving students the chance to talk about their experiences.

Example:

Do you have hens and cows around the house?

Gaps

Not being outcome oriented ; two questions are not enough to practice the expected outcome : writing 2 sentences.

Example:

Do you have hens and cows around the house?

Not being integrated with other skills

Reading

When do we say that someone can read?

1-Accuracy: is when students are able to read aloud .

A-It involves pronunciation

B-Such activities are to be done in the classroom .

2-Comprehension:is when students are able to read and comprehend.

3-Production (integration stage):is when students are able to read and produce.

Accepting compromise: The good side of the story

Learner skills

- The students have **learned to do gap analysis** in an actual public school setting and to **propose solutions** for shortcomings in the curriculum and in teacher practices.
- They have become **more accustomed to team dynamics** and to accommodating the less than perfect team member habits
- They were able to **establish and to work according to criteria for good practice**.
- In short, they are now more prepared to engage with the English teaching profession **because they have become more aware of school books outcomes, early learners' needs, and EFL classroom practices**.

Accepting compromise:

The not so good side

- Team dynamics did not always work – students in a few teams complained about late work from other members
- In the case of one team it did not work at all- I had them do the project individually.

Challenges with community partner

- In the interview teachers said situation in my class is perfect – all my pupils can read and write and do the listening activities. 100% perfect- no need for any material.
- Set up time and then refuse to do the interview.
- During the design- teachers would not let the students film or record the interview.

Results

Accepting the compromise

The good side of the story

- 10 student teams managed to design 1000 activity sheets for primary English classes.
- The materials they produced were collected in four supplementary activity books which were given to the directorates of education in the Nablus area.
- In a country like Palestine, where the primary school teachers' weekly load is 22-28 hours and their class size ranges between 30 and 40 pupils, such student contributions remain invaluable.

Thank You