

Filmmaking and Showcasing as Project-based Language Learning with Japanese University Students

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Abstract:

The researchers have been including filmmaking activities in university language courses over many years in Japan, including writing, speaking, reading courses and seminars. Both have taught filmmaking using a project-based learning (PBL) approach. In 2019, Nam, Cha, and Sung examined the learning effects of filmmaking activities on medical students finding shared experiences of collaboration, communication, and a sense of accomplishment. This suggests 21st Century Skills may be integral learning outcomes of filmmaking projects in the classroom. The current research explores the impact of filmmaking projects on language learners, focusing on the development of collaboration, communication, creative and problem-solving skills.

Case Studies of two filmmaking projects with a community showcasing component were conducted in single semester-long courses in language courses at two Japanese universities. Thirty-three students participated in classroom filmmaking activities. Using a qualitative approach, students completed bilingual surveys before and after engaging in the filmmaking projects. Data also included observations by the teacher-researchers and group self-evaluations. Thematic analysis explored any links between 21st century skills and filmmaking activities in the language learning context.

This study aimed to understand the impact of filmmaking activities on language learners and explore the connection to 21st Century Skills. The question that guided the researchers was: In what ways do filmmaking projects contribute to the development of 21st century skills in our English language classrooms?

Results showed some 21st Century Skill development among our students through the filmmaking projects. Collaboration appeared as students worked in and across teams and used collaborative tools like whiteboards and shared documents. Communication skills were challenged through scriptwriting and acting, as well as through image, music, and editing choices. Critical thinking and problem-solving emerged as they encountered technical challenges and produced creative solutions like using green screen, finding appropriate locations, and lighting, and editing. Additional results suggested initiative and leadership when deciding roles and team leaders naturally emerging. The film festival reinforced communication through community interaction and feedback.

Keywords:

Filmmaking, 21st Century Skills, Project-Based Learning, Language Learning, Collaboration.