

Individual Project-Based Learning

Student Perceptions of a Scaffolded Research-Based Speaking

Project in Tourism Higher Education

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Abstract

Background: Oral communication in English remains a challenge for many Tourism students due to speaking anxiety and the limited opportunities for continuous practice provided by traditional oral presentations.

Purpose: This study evaluates students' perceptions of an individual scaffolded Project-Based Learning methodology implemented in English for Tourism II.

Methodology: Students developed an individual research-based speaking project through five scaffolded stages supported by formative feedback. At the end of the semester, an anonymous questionnaire (n = 24) was administered to evaluate students' perceptions regarding learning, confidence, autonomy, engagement and satisfaction.

Results: Students reported positive perceptions across all dimensions, particularly regarding learning, satisfaction, feedback and continuous engagement.

Conclusion: The methodology promoted continuous learning, learner autonomy and confidence in oral communication.

Background information

Effective oral communication is an essential competence for future tourism professionals. However, many students experience speaking anxiety and tend to concentrate their preparation immediately before presentations, reducing opportunities for progressive improvement. To address these challenges, an individual scaffolded Project-Based Learning methodology was designed, combining research-based learning, continuous assessment and formative feedback throughout the semester to support the development of professional oral communication skills.

Methodological approach

Twenty-four undergraduate Tourism students developed an individual research-based speaking project on current tourism developments. The project was structured into five scaffolded stages distributed throughout the semester and supported by formative feedback through intermediate video submissions. Students completed a final oral presentation followed by an audience interaction activity. An anonymous questionnaire (n = 24) was administered at the end of the semester to evaluate students' perceptions of the methodology.

Scaffolded Research-Based Speaking Project

The project was organised into five scaffolded stages that progressively supported students' learning throughout the semester. Each stage required students to submit intermediate evidence of their work, allowing continuous monitoring and formative feedback before the final presentation.



Fig.1 Structure of the scaffolded research-based speaking project implemented throughout the semester.

Project Characteristics

- ✓ Five scaffolded stages
- ✓ Continuous formative feedback
- ✓ Research-based learning
- ✓ Audience interaction
- ✓ Professional oral communication

Results

Students expressed consistently positive perceptions of the methodology. The highest-rated dimensions were responsibility for learning, perceived learning and recommendation of the methodology. Formative feedback and continuous assessment were also positively evaluated, indicating that the scaffolded approach supported sustained student engagement throughout the semester.

Key Findings

- ✓ Positive perceptions across all dimensions
- ✓ Highest scores in responsibility and learning
- ✓ Overall impact: 7.67/10

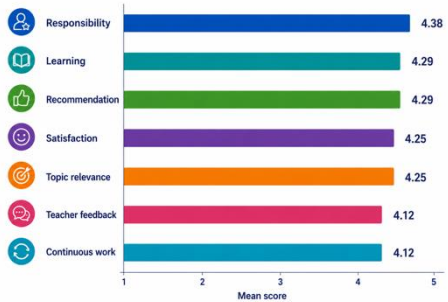


Fig. 2. Students' perceptions of the scaffolded methodology (5-point Likert scale)

Conclusions

The findings suggest that the scaffolded Project-Based Learning methodology transformed a final oral presentation into a continuous learning process distributed throughout the semester. Students valued the progressive organisation of the project, the formative feedback received throughout the different stages and the opportunity to continuously improve their oral communication skills. Overall, the methodology promoted learner autonomy, sustained engagement and confidence, demonstrating its potential for wider implementation in English for Specific Purposes courses in Tourism Higher Education.



Fig. 3. Summary of key findings

References

- Bell, S. (2010). Project-Based Learning for the 21st Century: Skills for the Future. The Clearing House, 83(2), 39-43.
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