Bringing Seneca's *Thyestes* to Life: Integrated Project-Based Learning in the Latin and Theatre

Classrooms

Over the past thirty years, pedagogical theory and practice on nearly every instructional

level have seen a shift away from a traditional, teacher-centered model to a more active, learner-

focused model. One of the major manners in which this shift can be seen is the increase of

Integrated Project-Based Learning (PBL) models in the classroom, approaches that fuse together

PBL and Interdisciplinary pedagogies and have been shown to improve content learning, real-life

skills, and sustained motivation in learners. The theatre classroom tends to engage more

naturally with the PBL system, as it works directly with active learning techniques and

collaborative art-making practices. However, nearly all published research on Integrated PBL in

the secondary language acquisition (SLA) context has been focused on modern language

instruction and not on the teaching of classical languages. Therefore, this paper seeks to address

this dearth of scholarship by detailing how an Integrated PBL model was used to construct and

deliver a pair of undergraduate courses, one advanced Latin and one intermediate Theatre, at a

small, southern liberal arts college in 2016-2017. During these courses, learners in the advanced

Latin course created an original translation of Seneca's *Thyestes*, complete with stage directions

and suited to the English idiom. At the end of that course, the translation was handed over to

learners in an Intermediate Theatre course who further developed – and reimagined – the

translation into a fully-performable script, designing a complete set, casting actors, and

producing on six full performances of the play as a part of the Theatre Program's annual season.

In this paper, a brief overview of current Integrated PBL theory is given, the chief value of which

will be as a comparison with the situation of classical language and theatrical instruction. Then, a detailed discussion of the implementation of PBL in the courses will be provided, including a reflection on the qualitative and quantitative results of the courses.

Bibliography

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