Linking Language Learning with Community: A Community-Based Learning Project for Advanced Korean Courses

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ABSTRACT: This article focuses on the significance of community-based learning (CBL), which has yet to be incorporated more widely and proactively in the field of second language education, including Korean. It introduces the Junior-and-Mentor (JAM) project as a model CBL project for advanced language courses, describes its outcomes, and discusses pedagogical implications. The article concludes with a suggestion for collaboration on expansion of the CBL project repertoires and creation of a CBL project repository for the language-teaching community.

KEYWORDS: community-based learning (CBL), Korean language education, advanced language courses, community-based learning project, project repository, language-teaching community

INTRODUCTION

The Junior-and-Mentor (JAM) project is a community-based learning (CBL) project designed for students in an advanced Korean language course at a private U.S. university. Undergraduate students were matched with international Korean graduate student mentors at the same institution on the basis of their career interests, majors, or areas of specialty during the fall semester in 2016 and 2017. The graduate student mentors came from a variety of professional and academic fields, such as the school of management, law, engineering, humanities, and international relations.

Project Learning Goals

The primary goal of this project is to provide the learners of a foreign language (FL) with opportunities to develop skills in the well-rounded five C
standard goal areas—communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. These learning goals are adapted and customized from Cho (2015) and NCSSFL–ACTFL (2017). The characteristics of each area are outlined below:

**Communication:**

- Students can understand, interpret, and analyze authentic informational texts, along with conversations and discussions.
- Students can exchange information and ideas, meet their needs or address situations, and express and react to preferences and opinions in conversations.
- Students can present information to narrate, inform, describe, or explain.

**Culture:**

- Students can converse comfortably with others from the target culture in familiar and some unfamiliar situations and show some understanding of cultural differences.
- Students can demonstrate awareness of the subtle differences among cultural behaviors and adjust their behavior accordingly in familiar and some unfamiliar situations (e.g., interacting with a professional advisor or mentor from the target culture).

**Connections:**

- Students can utilize authentic sources, such as mentors, to acquire information and to exchange opinions on issues of academic and professional interest.

**Comparisons:**

- Students can compare ways of networking in workplaces and universities and understand the similarities and differences between the target society and their own.

**Communities:**

- Students can engage with members of the school community such as mentors, graduate students, and classmates.
• Students can communicate orally and in writing with members of the target language community on topics such as college life in general as well as one's major and career.

RATIONALE

Community-Based Learning

Since the introduction of the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages’ five Cs by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in 1996, the Communities standard has often been considered a relatively less important learning goal by many language educators (ACTFL, 2011) and even referred to as “the lost C” (Cutshall, 2012). Prior researchers have questioned why many language instructors continue to find the Communities standard the most difficult to integrate among the five Cs (Megnan, Murphy, Sahakyan, & Kim, 2012). According to White (2016), it is largely due to insufficient training, professional development, and resources. However, Communities is an important goal area, as students are empowered and motivated when they connect language learning with their personal goals and interests. Today’s language curricula would be well-served by incorporating the Communities standard as part of classroom instruction through engaging individuals and groups who are members of real-time, virtual, and service-learning communities (Lentz, 2013).

As stated in the report of the Modern Language Association (MLA) Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages (2007, p. 1), “Language is a complex multifunctional phenomenon that links an individual to other individuals, to communities, and to national cultures.” By adopting the Communities standard, instructors can provide the opportunity for students to engage in practical applications of what they have learned in the classroom and to further enhance their transferable skills by performing real-world tasks in the community.

Recent research has emphasized the necessity and significance of CBL across disciplines and its benefits to both the students and the community. CBL can promote the students’ interest and motivation in language learning and can even cultivate active learning, creativity, and teamwork (O’Connor, 2012). CBL is one example of high-impact educational practices (Kuh, 2008), as it creates opportunities to discover the relevance of learning through real-world applications (Kuh, O’Donnell, & Reed, 2013; Lenton et al., 2014; Lombardi, 2007). As students apply what they are learning in real-world settings via CBL, they can develop a deeper understanding of
the target language and culture. Subsequently, they can reflect on their community experiences when they return to the classroom. Furthermore, by working on a specific project, students can simultaneously experience the Connections standard goal area (Abbott & Lear, 2010), while working in the Communities standard goal area (Polansky, 2004). In addition, students can improve critical thinking and problem-solving skills as well as the Communication standard goals of interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational skills (Bettencourt, 2015). This way, CBL achieves positive effects on multidimensional levels; for example, students’ personal and social development, as well as learning outcomes.

However, integrating a CBL project into a language course brings with it a wide range of practical challenges (Gonzalez & Golden, 2009). It can be time consuming, resulting in a greater workload than one derived from regular classwork, for both students and instructors (Lenton et al., 2014). Furthermore, such efforts may not always be instantly recognized and rewarded (Barreno, Elliott, Madueke, & Sarny, 2013). In addition, assessment of CBL projects can be a highly complex task (Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996; Holland, 2001; Poister, 2003). Additionally, establishing a partnership with community members and matching each student’s interest with an appropriate CBL project can be a challenging and complicated procedure (Barreno et al., 2013; Lowery et al., 2006; Moely & Ilustre, 2014; Willness & Bruni-Bossio, 2017).

**Mentor–Mentee Project in the CBL**

CBL takes a variety of forms, depending on context and the participants involved. A mentoring program is one variant of CBL, since community mentors can foster and guide students’ overall experience through campus community connections. Mentoring has been widely practiced in the fields of educational psychology, business, and education (Crisp, 2009). Many researchers have reported the positive impact of mentoring programs, noting that they enhanced the mentees’ academic performance, educational maintenance, or career development in higher education settings. Cohen (1995) and Roberts (2000) discussed how community-based mentoring programs could help mentees with academic goal setting and career paths. Community mentors can also guide and support their mentees in academic knowledge development through tutoring, research collaboration, or provision of advice (Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Kram, 1988; Miller, 2002; Schockett & Haring-Hidore, 1985). Wells and Grabert (2004) blended peer mentoring and service learning as an active pedagogical strategy, one
that can be used to foster civic responsibility and leadership skills, and to increase citizenship behaviors among upper-class mentors and first-year student mentees.

Research on mentoring programs thus suggests that quality-mentoring relationships have powerful and positive effects on mentees in a variety of personal, academic, and professional situations. Community-based mentoring can lead to the mentees’ personal growth and development and increase their social engagement. The university itself can be a valuable community resource to its students and the leveraging of such community resources thus supports the students’ high-quality enrichment opportunities by expanding access to experts. According to the Gallup-Purdue Index report (2014), however, about 8 in 10 college graduates in the United States lacked a mentor in college. This meant that few college students receive a key element of support while in school.

In the field of second language education, positive outcomes in mentoring programs were reported for language teachers. Peer mentoring among language teachers in training can help them to develop good practices and design well-articulated curricula (Mann & Tang, 2012; Orland-Barak, 2010; Sherris, 2010; Smith & Lewis, 2015). However, research has been scarce on community-based mentors (not language tutors) for university-level language learners who are in the process of developing language and cultural proficiency while simultaneously exploring academic majors and career tracks. This project is aimed at offering a way of linking these two major elements—community and mentors—in the FL learning context in U.S. higher education.

Integrating Community Engagement with Language Class

Community-based projects give students an opportunity to observe and analyze real-world situations while improving their language skills and learning from the realities of their community. When students engage in the target language community, they are motivated to move beyond their comfort zone and to interact with people from different backgrounds and cultures. In today’s global society, it is essential that students have the ability to communicate with such global citizens and to behave appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts. The interaction of linguistic and cultural competencies resulted in the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) paradigm (Byram, 1997; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006). In this sense, a community-based project can truly provide learners with an authentic environment within which to develop their ICC, through reflexive engagement with the community.
Students with an advanced language proficiency range should be encouraged to further develop their communicative skills, which also involves a deeper cultural awareness (ACTFL, 2012). That is, students should be able to “understand and use cultural knowledge to conform linguistically and behaviorally in many social and work-related interactions . . . [and to] show conscious awareness of significant cultural differences and attempt to adjust accordingly” (ACTFL, 2012, p. 15). However, students in language classrooms typically have limited opportunities for outside engagement and interact mostly with their peer students and instructor in a fixed social setting. In addition, the institution of higher learning also has limited geographic access to a local community of the target language and culture. Given students’ need for adequate career preparation and mentoring, this project can utilize campus community resources—including graduate students and other native-level target language speakers—to foster the development of ICC.

A MODEL PROJECT: JAM

The JAM project is one of the built-in project-based learning activities in the course curriculum; mentee students are graded on participation and completion, accounting for 10% of the overall course grade. Each student was matched with a mentor who had one or two mentees; the pairs conversed monthly either in person or through Skype, phone, or e-mail during the course of the semester. The main topics concerned the mentees’ career path: preparation, questions and answers, advice, networking, tutoring on the particular subject content, and so on. Mentees were assigned to submit written reflections in the target language after every meeting with their mentors. They also participated in class discussion and sharing in the target language once a month after each time they met with their mentors. As a final reflective activity, mentees were asked to complete an online survey regarding the project in English.

Mentees

The participants’ proficiency ranges from advanced-low to -mid; all were enrolled in an advanced Korean course during the fall of 2016 or the fall of 2017 in a private university in the United States. The class consisted of those with heritage learner (HL) background (N = 15) and FL learner background (N = 5). The HL learners were mostly born and raised in the United States.
except for two who were born in Korea and immigrated to the United States at the ages of 2 and 4.

**Mentors and Specialties**

The participating mentors ($N = 6$) were members of the institution’s Korean Graduate Student Association during the project period. All were native Koreans; four had completed their elementary through postsecondary education in Korea and two earned undergraduate degrees in the United States after completing their secondary education in Korea. This particular cohort had professional expertise in sociology, law, finance, medicine (residency training), computer science, and chemistry.

**Matching Procedure**

The course instructor first collected the mentees’ interest areas and desired career paths and then recruited graduate mentors with relevant professional specialties. Graduate mentors volunteered to participate and were matched with mentee(s) according to their career interest areas and fields.

**Mentoring Activities**

Mentors and mentees met three times (once a month, September through November) and each meeting lasted approximately 1 hour. Most pairs met in person; when they could not do so, the meetings were held via Skype. Mentoring meetings were conducted fully in the target language, and mentees were encouraged to ask questions when they encountered unfamiliar vocabulary or technical terms related to their field of interest. Mentors were also guided to provide their mentees with explanations or clarifications when asked. English was used only for simple and quick verifications of word meaning, with the purpose of ensuring time efficiency and optimizing language learning.

**OUTCOMES**

At the end of the semester, undergraduate student mentees submitted their reflective writing as a project report and had an in-class discussion to share experiences they had with their mentors. They reported how those experiences ultimately affected their career preparation and paths. All of these activities were conducted in the target language.
Students’ Reflective Reports

Samples of the students’ reflections included below (Excerpts 1–5) display a variety of significant indicators of their intercultural learning, while demonstrating how their participation in the project addressed all five C standards goal areas. The reports show that the students could successfully communicate with their native speaker mentors; they could understand and interpret what they heard from their mentors (interpretive communication); present their reflections through extended narrative writing (presentational communication); and exchange information and opinion with their mentors on familiar topics such as college issues, routines, relationships, and first-hand experiences as well as unfamiliar topics such as career development and work culture and environment (interpersonal communication). Interestingly, through the project, students managed to demonstrate their rapport and appropriate interactional relationship with their mentors, although it was not intended or instructed. They addressed their mentors, native speakers of the target language, by using proper terms and honorifics (e.g., 누나 [nuna]—older sister for boys, 선배님 [sunbaenim]—honorific form of senior) that are highly appropriate in the target culture.

The final reports also show that the students could connect their language skills with other content areas, including computer science, programming, law, investment banking, management, and medicine (Connections). Throughout their reflective essays, the content from these other subject areas were organically integrated.

Excerpt 1: Student’s Reflective Report Focusing on Career in Law

나는 MN 선배와 만나서 법대에 대한 얘기를 했다. MN 선배는 AB 대에서 동아시아학 전공을 했다. 졸업한 다음에 여성 보호시설에서 일했고 그 경험 때문에 법대에 지원하기로 결정했다. MN 선배는 다른 사람들을 돕는 것을 즐기며 법에 대한 지식을 가지고 다른 사람들을 돕는 꿈을 가졌다. 하지만 AB 법대에서 배우는 것이 생각보다 달랐다. 언니에 의하면 법대마다 서로 독특이 있는데 AB 법대는 변호사가 되고 싶은 학생들보다는 법률을 만들거나 바꾸고 싶은 학생들을 잘 가르친다. 하지만 언니는 법을 만들거나 바꾸 관심이 전혀 없었다. 언니는 어느 행동이 법을 어기고 어느 행동이 법을 안 어기는지 많은 알고 싶었는데 수업들이 그 쪽에 집중하지 않았다. 내가 첫 번째 깨달은 것이 좋은 대학이란 상황에서 자꾸 말을 많이 하는 것이 아니다. 법대를 졸업한 후 선배는 아주 큰 법률 사무소에서 체직을 했다. 몇 년 동안 그 사무소에서 일했지만 결국 회사를 나갔다. 회사에서 한 일을 즐기지 않았고 스토리스 때문에 몸 상태가 많이 나빠질 뻔 했다. 그리고 자주 울었다고 한다. 하지만 지금 언니는 AB 대에서 장학금을 마련하는 일을 하고 있고 일을 아주 즐긴다고 했다. 나는 MN 선배의 말을 듣고 법대에 가고 싶은 마음이 많이 사라졌다. 처음부터 일찍부터 이유로 법대에 가고 싶은 생각을 한 것 같다. 내가 될 하고 싶은 지 모르고 법대의 명망에 혼들러서 그런 생각을 해본 것 같다. 하지만 법대에 가는 것은 아주 큰 결정이라는 것을 깨달았다. 돈이 많
이 들고 축시 졸업한 후에 변호사가 되기 싶다고 덧붙이면서 다른 일을 하기 어렵다. 빚 때문에 큰 법률 사무소에 들어가기로 돈을 많이 벌어야한다는 생각이 든져 때문이다. 나는 변에 대한 호기심이 아직도 있다. 하지만 그 이유만 가지고 법계에 갈 수 없다고 생각한다. 조심하지 않으면 마음이 안 드는 직장에서 몸매 못하면서 계속 일하게 될 수 있다. MN 선배와 얘기하면서 내가 무엇을 원하는지 조금 더 자세하게 생각하게 됐다.

나는 오래 전부터 교수님이 되고 싶은 마음이 있었다. 하지만 그 바람을 인정하는 것이 생각보다 어려웠다. 교수님이 되는 것은 잘 헌신한 결과물에 둘으면서 자신감이 많이 희생이 된다. 그리고 남들과 비교해서 나는 자신을 저주 관심하는 것 같다. 하지만 나의 두려움 때문에 나에게 맞지 않는 길을 선택하고 싶지 않다. 실패할 수도 있는 생각이 든다. MN 선배가 드디어 성격에 잘 맞는 직업을 찾은 모습을 보고 나는 영감을 받았다. 나도 졸시 내 삶에 앞 두는 점이 있으면 MN 선배처럼 용기 있게 내 삶을 바꾸고 싶다.

선배님은 AB 경영대학에서 공부를 하고 있는 선배님이다. 한국에서 자라나서 CD 대를 졸업 하고 2005년부터 YYY에 입사하여 지금까지 일하고 계신다. CD 대 다닐 때 교환학생으로 하와이에 한 학기 동안 다녀왔다고 하셨다. 회사의 스폰서쉽을 통하여 기회와 더 함께 AB에 와서 공부하게 된 것이다.

한국 경제계에서 근무하다 보니 다양한 사람들을 만날 기회가 많다고 하셨다. 그로 인하여 투자 금융에 관심이 있는 나에게 금융에 대하여 설명할 수 있을 것이라고 말하셨다. 투자 금융은 삶과 일의 균형이 좋지 않다고 하셨다. 돈도 많이 벌지만 배우는 것 또한 많다고 하셨다. 돈을 어떻게 하면 가장 효율적으로 벌 수 있는가는 좋은 기회에 들어가서 배울 수 있다고 하셨다. 내가 관심있었던 골드만 사克斯 같은 곳에서 일하면 단순히 돈만 벌는 것뿐만 아니라 개인도 많이 발전할 수 있고 좋은 프로젝트나 커리어 트랜스퍼를 할 수 있는 기회가 있을 것이라고 하셨다. 월가에서 직장 생활을 시작하는 것은 좋은 생각이라고 나에게 말씀하셨다.

선배님은 한국의 금융과 경제에 대한 이야기도 많이 나누었다. 내가 많이 알지 못하고 관심이 없던 정보를 들으면서 너무 재미있고 신기한 한국의 금융에 점점 관심이 가기 시작했다. 한국의 JE증권, GH증권, JK이라는 회사에 대하여 말씀해 주시면서 한국은 어떤 직업을 직장인이 선호하는지 배울 수 있었다. 그 전에는 생각해보지 않았지만 한국에서 일하는 것도 좋은 기회가 될 수 있을 것이라는 생각에 문득 들었다. 내가 MBA에 관심이 있다고 하자 선배님은 정말 능력있는 사람들 가게 되면 아주 좋은 기회를 얻을 수 있다고 하셨다. 네트워크 하기에 아주 좋다고 하셨다.

선배님과 이런 저런 이야기를 나누어 보니 정말 금융의 세계는 아주 동적이고 재미있다는 것을 깨달았다. 하지만 집에 와서 생각을 해보니 내가 정말 투자 금융이 하고 싶어서 그 일을 추구하는 것인지 아니면 남들이 원하는 일이고 돈을 많이 벌어서 추구하는 것인지 고민을 하게 되었다. 부모님의 기대, 사회의 평판, 이런 것도 고려할 수 있었지만 그런 것에 따라서 나의 인생을 선택하게 된다면 나중에 나이 들어서 많이 후회할 것 같은 생각이 들었다. 선배님과의 시간을 통해 나의 결정이 무엇인가 다시 돌아보게 되는 계기가 된 것 같다. 너무 좋은 시간이었다.
Excerpt 3: Student's Reflective Report Focusing on Career in Business and Investment

P 선배님과 만난 경험이 나에게는 정말 좋은 만남이다. P 선배님은 한국에서 CD 대다니고 지급은 회사가 AB 경영 대학원으로 보냈다. 선배님은 미국 금융에 대해서 별로 모르지만 한국 사업에 대해서 많이 안. 지금은 미국에서 2 년 동안 살고 있고 아내와 맛히고 있다. AB 경영 대학원은 미국에서 제일 좋은 아나나라도 선택한 이유는 이론 때문이라고 했다. 한국에서는 대학 이들이 제일 중요한 것이라고 말했다. 한국 사영들은 미국 대학원이 좋지 안 좋은지 모르고 이름만 있는 것 같다고 했다. 그러나 더 좋은 경영 대학원에 입학 했어도 AB 대학원으로 오기로 했다고 말했다. 선배님은 AB 에 오기 전에 YYY에서 일했다. 여기서 좋은 사람들도 많이 만났고 인맥도 키웠다. 인맥이 쌓이면서 한국에서만 일을 했어도 여전히 금융 세계에 대해 많은 것을 아는 것 같다.

P 선배님이 많이 얘기했던 것은 대학을 졸업 하자마자 큰 회사로 가는 게 중요하다고 했다. 큰 회사에서는 돈도 많이 주고 배울 게 너무 많다. 학교를 처음 시작할 때 중요한 것은 사람들을 많이 만나고 배울 수 있는 것도 배우는 것이다. 좋은 사이에서 지식이 많으면 배울 뒤에 많이 확실하게 알 수 있다. 큰 회사에서 일도 많이 하니까 일하는 것을 좋아 하는지 안 좋아 하는지 더 빨리 알 수 있다. 그러고 일하면서 그 직업이 마음에 안 드면 인맥을 잘 만들어서 다른 회사로 옮길 수도 있다. 다른 회사들이 Goldman Sachs 처럼 큰 회사 이름을 보면 그들이 고용할 가능성이 더 높다.

이렇게 한국 금융 문화에 대해 듣는게 나한테 많이 도움이 됐다. 한국은 인베스트먼트 뱅킹이 관심이 많이 없고 한국 대학생들은 대부분 정부에 대해서 관심이 있다고 했다. 그래서 이 문야는 인기 가 별로 없으나 한국에서 일 찾기가 별로 안 어렵다고 한다. 한국 사람들은 다른 사람이나 회사한테 돈을 요구하는 것을 안 믿는다고 했다. 그래서 한국에서 큰 인베스트먼트 뱅크가 있어도 일을 별로 안 한다고 한다. 그리고 한국에는 Goldman Sachs 처럼 큰 뱅크들이 있어서 돈도 많이 주는데 배우는 게 별로 없다고 했다. 한국 지점은 일도 많이 안 받는다고 했다. 만만에 미국 지점이 일할게 너무 많으면서 그런 지점으로 본다. 그리고 그런 지점이 일은 못 받으면 홍콩으로 간다고 했다. 그 다음이 한국 지점이다. 그래서 일을 찾고 싶으면 미국이나 런던 아니면 홍콩에서 시작하는 게 제일 도움이 될 것이라고 조언했다. 핫선배님과 만나서 배운 게 많다. 이 프로젝트는 재미있고 한국에 대해서 많이 배우고 한국어로 내가 정말 관심 있는 직업에 대해 얘기해서 좋았다. 하지만 너무 늦게 프로젝트를 시작했고 박사가 너무 바빠서 만난 만 날 수 있었다. 그래도 그런 만남에 좋은 것이 많이 나왔다. 신기하게도 백만장호 한국어로 내가 관심 있는 것에 대해 같이 말하는 게 많이 어렵지 않았다. 이 프로젝트를 또 했으면 좋겠다.

Excerpt 4: Student's Reflective Report Focusing on Computer and Technology

나는 선배님을 만나서 컴퓨터공학에 대한 이야기를 나누었다. 선배님은 QR 대학교에서 학사학위를 받았고, ST에서 식사학위를 받았고, 그리고 현재 AB대학에서 박사학위 과정을 마치고 있다. AB 대에서 연구 초점이 운영 체제와 소프트웨어 검증이므로 JW 교수님께 연구를 컨. 사실상 말하자면 선배님을 만나기 전에 좀 기다렸다. 질문을 할 때 어휘 역부족으로 난감했다. 그래도 인터뷰 전에 컴퓨터공학 단어도 검색해서 완벽한 단어를 쓰는 것이 나나했다. 험 만남에 내 예상과 반대로, 선배님이 세부운 것을 잠시에 달아주시면서 나를 환영했다. 긴장감이 많이 풀렸다.
내가 내소개를 할 때 선배님은 내가 일학년에 벌써 컴퓨터 공학 전공을 확실히 알고 있는 것에 놀랐다. 원래 신입생들이 전공을 모르면서 입학하는데 내가 미리 알고 있는 것에 대해서 잘 놀랐다고 했다.

선배가 지금 진행하고 있는 연구는 'Operating Systems Safety Verification'이라는 것인데, 만약에 드론이 아니라면 RC Car (리모트 컨트롤 자동차: 원격조정 자동차) 같은 차량에 OS (Operating System: 운영체계)를 설치하면 아무 이상 없이 기능할 수 있도록 할 수 있다고 한다. 다른 프로젝트 중에 가장 많이 지원하는 Certikos에 기여했다.

나는 선배님한테 한국 첨단 기술 회사 문화와 미국 회사 문화에 차이가 무엇인지 질문했다. HJ 선배님이 한국의 회사 문화는 참 힘들다고 말했다. 이유는 한국 대기업에서 다른 회사로 옮기는 게 어려우며, 회사를 그만두고 다시 입사하는 게 어렵다고 했다. 하지만 스타트업과 카카오와 네이버 같은 회사들에서 미국 회사로 서서히 이행하고 있다고 했다.

HJ 선배가 전공 공부는 수학 아니면 통계에 중점을 두는 게 유익하다고 말했다. 통계학이나 수학을 같이하면서 공부하면 문제 해결에 큰 도움이 될 것이라고 격려해 주셨다. 나는 수학은 별로지만 통계에 대해 흥미를 느끼고 있어서 선배님이 다음 학기에 Intensive Statistics를 들으라고 지도해 주셨다.

선배님의 관심 있는 일이 학계 아니면 기업에 있는지 물어봤을 때 처음에는 산업에 관심이 있겠다고 하지만, 지금은 학문적인 연구에 더 흥미를 느끼고 있다고 했다. 연구가 기업보다 더 자유롭다고 하면서 기업에는 일하는 속도가 매우 빠르다고 했다. 박사학위를 미국에서 받는 것이 가장 흔한 길이라고 생각을 하고 있었는데, AB대학의 교수님이 본인의 관심 분야를 지도해 주셔서 예측에 대해 공부하기로 하게 되었다. 선배님과의 다음 만남이 몹시 기대된다.

Excerpt 5: Student’s Reflective Report Focusing on Career in Medicine

나는 다른 반 학생들과 달리 지난 수업에도 한국 멘토 선배가 있었다. 그 선배와 이번 학기에 만난 선배의 차이점을 경험하였다. 왜냐하면 지난 학기 선배는 아직 의대생이었고 이번 학기 선배는 병원 레지던트이기 때문이다. 아무튼 두 번 다 많이 배웠지만 MDS(한국 성함 물어보지 못함) 누나가 되게 순순하게 참을성 있게 다양한 것을 나와 희수한테 설명했다.

그리고 결론을 간단하게 말하면, 의사가 되는 길은 여간 어렵지 않고 진짜 ‘산 넘어 산이다.’ 그런 누나 말에 의하면 확실히 ‘고생 끝에 낙이 올 것이다.’ 아무리 어려봐도 미생의 장그래처 림 노력하면 (TTF) 성공이 될 것이라는 의미이니 누나가 마찬가지로 그 의미를 우리한테 전해준다. 아무리 어려봐도의 장그래처 림 노력하면 (TTF) 성공이 될 것이다. 누나와 이런저런 이야기를 나누다 보니 진짜 의사되는 것에 가장 중요한 것은 동기가.

MDS 선배는 현재 DDD 일반 병원 레지던트이다. DDD 병원이 앞서서 되게 유명한 뿐만 아니라 우리 미국에서 아마 제일 좋은 병원이다. 누나가 지금 그 병원에서 일하는 것이 쉬운 일이 아닙니다. 누나는 AB대학 2012학부년 이었고 기숙사는 TR이었다. 1년 동안 휴가하고 RRR 의대에 입학했다. 그리고 지금 병원에서 내과 일을 하고 있다. 누나는 AB에서도 되게 독특했고 지금도 되게 재밌는 것 같다고. 항상 공부를 열심히 했다고 말했다.

누나는 미리코리라고 하고 같은 지역에서 자랐다. 우리집에서 누나 동네까지 운전하면 한 20 분밖에 안 걸린다. 그리고 더 웃긴 것은 나는 누나와 같은 교회를 한 10년 동안 다녔다. 세상이 참 좋아 생각이 들었다.

누나가 나에게 개인적인 조언을 했다. 내가 혈액암에 관심 있으니까 그것에 대해서 얘기했다. 혈액의학은 신경생물학 근무 시간이 있고 다른 것과 비교해서 그렇게 일심이 일을 안 해도 된다는 얘기였다. 그리고 나중에 의대 3,4년에 여러 종류들 중에서 선택하는 것인데 그 종류에 일
Encouraged to make observations about similarities and differences between languages and cultures in their report, the students compared various aspects, such as corporate culture, professional trends, and work practices (Comparisons). Differences were often implied through use of subtle linguistic cues including 은/eun/는/neun—the contrast marker in Korean.

The reports also discuss the practices/products of the professional culture and fields under focus. For example, ‘삼성증권, 한국 투자증권, 미래 에셋, 카카오, 네이버’ (major companies); ‘새우깡’ (food); ‘드라마 미생, 장그래’ (popular drama and main character), and ‘고생 끝에 낙이 온다, 산 넘어 산’ (proverb/idiom); ‘회사 문화, 금융 문화’ (corporate culture, financial practices); ‘인맥’ (networking), ‘이름’ (reputation), and so on. These are important examples of cultural products, practices, and perspectives that the students observed, learned, and contemplated (Excerpt 6).

Excerpt 6: Students Making Comparisons

“경영 대학원은 미국에서 제일 좋은 대학원 아니더라도 선택한 이유는 이름 때문이라고 했다. 한국에서는 대학 이름이 제일 중요한 것이라고 말해줬다. 그러니까, 더 좋은 경영 대학원에 입학 했어도, AB 대학원으로 오기로 했다고 말했다. 한국 사람들은 미국 대학원이 좋지 안 좋은지 모르고 이름만 알아서 firma고 했다. 선배님이 AB에 오기 전에 YYY에서 일했다. 여기서 좋은 사람들도 많이 만났고, 인맥도 키웠다. 인맥이 제사, 한국에서만 일을 했어도, 여전히 금융 세계에 대해 많은 것을 아는 것 같다.”

“나는 선배님한테 한국 첨단 기술 회사 문화와 미국 회사 문화에 차이가 무엇인지 물었다. HJ 선배님이 한국 회사 문화는 참 힘들다고 했다. 이유는 한국 대기업에서 다른 회사로 가거나,몇 회사를 그만두고 다시 입사하는 게 어렵다고 했다. 하지만 스타트업과 카카오, 네이버 같은 회사들에서 미국 회사로 서서히 이행하고 있다고 했다. 이번 학기 수업에서 본 미생 드라마에서도 한국 회사 문화를 볼 수 있었다. 그때는 드라마라고만 생각했었는데 선배님이 이야기 한 후 한국 현실과 많이 비슷하다는 것을 배웠고, 그래서 전까지 한국에서는 회사 생활이 힘들 것 같다.”
Lastly, through the project, students became motivated to participate in the community. The students’ reflections clearly indicate that they could use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate with a community of target language speakers. Furthermore, they set goals and measured their progress by using the language for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement (The National Standards Collaborative Board [NSCB], 2015).

In describing their newfound interest in community participation, students’ reflective reports displayed their adept stance regarding their relationship with their mentors. Two salient characteristics of Korean culture are group orientation and hierarchical social order. Close relationships with others can be formed quickly through commonalities in hometown, school and college, workplace, or kinship ties. In these relationships, determination of seniority is important, which is usually based on age or status. The Korean words referring to the senior and junior parties in nonkinship relationships, 선배 (sunbae) and 후배 (hoobae), do not really have counterparts in English, though they can roughly be translated as “senior” and “junior,” respectively, though the full social dynamics are not part of Western culture. 선배 (Sunbae) does not necessarily coincide with age; rather, it signals longer experience in the academic or work environment. In Korean culture, a 선배 (sunbae) is expected to provide moral support and guidance to 후배 (hoobae); in turn, a 후배 (hoobae) is expected to show respect. The students’ writing showed that they adopted this cultural norm, commonly observed in college or university context as well as in professional workplaces (Excerpt 7).
Excerpt 7: Students’ Motivation for Continued Community Participation

“그리고 이 멘토 프로젝트가 나에게 많은 필요한 정보를 배울 수 있는 기회라서 너무 좋다고 생각한다. 그리고 나에게 현재 동기 부여로 준 것 같다. 앞으로도 이 멘토와 계속 연락할 듯하다.”

“또무나 소중한 시간 이었고, 진짜 좋은 인연이라고 생각합니다. 호텔에서 새벽 1시까지 수다떨고 놀다가 집을 돌아갔습니다. RQ 선배님과 처음 만났을 때 조금 어색했지만, 발 능게까지 같이 있으면서 대화를 나누고 정신이 편안해지면서 진한 홧김이 되었습니다. 아직까지 문자로 대화 나누고 있고 선배님이 학교로 돌아 오시면 우리 기숙사에서 정신 새어먹고 저녁엔 SSS 선배님들과 다시 놀 계획을 했습니다. 교수님 덕분에 소중한 인연을 맺을 수 있었습니다. 감사합니다.”

“그 동안 계속 연락하고 선배님은 저에게 프로그래밍 문제를 물어보시는 것에 긍정적이었다. 그런데 제가 아직 새로운 프로그래밍 언어에 대해 익숙하지 않기 때문에 조금 어렵기도 하고요. 그래서 문제를 물어보시면서 오늘 선배님하고 만나기로 했다. 나중에 선배님을 물어보니 너무 고마웠다. 만난 후에 집에 가서 직접 해보고 다 할 수 있나 기분이 너무 좋았다. 또 새로운 문제들을 고르고 다음 하기에도 계속 만나서 식사도 같이 하기로 했다. 교수님 덕분에 이런 기회가 생겨서 진짜 감사하고 제가 더 열심히 하도록 하겠습니까.”

“그리고 우리가 사생활에 대한 대화도 편안하게 나눴습니다. 그리고 선배님은 저에게 지난 학기에 한창 우리학교의 중요한 이슈였던, ZZZ College의 이름을 바꾸라는 찬반논란에 대해 물었습니다. 제 의견을 말씀하고 공감받지 못하기도 했습니다. 둘러보면서 결국 해야해야겠다고 했지만, 선배님이 2주 후에 있는 SSS 연말 파티에 저와 WS씨를 초대했습니다. JAM 멘토를 만났으니 선배님을 계속 만나는 것에 더 예정입니다.”

“이제가기 전에 선배님은 질문이 더 있으면 언제든지 연락하라고 말씀하셔서 저는 참 감사했습니다. 선배님과 만나면서 저는 그든 과정에 대해 더 배우고 선배님과 더 친해져서 좋았습니다.”

“시간이 갈수록 우리는 서로의 개인 고민들을 밝혔다. 처음에 우리가 실험 실패에 대해서 불평함으로서 친해졌지만, 하지만 어느 날에 선배님이 대학원 때문에 후회가 많고 이런 생각이 앓았다고 말씀하셨다. 진심으로 학아 연구한다고 수익 없이 일을 자주 해야 하고 성공은 별로 확신하지 않아서 환멸 느끼게 될 수가 있다. 그래서 선배님이 가끔씩 내가 후회를 받지 않도록 나한테 대학원에 확신이 가고 싶으나라고 물어보신다. 이런 질문이 내가 깊히 고려하게 하지만 항상 “확실히”라고 답한다. 선배님의 걱정과 조언과 친절을 보며서서 감사합니다.”

“앞선배님과 만나서 배운 게 많다. 이 프로젝트는 제미있고, 한국에 대해서 많이 배우고, 한국어로 내가 정말 관심 있는 작업에 대해서 얘기해서 좋았다. 하지만 너무 늦게 프로젝트를 시작했고, 멘토가 너무 바쁘셔 한번만 만날 수 있었다. 그래도 그 한번 만남에 좋은 것이 많이 나왔다. 신기하게도 멘토방 한국어로 내가 관심있는 것에 대해 같이 말하는 게 많이 어려지 않았다. 이 프로젝트를 또 했으면 좋겠다.”
Student Survey

An anonymous online survey in the students’ first language (L1)—English—was administered via Qualtrics at the end of the semester. Students who participated in the project as mentees were allowed to respond in English in order to collect their fully expressed opinions of this project.

Question 1: The JAM Project was a meaningful experience to you?

An overwhelming majority of the students who participated in the project responded that it was a meaningful experience to them, as seen in Table 1. Nine students strongly agreed (45%) and 10 agreed or somewhat agreed (50%); one mentee somewhat disagreed (5%). The results show that the project was positively received by the participating students.


The students responded that the project was meaningful to them not only because they had the opportunity to talk about career-related topics, but also due to the fact that they could interact with the mentors and obtain useful information in the target language. Having a mentor was perceived to be beneficial not only in terms of the knowledge and advice that students can glean from mentors, but because mentoring offered socialization in professional terms as well as personal support (Excerpt 8).

Table 1. The Students’ Responses to Question 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>45.00%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Excerpt 8: Responses to Survey Question 2

I felt that I could bond with my mentor in the short time we spent together. I think seeing somebody in the exact same position I want to be is a good motivator, to say the least, in addition to being a good way for me to see if the life of my mentor is truly something I desire. It helped me to shape a better path for my future and to realize that sometimes the goals that I have established are either not realistic for me or do not fit me well, as a person. I was able to connect with a more experienced mentor who was able to answer my questions about the field I am about to enter. My mentor was able to answer my questions with great specificity and gave good pointers and best practices in the field. I am glad to have had this talk with my mentor!

Even though I have always considered a career in a field of my interest, I never had the chance to see what it was actually like in that field. The JAM project gave me an opportunity to see what the major of my interest would be like as a career, and I found it overall very insightful. It allowed me to speak in field of interest in Korean to develop necessary business terms. Also allowed me to learn about the financial world in both Korean and in the rest of the world. I appreciated the conversations and felt they were as genuine as can be with mutual interests on both sides.

This project was very helpful in getting me to really think deeply about my future. Often, I am caught up in the busyness of the present, so I never have a chance to stop and breathe and think about why I am doing what I am doing, why I am working so hard, what I am working toward. Some of these things were unclear, but after meeting with my mentor, I got a lot of new insight that helped to make clearer my path going forward.

Aside from developing my Korean proficiency, I thought that JAM was important in a number of ways. I loved the fact that I was partnered with someone who had professional experience in what I wanted to pursue. My mentor was a caring and open person who invited me to social gatherings that took place within the professional schools and introduced me to his colleagues who would later assist me in writing my resume and helping me with interviews.

It was great to have a mentor whose career path was something that I wanted to exactly follow. My mentor was a medical student at Medical School and listening to how he got there helped me to gain a better sense of what I needed to do to pursue the medical field. Because my career goals aligned exactly with his, I was able to make the most of my time with him and ask him specific questions related to getting into medical school. Also, it is nice to have someone who I can contact again in the future for help and advice.

Question 3: Any suggestions or requests for this project?

Although the project received very positive feedback in general, there were limitations and suggestions for improvements. Students expressed that they wanted to spend more time with their mentors and would like to have the chance to meet mentors in a variety of specialty areas.

As mentees pointed out, a major challenge of this project was to secure mentors’ participation. Although many graduate students expressed interest in serving as a mentor for this project, not everyone was not able to join due to their busy schedules and other commitments. This challenge could be met by expanding the pool of mentors beyond just graduate students, including postgraduate alumni in the respective fields (Excerpt 9).
Excerpt 9: Responses to Survey Question 3

It [sic] would have liked to have met with the mentor more than once, but I felt that this was largely impossible due to time constraints.

It is pretty hard to find people that match our interests perfectly so maybe having us meet one-on-one instead of groups. Even though that may be even harder so I am not sure.

I was only able to speak with my mentor once, and I think it would have been nice if I had more chances to develop a relationship with my mentor. I think I would have appreciated starting it earlier in the year.

I would suggest that maybe a bit stronger effort could be made so that every student is able to have such an experience.

Maybe more mentors to choose from or a chance to talk to more than one mentor?

If there are more areas of expertise covered through the project that would be more inclusive for students with diverse interests. I think that can be fixed with finding mentors from different concentrations within each professional school.

Maybe more selections regarding the diversity of fields of the mentors!

Perhaps have one casual event where all the mentors and mentees can get together and do something fun!

DISCUSSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Language-specific questions were not included in the final survey for the mentee students because the main focus of the project was to have a channel of communication about career and academic paths in the target language with native speaker mentors. This project was not intended as language tutoring or practice sessions. Nonetheless, the participants’ reflections included mentions of target language use and practice.

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Because my career goals aligned exactly with his, I was able to make the most of my time with him and ask him specific questions related to getting into medical school. Also, it is nice to have someone who I can contact again in the future for help and advice.

He was a very kind “hyung” who cared about my well-being. I was quite surprised to realize that our conversations were all in Korean. Honestly, I never had this level of conversation in Korean outside of classroom. I made notes on medical vocabulary in Korean while talking with him.
This project was very helpful in getting me to really think deeply about my future. (. . .) I learned from my mentor that the drama “Misaeng” which we learnt about in class was quite close to reality. I was able to use Korean business terms and corporate culture shown from Misaeng and it instantly created a mutual interest. I am looking forward to my upcoming summer internship application in Seoul.

As seen in mentee students’ reflections, the JAM project provided students with opportunities to link their language and cultural learning to their career advice sessions with community-based mentors. They successfully communicated about professional concerns (e.g., law, business, and engineering) with native speakers of the target language. In addition, during meetings with their mentors, they utilized the cultural practices, concepts, and language (e.g., vocabulary, idioms, and expressions) they learned from the class discussion of a Korean drama series, Misaeng, which address economic and sociocultural issues in Korean society. They were able to apply the language and manners as they interacted with mentors in the target language. Thus, a project like JAM can not only foster and guide college students for their academic and career endeavors, but also provides students in an advanced language course with opportunities for interaction with native speakers of the target language. This enables classroom learning to be connected to content subject learning and real-world applications, rendering language learning more relevant and meaningful.

Through working on the JAM project, the students had opportunities to understand the culture of the people who spoke the target language. This was meaningful for the students, as understanding cultural practices and personal perspectives are an essential part of developing intercultural competence. In communicating with their graduate student mentors, the undergraduate student mentees formed a kind of junior–senior relationship that fostered appropriate stances and language registers (e.g., politeness and honorifics) in the Korean culture, although they were almost peers. This way, the JAM project provided the learners with a deeper understanding of how language and culture reflect the perspectives and practices of the native speakers of the target language: the Comparisons standard goal of the five Cs.

This project also provided the students with knowledge about academic and professional concerns in the target language. Students searched for information and had in-depth conversations about their specific interests in professional fields with their mentors. This was important for the students, as the Connections standard goal of the five Cs is one of the most valued FL skills in today’s world. The students’ reflective reports showed that the
project could provide them with well-rounded learning opportunities in all five C standard goal areas—Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities.

Korean graduate student mentors can be a valuable community resource for undergraduate students, with the former helping the latter to explore and navigate their career interests. In this regard, using an existing community in the same institution to foster students’ language and cultural learning is highly feasible and worthwhile. A small-scale course project like JAM can provide language learners with access to mentors who are native speakers of the target language (Korean in this case), enabling effective and appropriate interaction. It allows students to put what they have learned in the classroom into practical use and to engage in personalized and meaningful real-life situations. They develop their interactional skills as they communicate about academic and professional topics with people in the community. Despite positive outcomes, the project also had some limitations. For example, recruiting and diversifying the pool of graduate mentors, expanding meeting times, and hosting a social event for all the participating mentors and mentees were desired by many mentees.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

This forum addressed the importance and potential of CBL, which has yet to be embraced more widely in the field of language education, including Korean. As a concrete example of CBL projects, the article featured the JAM project, in which undergraduate students in an advanced-level Korean language class met with assigned graduate student mentors, who are native speakers of the target language. The pairs held regular conversations on topics related to academic interests and career endeavors. One of the most significant benefits of incorporating “Community” into language learning is demonstrating interculturality—the ability to actively participate in communication that is guided by awareness and understanding of cultures (Van Houten, Couet, & Fulkerson, 2014). In this regard, the project JAM was an integrated approach, which highlighted the interplay between language and culture in order to develop commensurate levels of ICC.

The integration of communities and language instruction through projects like JAM has a number of advantages for language learners. Colleagues in the field of FL/HL education may wish to expand and refine existing teaching modules, and would benefit from having detailed descriptions for community-based projects currently in use in language classes in the United States. It would thus be worthwhile to create a collaborative
repository of CBL projects that can be shared with language faculty in both K–12 and higher education settings.

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NOTE
The author is indebted to the anonymous reviewers and the editor for their constructive feedback and insightful suggestions. All remaining limitations are fully the author's own.

1. A Korean TV drama series [Misaeng (‘incomplete life’) 2014] was incorporated into the course curriculum in order to enrich the learners’ sociocultural knowledge and foster their awareness of the sociocultural issues in the target society. Refer to Lee-Smith and Roh (2016) for more details.

REFERENCES


Lentz, L. R. (2013). Communities: From being “lost” to being the heart of instruction. *The Language Educator, 8*, 42–45.


