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## Project based learning approach in fusion cuisine education: A modal proposal

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### Abstract

Project based learning is targets to make students learn with an integrated form by an approach that aims problem solving with a treatment similar to living in natural circumstances individually or in small groups. On the other hand, fusion cuisine education can be expressed as a production art with the techniques, cultures, and ingredients of at least two different cultures. The focus point of project based learning approach is encouraging students to reach information instead of transferring the information to students directly and this point overlaps with the main philosophy of fusion cuisine practices. In this study, a literary search has been conducted about fusion cuisine practices and project based learning in gastronomy education. Also, a model proposal, about how to combine the project based learning approach with fusion cuisine practices in secondary degree, associate degree and undergraduate degree programs, has been constituted. Students' problem solving, reaching to the information and new information production skills can be improved with this proposal.

Keywords: Fusion cuisine; fusion cuisine education; project based learning approach.

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## 1. Introduction

Fast living phenomenon which came with the increase of income levels and technological improvement globally lead people to eat out more often. The development of service quality in food and beverage businesses is another incentive factor for individuals to eat out from their home. That development can be expressed as to produce different food and beverage products than consumers use to eat. In this sense, fusion cuisine applications can be stated as the top priority culinary trend in the production of unusual food and beverage products. It is stated that fusion cuisine applications are come up with the combination of western and Far East cuisine techniques and ingredients. Also it can be expressed as to produce unique and new tastes and plate presentations with the combination of cooking techniques, cutting styles, decorating styles and ingredients of different nations and different cultures consciously in a plate. It is possible to define fusion cuisine as to combine at least two different cuisine cultures in a plate with the aim of producing new and unique tastes, with conscious efforts and with the condition of not to have dominance of one culture. Main philosophy of fusion cuisine can be summed up as to synthesize different food and beverage elements in one plate (Uyar & Zengin, 2015; Newman, 2014; Adlam, 2012; Can et al., 2012; Brown, 2010; Sandikci & Celik, 2007; Tomita & Secter, 2012). Fusion cuisine applications which have significant importance on the improvement of food and beverage industry should be made actual. To do that gastronomy education needs to be improved qualitatively and quantitatively. The actively performed fusion cuisine education in the scope of gastronomy education can provide the development of food and beverage elements in the culture qualitatively and quantitatively. It is predicted that project based learning approach can improve the quality of fusion cuisine education (Sarioglan, 2014; Sarioglan, 2013; Sarioglan, 2012).

Project based learning can be expressed as an education model which has focus point concepts and scientific norms. It involves students' problem solving skills and their meaningful learnings. It also encourages students to study on by own to configure their information and encourage students to reveal their own output by finalizing their works realistically. Learning means to organize learners' cognitive structure consistently in project based learning with its process-oriented and project based content. In the light of this information it is possible to express project based learning as a learning approach which is process oriented and which needs interactive environments in classes. These are such environments that provide students to build and orient their own learnings, to improve their creativity, to try solving encountered problems with collaboration, to be deciders about their success and to carry their lives to the class. In the process of project based learning students can study individually or as a group.

There is no limitation for class hours to apply project based learning approach. Students can study about their projects in anywhere and anytime available. The main philosophy of this approach is to trigger improvement of creativity by synthesizing student's acquired knowledge and student's own-designed elements (Sahin & Ozdemir-Simsek, 2016; Gary, 2015; Aydin, 2011; Rooij, 2009; Chanlin, 2008; Colley, 2008; Solomon, 2003; Saracaloglu et al., 2006; Thomas, 2000).

There are some specifications for the projects of the approach to ensure efficiency of project based education. Projects should be configured as to make students to deal with complex and real living problems which are meaningful to themselves, to use their ability of researching, planning and problem solving and to study in interdisciplinary extent for completing their project. In relation with the objectives defined in the beginning, projects should contain reflective activities that provide students to understand their subjects in depth and to think critically about the targets and their experience in projects. At the end of projects, learned elements should be revealed and should be evaluated by students with criteria specified before (Boss & Kraus, 2014; Ravitz, 2010; Chu, 2009; Lehmann et al., 2008).

## **2. Research Significance and Method**

Main purpose of the study can be expressed as provision of qualitative and quantitative developments in culinary culture with the improvement of the productivity in fusion cuisine education. However, in the study about efficiency of fusion cuisine education made by Sarioglan in 2014, the frequency levels of theoretic and application knowledge of gastronomy students about fusion cuisine are 6.69% and 5.98% respectively. In this sense, the need to increase the efficiency of fusion cuisine education result has been determined (Sarioglan, 2014).

In the study a modal proposal has been constituted to improve theoretic and application knowledge of students that are having fusion cuisine education. The model proposal formed within the focus point of the assumption about necessity to use project based learning method in fusion cuisine education. The most important specification of the model proposal is being applicable in the framework of existing education system.

## **3. A Modal Proposal for Project Based Learning Approach in Fusion Cuisine Education**

For the qualitative development of the fusion cuisine education, a 3-step modal proposal has been constituted. Steps are mainly consisted of Formation of Project teams and assignment of cuisine cultures as project subjects, supplying required research materials for application of the projects and evaluation of projects. The important specifications of project based learning approach formation of teams and subject assignment are especially included and underlined within the first step.

### ***Step 1: Formation of Project Teams and Assignment of Cuisine Cultures as Project Subjects***

Formation of project teams among students is an indispensable element of project based learning approach. The student teams to be formed for fusion cuisine education need to be formed within small groups of three, four or five people with different characteristics. By having students with different personalities working together in the same team, the concept of synergy will trigger the concept of creativity, which is the most important feature of fusion cuisine. After the formations of the teams, at least two cuisine cultures, another important feature of fusion cuisine, should be given to the students as their project subject. These subjects can be given as examples of French Cuisine - Thai Cuisine, Italian Cuisine - Indian Cuisine and Mexican Cuisine - Japanese Cuisine.

### ***Step 2: Supplying Required Research Materials for Application of the Projects***

Student teams need to research about their subjects to apply their projects. According to their research, teams should create recipes of the food or beverage items they plan to do and those recipes should be delivered to the instructor. Subsequently required tools, equipment, material and ingredients must be supplied and delivered to the teams. This requires an effective supply chain management network and a strong financial structure in relevant educational institution. With the provided tools, equipment, material and ingredients to the teams, production phase should be started.

### ***Step 3: Evaluation of the Project***

The food and beverages that the teams have produced within the fusion kitchen philosophy should be evaluated. Evaluation should be done through criteria such as knowledge about their subject, food and beverage production, recipe creation process, individual participation levels in team work, hygiene, time management, presentation and decors. The proximity or distance between the targeted production output and the achievement within the framework of evaluation criteria should be determined. The reasons for the distance between the targeted output and the achievement must be specified. On the other hand, if there is a great deal of proximate between the targeted output and the

achievement, a debate should be held on how to better develop the target goal. Thus, deviations from the desired goal will reduce the most, and the goal will be improved in fusion cuisine applications.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

In the research it is seen that fusion cuisine applications are crucial in the sustainability of development of the gastronomy phenomenon. However, it is also seen that fusion cuisine applications should be improved by project based education approach which is one of the new education methods. It has been determined that local, national and international developments might be possible if the steps in modal proposal are implemented in fusion cuisine education. On the other hand, in both gastronomy and fusion education the other new education techniques could be implemented. After this study it is suggested to research about applicability of other new techniques such as collaborative learning model, peer education model, extracurricular learning model and inquiry based learning model in fusion cuisine education.

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