

## **THE EFFECTIVENES OF BROJECT-BASED LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH**

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**DOI**

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14270618>

**Abstract:** *Project-Based Learning (PBL) is when students design, plan and carry out an extended project that produces an output, such as a product, publication or presentation. Ideally, these outputs are exhibited to an external audience which can be a powerful motivator for students.*

**Key words:** *PBL, Interactive learning experience, personalized learning, framework.*

PBL is a key feature of the Language Futures approach where projects could last anything from a week to a whole term. Projects aim to grant students independence to create an authentic final product, requiring them to explore a subject or a combination of subjects in a deep sense throughout the production. Projects are designed to build knowledge and develop skills, to incorporate language learning and inter-cultural understanding and to connect learning to the real-world. Starting out with a challenging question, students engage in sustained inquiry, which involves generating further questions and using a range of resources to answer them – this activity is student-led.

### **Origin of Project-based learning**

Project-Based Learning (PBL, hereinafter) has substantially advanced as a result of the extensive development and application of the approach to a diverse array of academic fields and types of learning environments. Several researches have been conducted to examine the possible effect that PBL has in significantly influencing students' achievements in a range of curricular areas. Comparing the success rates of high school students in social studies as well as college and career orientation in a regular high school to those of a PBL technology high school was the focus of a study that was carried out by E. J. Summers and G. Dickinson.

PBL places an emphasis on the development of students' key academic knowledge and their understanding of the content of their academic courses, as well as their capacities to prepare for careers. Other scholars have also provided essential design concepts that are required for PBL, with some of them concentrating on the use of PBL in particular subject matters. Evidence suggests that PBL can help ESL students improve their English language skills and content area knowledge

simultaneously. The findings of this study lend credence to the claim that PBL has the potential to level the playing field for underprivileged students, particularly in fields where they have been underrepresented to until point. When it comes to achieve substantial learning goals, some studies have pointed out that the subject matter or topic which is concerned to a PBL approach ought to be genuine and connected to topics that are related in significant discussion in the context of real world. Furthermore, PBL emphasizes the significance of establishing project-based learning courses on learning objectives. It is argued that learning objectives are formulated as —learning performances, which combine the —basic ideas of the discipline with the essential —disciplinary practices. The project is not the end result of learning in PBL, as it frequently is in traditional classrooms; rather, the project is the process through learning occurs. This is in contrast to traditional classrooms, where the project is frequently the completion of learning. This is the defining characteristic that sets PBL as apart from other educational systems. Given that PBL requires significant shifts away from traditional methods of education, it should not come as a surprise that the sets of examination of design principles that are addressed in the literature explore the topic of how students learn new skills and information.

The definition of Project-Based Learning as such is not a definite one since as Coufalová (2006) claims different authors within their own definitions point out various features of PBL. Some of them favor practical importance in definition of PBL, others highlight the elements of active learning and previous students 'experience or the significance of the project aim. He confirms that PBL can be both defined and classified differently; once it can be regarded as a complex method of tuition while other authors rank it among organization forms. In addition, it may as well be thought of a type of educational strategy.

### **Advantages of technologies in project-based learning**

**Accessibility to Resources:** Technology provides learners with easy access to a wealth of language learning resources. Online platforms, mobile apps, and websites offer a wide range of educational materials, including interactive lessons, vocabulary exercises, grammar explanations, and multimedia content. Learners can access these resources anytime and anywhere, making language learning convenient and flexible.

**Interactive Learning Experience:** Technology offers interactive and engaging learning experiences that enhance language acquisition. Language learning apps and software often incorporate gamification elements, such as quizzes, challenges, and rewards, which make the learning process enjoyable and motivating. Interactive

exercises and simulations allow learners to practice language skills in a dynamic and immersive way, fostering active engagement and deeper understanding.

**Personalized Learning:** Technology allows for personalized language learning experiences tailored to individual needs and preferences. Adaptive learning platforms use algorithms to assess learners' strengths and weaknesses and provide targeted content and exercises accordingly. This personalized approach helps learners focus on areas that require improvement, ensuring efficient and effective language acquisition.

*Preparation phase.* According to Miller, the main thing teachers should bear in mind is to help students to create authentic, engaging and relevant projects and following instructions help teachers to guide them through the sequence of preparation steps. Though these steps must be at least partially pre-planned by the teacher, the content is mainly class-generated and thus it meets the central demand that the project is an enterprise of students. The preparation phase is gradually recorded into a logical framework form and covers:

1. Selecting the purpose.
2. Determination of the educational aims.
3. Selecting the final product.
4. Creating a general structure, timeline and regular check-ins.
5. Forming teams.
6. Producing the final written framework.

1. Selecting the purpose. In order to create a compelling student project, it seems to be a crucial point how to awake students' inner motivation. As it was said, spontaneous projects are rare and random, thus if teachers plan to meet educational purposes in PBL and keep the project under control it may be them who suggest the theme, not students, however, there is a great emphasis on how they do it. For instance, it is advised that before introducing the project work itself, teachers should launch it with an "entry event" that arouses students interest and initiates their questioning. The motivation props could be anything from featuring a film, music or showing a mock correspondence to arranging a lively discussion, or an invitation of a guest speaker. Actually, this stage corresponds with the first stage three-phase model of constructivist teaching, where teachers activate and map of existing students' prior knowledge and personal experiences along with arousing emotions around the topic, which helps to set up a scenario of personal interest. It is mainly methods of brainstorming and mind mapping are favorable to employ with students at this stage. One should also mention the Need to Know Form, which Miller calls "a living and

breathing document” where students are asked what they need to know so that they can accomplish the presented project.

The result of this first crucial step, Miller sees in eliciting an idea that becomes the basis of the whole project and what he calls a “Driving Question”. According to him, a good driving question should be open-ended, provocative, complex and should link to the core of educational goals that a teacher intends to teach students.

2. Determination of the educational goal. Once the topic and consequently driving questions are selected, the teacher with the help of students formulate the driving question into the clear, concrete, practicably attainable and measurable objectives of PBL. Svobodová et al. claim that a well-chosen educational goal lays in learning both new content and language skills.

On this point, Patton advises teachers carry out “backward planning” that states everything students are expected to learn in the project from the knowledge to specialist skills or competencies and think the ways of assessing them. In addition, students should also agree on the choice of suitable title for the whole project.

3. Selecting the final product. Patton distinguishes three main types of final outcomes which may be a product, a performance or a service. Yet, the choice of final products can be almost endless, depending on student’s interest, style of learning, experience or creativity. He states that students should be allowed the “Voice and Choice” in products, which will allow to use their strengths and what is more, it keeps them engaged and invested. This opportunity to option enables students to personalize the learning and makes project meaningful to them. Besides, students and the teacher agree firmly on assessment criteria in forms of a rubric so that students would know exactly in advance what particularly they should pay attention to and what the transparent evaluating standards are. And moreover, clear criteria allow students to peer-assess or self-assess better in various tasks. As he states, students should be involved in developing the rubric and be able to restate it in their own words, which they may conduct easily if they are shown a model of the type of product they will be creating. This, according to Patton, first, will give them a clear vision and second, can be used a basis for assessment criteria. In connection with the final product and its presentation, students as well need to discuss and agree on their public audience, to whom and when they are going to present their work finally, apart from their classmates and the teacher.

4. Creating a general structure of the project. At this stage, first, students structure the project by discussing what, why, where and how decisions. Mergendoller and Thomas let students to brainstorm questions before completing a

research plan. Similarly, students consider how and where the needed information will be gathered, compiled and analyzed.

Correspondingly they will decide on the provision of all tangible material they can use during the project. Next, students define several project milestones plus their deadlines and write them into a Milestone Table serving as a basic time line for the whole project where students can tick fulfilled stages. Then students with the teacher's help consider individual steps and procedures of their solutions and they create a Table of Individual Tasks that has to be carried out to meet the educational goals. They will think out everything they will be doing, label those activities and decide on their primary roles and responsibilities according to their interest and abilities. In addition, they should analyze the possible risks and suggest preventive measures before completing Risk Management Plan.

Last but not least, it is important to plan regular check-ins with students and schedule critique sessions which ought to follow draft deadlines (Patton, 2012).

5. Forming teams. During previous deliberations are students are divided into particular co-operative groups, managed by a group leader. On this point several authors show different attitude in terms of instructor-formed teams vs. self-selection ones. Mergendoller and Thomas prefer spontaneous group formations, which are based on specific interests or friendship; other authors advocate instructor-formed teams. They favor establishing heterogeneous groups which are established by teacher's choice. There are several benefits that justify that attitude.

Firstly, teachers are able to place behaviorally challenged, uncooperative, domineering or unpopular students in appropriate groups. Secondly, they can match the grouping pattern to the educational context or goal. Thirdly, weak students are provided with good modeling of effective learning approaches and tutoring from strong students. And lastly, instructor-formed groups may have fewer propensities for cheating; students do not incline toward covering one's plagiarism or failure to participate in group efforts, due to weaker pre-existing relationships between students. However, Svobodová et al claim that later on, when students master PBL process, they can compile their working teams on their own. Besides, as regards functional grouping, Oakley et al. suggest having all students fill out the Getting to Know You form at the beginning of the school year. This form serves several purposes and authors claim this technique as a helping tool for creation a good team of compositions. Most authors recommend to form three- and four-person teams, however, Oakley et al. warn that initially students may object to instructor-formed-

team's creation and appeal to teachers to seek out more information about successful dealing with student resistance to cooperative learning.

6. Producing the final written logical framework. In this final stage of the preparation phase, teachers fill in the logical framework in which they specify individual project stages and milestones including the time and organizational schedule.

Project-based learning is a learning model that engages students in accomplishing group project or individual project to improve their knowledge and skills. Project-based learning can be implemented to the field of second and foreign language acquisition to develop teaching and learning. Project-based learning provides learners with opportunities to use language in a meaningful and authentic context. It means that students' participation in meaningful activities encourages them to use EFL language skills authentically. Through working on the projects, project-based learning engages students in activities that improve their language skills and language components in target language.

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