

## Project-Based Learning as an Effective Teaching Method

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**Annotation:** This article is devoted to the educational methods such as a project based learning, its challenges and results of the teaching technology. For English language learners this is of great import as the task is on the teacher to provide pedagogical space for English language learners to use their English and receive useful feedback.

**Keywords:** a project based learning, teacher-centered lessons, student-centered, interdisciplinary learning, English language learners, feedback strategies, student interaction, collaborative skills.

Project-based learning is a model for classroom activity that shifts away from the classroom practices of short, isolated, teacher-centered lessons and instead emphasizes learning activities that are long-term, interdisciplinary, student-centered, and integrated with real world issues and practices. The major benefit of project-based learning is how it can allow a teacher to create projects across curriculum areas, in other words, projects that foster interdisciplinary learning. Within the framework of a project-based learning curriculum, teachers have many opportunities to build relationships and interact with students.

Project – based learning stresses how “finished products, plans, drafts, and prototypes all make excellent ‘conversation pieces’ around which teachers and students can discuss the learning that is taking place.” For English language learners this is of great import as the task is on the teacher to provide pedagogical space for English language learners to use their English and receive useful feedback. At each stage of a project, the teacher has the opportunity to check in with the English language learners: to ask them how they are going with their project, ask them to summarize what they have done, to explain the steps they have gone through, to demonstrate what they have learned, to help the English language learners focus on their errors as well as correct these, and so on. During these teacher– English language learners interactions English language learners have the chance to play with their language, practice their communication skills, and respond to the teacher. Simultaneously, the teacher has the opportunity to encourage and help improve English language learners communication skills.

The reader, of feedback strategies to use with English language learners to help with enhancing their language learning; for now these feedback strategies are explicit correction, recasts, clarification request, metalinguistic clues, elicitation, and repetition. In terms of portfolios, PBL also documents the process of student learning such that they can be shared with other students, teachers, parents, and mentors. By its very nature, PBL platforms drafting, editing and redrafting stages of any given piece of student work thereby allowing teachers to assess students’ learning during the process of the project as well as the product of the project. It also facilitates collaboration, mediation, and student interaction. This gives English language learners occasion to acquire collaborative skills, such as group problem-solving and decision-making, relying on peers, integrating teacher or peer feedback, practicing interaction skills, and working as student researchers.

PBL can be further enhanced through the use of educational technology by giving students the option to use a wide variety of online tools and to access authentic materials. Connecting to the World Wide Web helps English language learners connect with world English's as they are used across the globe. In other words, English language learners through active engagement with the internet can access ways to use English that are real, authentic and appealing. Lastly, PBL is about learning taking place beyond one solitary lesson. In and of itself, such extended learning time allows English language learners to epistemologically engage with their own learning; they can plan, revise and reflect on both learning process and product.

The technologies lend themselves to realizing all these ideas and strategies in the classroom for the benefit of English language learners. There are two perspectives of constructivist pedagogy. These are cognitive constructivism and social constructivism. Rather than highlighting their differences, we shall attempt to underscore their similarities in the light of classroom practice. It proposes eight such similarities: that constructivist classrooms 1. afford multiple truths and accounts of reality; 2. provide multiple portrayals of reality, avoid curricula dangers of stereotyping, tokenism, and oversimplification, and are thus better situated to represent the complexity of the real world; 3. generate learning environments in which students create knowledge rather than reproduce it; 4. emphasize authentic contextualized and meaningful task participation rather than decontextualized instruction; 5. accentuate exploratory, real-world, and/or case-based learning over predetermined and lockstep instruction; 6. stress careful reflection on experience and critical thinking; 7. enable "context- and context-dependent knowledge construction"; 8. support collaborative and cooperative learning through interaction, dialogic engagement and social negotiation rather than standardized, competitive learning.

What this means is that a student never enters a classroom as a tabula rasa or blank slate waiting to be filled with knowledge by the teacher. Instead, students come to each task of learning with the expertise and knowledge from prior experiences, which in turn influences the way in which a student (a) approaches each new task of learning, and (b) internalizes and constructs new knowledge from the task. The second notion is that learning is active rather than passive. Learners confront their understanding in light of what they encounter in the new learning situation. If what learners encounter is inconsistent with their current understanding, their understanding can change to accommodate new experience. Learners remain active throughout this process: they apply current understandings, note relevant elements in new learning experiences, judge the consistency of prior and emerging knowledge, and based on that judgment, they can modify knowledge. In constructivist pedagogy, all learning is active and not passive. This of course fits in with differentiated instruction, which also guides each learner to take full responsibility for their learning.

The challenge for teachers is that they cannot assume that, just because every student uses their prior experiential knowledge base to engage with each and every new learning activity, students will understand and internalize new subject matter in the same way. The trick is to reconcile inconsistencies between what a student knows and what they are given to learn as well as to make these inconsistencies salient for the student in ways that they can further create new knowledge. Furthermore, students by default need different learning experiences to advance to different and higher levels of understanding. In other words, one pedagogical size never fits all! In order to make the most of a student's current knowledge base, teachers need to provide students with learning opportunities and situations that are important, relevant, timely, and developmentally appropriate for them rather than important to the teacher, to a "received" and standardized curriculum or syllabus, or to a school system.

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