



Benefits And Drawbacks Of Implementing PBL In Curriculum

Axmedova Ugiljon Kuronboyevna

PhD Student, Urgench State University, Uzbekistan

Copyright: Original content from this work may be used under the terms of the creative commons attributes 4.0 licence.

ABSTRACT

The article discusses about the benefits and drawbacks of implementing PBL as an modern instructional approach in curriculum. The purpose of the article is to know what are the pros and cons of PBL and how to minimize its drawbacks and maximize the benefits in English language teaching.

KEYWORDS

Project-based learning curriculum, instructional approach, real-life topics, natural extension, communicative skills, meaningful participation, learner-centered nature, motivation, cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

Project works are being implemented in English classes as the main activities in a project-based learning curriculum. In this environment, students are allowed to read different types of sources, to negotiate with their classmates the best strategies to present

or carry out their project, and to write up whatever final product they have in the form of a report, a paper, an article, a newspaper, a play, and soon.[1:58] PBL is as the best instructional choice makes students to be in the center of the learning process.

PBL has been defined in different ways. However, simply put, PBL is "a model that organizes learning through projects". Stoller (2006) stated that "the versatility of project-based learning makes it difficult to articulate one single definition that takes into account the various ways in which the concept can be translated into practice"[10:20]. Stoller (2006) explained the main role of PBL that besides helping students to learn the target language PBL also allows the students to connect to real-life topics and topics related to their curriculum. For instance, at Urgench state university, a group of Foreign language and literature major students developed a project that connected the topics of their curriculum to their own lives as future English teachers. After studying the vocabulary, expressions, and phrases related to occupations at schools, Foreign language and literature majors had to make a poster presentation called "**An ideal school**". They should present on their posters how ideal schools can be as their future workplace. They were divided into groups to work on the poster presentation and later got together as a big group to discuss how to make their poster presentation in order to make it resemble an ideal school of the city.

Stoller(2006) pointed out that "In some settings, project-based learning is a natural extension or an enhancement of what is already taking place in class" [1:22]. The project just described allowed the students to review the content they studied during the semester through a poster presentation. It was also a great opportunity for them to practice the foreign language they were studying. In a foreign language environment the classroom are always the only place where the students can practice a foreign language. Therefore, projects like the one discussed above

promoted the development of the students' communicative skills, the integration of the four language skills in context, the reinforcement of the content they studied throughout the semester as well as an active and meaningful participation in the learning process. In spite of these good results, some teachers still hesitate to implement a PBL approach to their teaching.

THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RESULTS

In our article we will talk about the advantages and disadvantages of implementing PBL in curriculum. The purpose of the article is to know that what are the pros and cons of PBL and how to minimize its drawbacks and maximize the benefits in English language teaching. Our aim of researching on the topic is to develop using PBL in curriculum and implement it into education system as an modern instructional approach.

Drawbacks of PBL

Teachers may face some disadvantages of PBL while using it in their English classes. There are some drawbacks discussed by researches in the implementation of PBL. Henry(1994) argued that projects "can demand a lot of students, take a long time, need extra supervision, need careful design to work well, benefit from preparatory training exercises, involve extra expense, are supposedly difficult to assess, and are time-consuming to assess"[5:53]. Fleming (2000) sided with Henry(1994) in that "projects often require concentrated effort over an extended period of time" or it may be difficult to choose a topic and to decide on how the final product is going to be presented.[4:6] It may also be difficult for teachers to supervise the students' in their different stages of the project activity.

Markham(2003) stated that students' involvement is vital to the success of PBL, so if teachers do not make sure that the students are ready for the implementation of this instructional approach, their engagement in the project development will be compromised. The group of students and the teachers are working with dictates the success of PBL implementation[1:89]. If the students listen to teachers' lectures and they only participate by taking notes, it will be a hard task to develop projects with them. Below some drawbacks of PBL are described that instructors and students may face during carrying out projects:

- First, they may not be used to this instructional approach.
- Second, their passiveness may make it active to sell them the idea of developing a project. It may sound like it is-a-lot-of-work type of activity.
- Third, if they end up developing a project, they may feel as if they are only having fun instead of really studying and learning. They also think that the teachers are not doing their job or using class time wisely.
- The students' interest in a topic that is outside the instructor's expertise may constitute a drawback as well. Jakar (2006) pointed out that sometimes students want to research a topic that is beyond their language instructor's expertise. Jakar (2006) explained that it may be a drawback if the teachers are not able to work as facilitators in the process, providing the students with the technical and pedagogical guidance they need to develop their projects. In addition, Jakar(2006) pointed out that "Since the teachers are primarily EFL specialists, it

is not reasonable to expect them to function as interdisciplinary experts, although they should be encouraged to exploit their own talents and interests where possible"[6:191].

It is known that there is no flawless instructional approach to teaching. All of them have their advantages and disadvantages, so it is up to the teachers to weigh the pros and cons and decide which instructional approach suits both their pedagogical skill and provides a good learning experience for their students.

As an English teacher with over 7 years of experience, I had the opportunity to experience some of the drawbacks of PBL in my practice. Actually, I held some of these negative beliefs myself and this experience helped me develop some strategies that may help other instructors minimize the drawbacks of implementing a PBL curriculum. For instance, in order to carry out a project with my students I had to explain at the outset what we were going to do, the objectives, and why I was using that instructional approach. Then, to include them as co-creators in the process, I allowed them to ask questions about it and to give suggestions to improve it.

In my PBL courses, textbooks were rarely assigned. Instead, students used authentic written materials whenever possible. I always tried to let my students use only English materials while carrying out their projects. The university administrators generally gave me freedom to develop in the classroom what I thought was best for the students. I had the chance to discover that it is not always easy to implement pedagogical ideas or curricula that differ from the traditional ones. The all above mentioned was the drawbacks of PBL. In the

next section, I try to discuss the PBL advantages according to the different authors.

Benefits of PBL

A number of authors agree that PBL has different advantages worth considering. They are as advantages of PBL in curriculum make teachers and learners have really good English classes.

- The **learner-centered nature** of PBL is its first advantage. It focuses on the students' learning needs, providing them with a more meaningful learning experience[4:56]. As a result, students can become more motivated and interested in learning since they are not "passively stuffed with knowledge but rather engaged in applied learning designed to develop initiative, creativity, and judgment"[7:6]. The learner-centered nature of PBL allows students to engage in their learning process, a factor that increases their motivation to learn.
- **Motivation** is also considered to be an advantage of PBL. PBL increases the students' motivation because the students work on things that entice them and it happens in a way that best suits their abilities [4:36]. In addition to that, the array of activities students can be involved with while developing their projects can attract even the most reluctant student[8:89].
- Another motivational factor is the possibility the students have of being involved with **real-life situations** when they are exposed to PBL . It increases the students' motivation since instead of memorizing the learning materials they learn it by doing [7:56].

- Motivation triggers other advantages of PBL such as **self-confidence** and **ownership**. Fleming(2000) stressed that self-confidence is developed as students dive into their learning process trying to get the most out of it by using their strongest abilities. Stoller(2006) pointed out that students get motivated and their self-confidence increases when they notice that their learning is moving forward based on their classmates' and instructors "ongoing feedback"[10:23]. Stoller(2006)explained that "ongoing feedback makes it easier for students to reflect on their accomplishments, there by contributing to potential growth in self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-concept".
- PBL allows students **to judge their own work** since they understand that doing a good job on the project is a result of devoting themselves to what they do [4:32]. In other words, they do not leave this sole responsibility to their instructor, rather they work cooperatively with each other through the process to make sure they are on the right track.
- PBL promotes **cooperation**, which is another advantage. In a cooperative environment, students develop their learning by working together in pairs or small groups with the facilitation of their instructor. In a PBL setting students are encouraged to interact with their classmates **collaboratively** (Richards,2001)and **productively**(Fleming,2000,p.13). Blumenfeld et al.(1991) note that PBL prompts students to develop their projects "by asking and refining

questions, debating ideas, making predictions, designing plans, and experiments, collecting and analyzing data, drawing conclusions, communicating their ideas and findings to others, asking new questions, and creating artifacts"[2:63]. In brief, they discuss aspects of their projects, they negotiate ideas, they share responsibilities, and work as a team in order to be successful.

Most importantly, PBL facilitates language learning in foreign or second language classes. Because it also provides opportunities for language learners to develop all four language skills in an integrated and contextualized way, it mirrors "real-world language use where skills are rarely used in isolation" [4:56].

CONCLUSION

To conclude, we can say "Many language professionals praise project-based learning because it creates purposeful opportunities for language input, language output and explicit attention to language-related features (e.g. forms, vocabulary, skills, strategies) ". Language learners benefit as much as they can from their PBL experience, whenever necessary the instructor will have to develop some language related pre-project activities, as for example, explanations of grammar topics related to the project the students are to develop. It will help the students contextualize their learning and provide them with the language forms they need to carry out their project. The fact that students with different learning styles can benefit from PBL constitutes another important advantage since it is known that individuals learn differently and have their own way to do things. PBL gets students to use the learning style that suits

them best and allows them to use their strongest abilities to develop their projects and learn from them..

REFERENCES

1. Beckett, G. H. ,&Miller, P.C.(2006). Project-based second and foreign language education. Past, present, and future.. Greenwich, CT :Information Age Publishing.
2. Blumenfeld,P.,Soloway,E.,Marx,R.,Krajcik,J.,Guzdial,M.,&Palinscar,A. (1991).Motivating project-based learning: Sustaining the doing, supporting the learning. Educational Psychologist, 26, 369-398
3. Eyring, J.L.(1989).Teacher experience and student responses in ESL project work instruction: A case study. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California: Los Angeles.
4. Fleming, D.S.(2000).A teacher's guide to project-based learning. Charleston, WV: AEL, Inc.
5. Henry,J. (1994). Teaching through projects. London: Kogan. Page published in association with the Institute of Educational Technology, Open University.
6. Jakar,V.(2006).Knowing the other through multicultural projects in school EFL programs. In G. H. Beckett &P. C. Miller(Eds.),Project-based second and foreign language education. Past, present, and future(pp.181-193). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.
7. Knoll, M.(1997).The project method: Its vocational education origin and international development. Journal of Industrial Teacher Education, 34,59-80.

-
8. Markham, T., Larmer, J., & Ravitz, J. (2003). Project-based learning, a guide to standards-focused project based learning for middle and high school teachers (2nd ed.). Novato, CA: Buck Institute for Education.
 9. Richards, J. C. (2001). Approaches and methods in language teaching (2nd ed.). Cambridge Language Teaching Library. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 10. Stoller, F. (2006). Establishing a theoretical foundation for project-based learning in second and foreign language contexts. In G. H. Beckett & P. C. Miller (Eds.), Project-based second and foreign language education. Past, present, and future (pp. 19-40). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.