

“E-EXHIBITION” A FRAMEWORK OF STUDENTS’ PROJECT BASED LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Project-based learning (PBL) hails from a tradition of pedagogy which asserts that students learn best by experiencing and solving real-world problems. Studies have proven that when implemented well, project-based learning results positive outcomes related to students’ learning in the areas of content knowledge, collaborative skills, engagement and motivation, and critical thinking and problem-solving skills. E-Exhibition “English Entrepreneur and Entertainment Exhibition” is chosen as a framework of students’ project based learning. The main focus of this exhibition is to assess students’ performance and progress through project as a practical and meaningful way of learning. This exhibition represents a multi-faceted assessment. Students get multiple opportunities by feedback and revise works, students receive multiple learning outcomes in term of problem-solving, content, and collaboration, students presentation in the exhibition encourage their communicative and social value skills.

Keywords: E-exhibition, project based learning (pbl), framework of pbl.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, project-based learning (PBL) has become more popular in education as well as in language teaching. In PBL, students work on a project in groups using the target language for language learning. PBL can motivate students and create positive communication and collaboration as they develop language, content, and thinking skills. This integrative, holistic, and formative approach appeals to many educators; however, they may hesitate to implement it in their class because it does not fit easily into standardised testing contexts. Indeed, this learning requires alternative ways to assess students’ progress and achievement; moreover, such assessments in PBL should help students know what they have learned, and offer positive feedback in learning.

Project-based learning (PBL) is a model that organizes learning around projects. According to the definitions found in PBL handbooks for teachers, projects are complex tasks, based on challenging questions or problems, that involve students in design, problem-solving, decision making, or investigative activities; give students the opportunity to work relatively autonomously over extended periods of time; and culminate in realistic products or presentations (Jones, Rasmussen, & Moffitt, 1997; Thomas, Mergendoller, & Michaelson, 1999). This article describes the implementation of “E-exhibition” as a framework of students’ project based learning which reflects an effective method for teaching students complex processes and procedures such as planning, communicating, problem solving, decision making, and presenting. It shows that

"E-exhibition" as a framework of PBL performs a practical and meaningful way of learning.

DISCUSSION

E-exhibition as one of PBL frameworks

"E-exhibition" is a PBL design that grew out an adventure and service-based education program known for its learning experience. This exhibition framework is defined as "intellectual investigations built around significant projects and performances." The exhibition project combined intellectual inquiry, character development, and community building which differ from other Project-Based Learning classrooms in conceptual as well as structural ways. Conceptually, the exhibition project invariably involves fieldwork, service, teamwork, character building, reflection, and building a connection to the world outside of the classroom. Additionally, students keep a portfolio of their work, and project work to develop a "culture of revision" and craftsmanship. Structurally, "E-exhibition" is a framework for the whole improvement. "E-exhibition" as a PBL framework is intended to transform curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

To capture the uniqueness of Project-Based Learning in "E-exhibition" a PBL framework for ESP learning, the following set of criteria are offered. The five criteria are centrality, driving question, constructive investigations, autonomy, and realism (Thomas, 2000).

1. *PBL projects are central, not peripheral to the curriculum.* This criterion has two corollaries. First, according to this defined feature, projects are the curriculum. In PBL, the project is the central teaching strategy; students encounter and learn the central concepts of the discipline via the project. There are instances where project work follows traditional instruction in such a way that the project serves to provide illustrations, examples, additional practice, or practical applications for material taught initially by other means. However, these "application" projects

are not considered to be instances of PBL, according to this criterion. Second, the centrality criterion means that projects in which students learn things that are outside the curriculum ("enrichment" projects) are also not examples of PBL, no matter how appealing or engaging.

2. *PBL projects are focused on questions or problems that "drive" students to encounter (and struggle with) the central concepts and principles of a discipline.* This criterion is a subtle one. The definition of the project (for students) must "be crafted in order to make a connection between activities and the underlying conceptual knowledge that one might hope to foster." (Barron, Schwartz, Vye, Moore, Petrosino, Zech, Bransford, & The Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt, 1998, p. 274). This is usually done with a "driving question" (Blumenfeld et al., 1991) or an ill-defined problem (Stepien and Gallagher, 1993). PBL projects may be built around thematic units or the intersection of topics from two or more disciplines, but that is not sufficient to define a project. The questions that students pursue, as well as the activities, products, and performances that occupy their time, must be "orchestrated in the service of an important intellectual purpose" (Blumenfeld et al., 1991).
3. *Projects involve students in a constructive investigation.* An investigation is a goal-directed process that involves inquiry, knowledge building, and resolution. Investigations may be design, decision-making, problem-finding, problem-solving, discovery, or model-building processes. But, in order to be considered as a PBL project, the central activities of the project must involve the transformation and construction of knowledge (by definition: new understandings, new skills) on the part of students (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1999). If the central activities of the project represent no

difficulty to the student or can be carried out with the application of already-learned information or skills, the project is an exercise, not a PBL project. This criterion means that straightforward service projects such as planting a garden or cleaning a stream bed are projects, but may not be PBL projects.

4. *Projects are student-driven to some significant degree.* PBL projects are not, in the main, teacher-led, scripted, or packaged. Laboratory exercises and instructional booklets are not examples of PBL, even if they are problem-focused and central to the curriculum. PBL projects do not end up at a predetermined outcome or take predetermined paths. PBL projects incorporate a good deal more student autonomy, choice, unsupervised work time, and responsibility than traditional instruction and traditional projects.
5. *Projects are realistic, not school-like.* Projects embody characteristics that give them a feeling of authenticity to students. These characteristics can include the topic, the tasks, the roles that students play, the context within which the work of the project is carried out, the collaborators who work with students on the project, the products that are produced, the audience for the project's products, or the criteria by which the products or performances are judged. Gordon (1998) makes the distinction between academic challenges, scenario challenges, and real-life challenges. PBL incorporates real-life challenges where the focus is on authentic (not simulated) problems or questions and where solutions have the potential to be implemented.

"E-exhibition" as one of project based learning frameworks has proven that when implemented well, project-based learning (PBL) can increase retention of content and improve students' attitudes towards learning, among other benefits. Project-based learning hails from a tradition of pedagogy which asserts

that students learn best by experiencing and solving real-world problems. In line with the implementation of "E-exhibition" as one of project based learning frameworks, according to researchers (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008; Thomas, 2000), project-based learning involves the following:

- students learning knowledge to tackle realistic problems as they would be solved in the real world
- increased student control over his or her learning
- teachers serving as coaches and facilitators of inquiry and reflection
- students (usually, but not always) working in pairs or groups

In "E-exhibition" the teacher creates real-world problem-solving situations by designing tasks that correspond to two different frameworks of inquiry-based teaching: *Problem-based learning*, which tackles a problem but doesn't necessarily include a student project, and *project-based learning*, which involves a complex task, student presentation, and creating an actual product or artifact. The exhibition process engage students in creating, questioning, and revising knowledge, while developing their skills in critical thinking, collaboration, communication, reasoning, synthesis, and resilience (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008).

"E-exhibition" is not a short process; the students who have been divided into groups must complete some stages of tasks throughout one whole semester before conducting the exhibition. The project based learning framework is implemented in Business English Class, the teacher gave students a portfolio work to be completed for one whole semester before they conducted the exhibition. The portfolio work named "Creating a Brand New Business Product" in a "Company Profile" portfolio work.

During one whole semester, each group must discuss and complete some steps to create a brand new business product based on the theory of business. First, each group must decide what their product is; it can be goods or service. Second, they gave name for their product and company. Third, they discussed the company's address based on the theory of how to choose a strategic business

location. Fourth, they mentioned the company's motto, visions and missions. Fifth, they described their product. Sixth, they created the company's logo and described meaning of the logo. Seventh, they decided the assets of company. Eighth, they wrote history of their brand new company. Ninth, they discussed structure of organisation in the company and wrote the job description for each position. Tenth, all students wrote their individual profiles. And the last step is product promotion aspect; each group created and designed their product catalog and brochure.

The teacher's role as a facilitator revised each group company profile portfolio. In each step of the company profile portfolio, the teacher revised what the students have written. Moreover, in weekly classroom meeting, each group must presented their discussion result. Other groups and the teacher gave suggestions for the improvement of each group work. The teacher gave feedback based on the business theory and revised their portfolio writing.

After completing the Company Profile portfolio as the main guidance of students' Brand New Business Product, students did preparation for "E-exhibition". They prepared and did try and error in creating their product to be displayed in the exhibition.

"E-exhibition" as one of project based learning frameworks can be described in the following features:

1. A realistic problem or project
 - aligns with students' skills and interests
 - requires learning clearly defined content and skills
2. Structured group work
 - groups of four to five students, with diverse skill levels and interdependent roles
 - team rewards
 - individual accountability, based on student growth
3. Multi-faceted assessment
 - multiple opportunities for students to receive feedback and revise their work
 - multiple learning outcomes (problem-solving, content, collaboration)

- presentations that encourage participation and signal social value (exhibition, and portfolio)

CONCLUSION

In summary, the implementation of "E-exhibition" as one of PBL frameworks indicates that PBL: (a) has a positive effect on student content knowledge and the development of skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving; (b) benefits students by increasing their motivation and engagement; and (c) is challenging for teachers to implement, leading to the conclusion that teachers need support in order to plan and enact PBL effectively while students need support including help setting up and directing initial inquiry, organizing their time to complete tasks, and integrating the business theory into projects in meaningful ways. PBL seems to be equivalent or slightly better than other models of instruction for producing gains in general academic achievement and for developing lower-level cognitive skills in traditional subject matter areas. Additionally, students and teacher both believe that PBL is beneficial and effective as an instructional method.

PBL has value for enhancing the quality of students' learning in subject matter areas, leading to the tentative claim that learning higher-level cognitive skills via PBL is associated with increased capability on the part of students for applying the learning process in project and problem-solving contexts.

The implementation of "E-exhibition" reflects that PBL is an effective method for teaching students complex processes and procedures such as planning, communicating, problem solving, decision making, and presenting.

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