*The Study of the Degree of Effectiveness of Project-based Learning in Relation to Improving the Language Learning Skills of KKU Students*

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Abstract

As a foundation for communication skills, speaking skills seems to be an important skill in the four-component of the English language. However, weaknesses in speaking skills and the development of other skills are found in a large number of learners. Learners cannot generate their knowledge in real life situations. These problems need to be immediately improved in order to achieve the goals of the National Educational Act of B.E. 2542. Many teaching approaches have been attempted to solve these issues, one of which is Project-based Learning.

This study investigated the effectiveness of Project-based Learning for the course 000102 English for Academic Purposes I at Khon Kaen University. The course component studied was speaking skills. The instruments used to evaluate this investigation included Likert rating scales questionnaire for quantitative data which was analyzed by percentage, mean scores, and standard deviation. The qualitative data was gathered by a group discussion of teachers in charge in the course.

The overall results of the study revealed that PBL approach presented a positive outcome. By using PBL approach, learners had an opportunity to evaluate themselves. It also developed learners' skills such as problem-solving skills and collaborative skills. This type of learning is valuable as it is connected to real-world issues and enables learners to demonstrate their knowledge in a practical way.

The weakness of this paper is that data from group discussion was too little compared to the overall number of teachers in charge in the course. To make the investigation more reliable, data from group discussion should be increased.

**Introduction**

Over the past decade, the student-centered method has been an important component in the educational system, and has played a key role in approaches to teaching and learning. However, at present, many educators have focused on the learners' ability in self- development. Therefore, educational management should focus on the self-development of learners. There are many reasons that teaching and learning focus on the above aspect. First, learners are able to generate organized and sustainable learning skills. They can employ the research process to develop and apply their learning in real life. Learners can also use the research process as a part of the learning process. It is believed that research is a path to wisdom and learning in society. It offers an opportunity for Thais to develop skills and create a lifelong learning. "Give a man fish, he eats it one day; teach him how to fish and he will never go hungry". This is very well known in the educational paradigm. If we teach learners how to learn, then they will not be at a loss in real-life situations, since they would be prepared to deal with whatever comes their way.

The Ministry of Education has planned and continuously developed English language teaching in order to be in alignment with present day, which focuses on real-world communication. However, regarding teaching and learning activities in the English classroom, in practical ways, teachers often stick with textbooks and use lectures as their teaching approach. This method focuses mainly on vocabulary and grammar rather than real communication. Nevertheless, the use of traditional teaching approach is far from improving communication skills or promoting teachers to understand and to be able to use the language in different situations. Because of the traditional approaches to teaching and learning English in Thailand, success has never come close to being achieved. The reasons affecting leaner's' speaking skills are a lack of confidence and self-esteem. Furthermore, teachers often use the L1 language in class. They also do not use an effective teaching approach in the classroom. Teachers should encourage learners to practice speaking in order to boost their confidence and change their attitudes toward learning language.

Based on developments in cognitive research and a changing modern educational environment, PBL has gained popularity. Project-based Learning is an effective approach that allows multiple skills to be developed through an integrated, meaningful activity. This type of learning is valuable since it is connected to real-world issues and enables learners to demonstrate their knowledge in practical ways. It also engages learners in sustained investigations and allows learners to participate in a variety of tasks that seek meaningful interactions. Therefore, it has become an important option in classroom teaching and learning approaches. Project-based Learning uses the research process in teaching and learning activities which will develop learners' skills such as problem-solving skills and collaborative skills. Also, PBL can help improve the social skills of the learners. The use of projects in the classroom is not a new one, and reflects a search for ways to make the learning of a foreign language as meaningful an experience as possible. Projects are a means by which learners become active participants in an experiential learning model. They also assist in the development of independent and cooperative learning skills. Learners are more likely to feel personally involved in the learning process and motivated by the tangible end product. Projects give teachers a means by which to involve the whole child in the learning process by involving the full range of skills

and talents available. It also provides a planning approach for multi-level classrooms. The flexibility of this approach also provides the teacher with cross-curriculum and language skill integration. PBL functions as a bridge between using English in class and outside the class in real-life situations. (Freid-Booth 2002). It does this by placing learners in situations that require authentic use of language in order to communicate. When learners work in teams, they find they need skills to plan, organize, and negotiate, and so on. Because of the nature of project work, development of these skills occurs even among learners at lower levels of language proficiency.

By studying a number of researches in Project-based learning, it can be observed that this approach provides much of the opportunity in learning independently, promoting language ability, and improving important skills such as problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, and co-operative skills. Therefore, using the Project based Learning in English Language teaching could possibly improve the abilities of the learners in communicating in real-life situations, which is an element in learning English for communication successfully.

The purpose of this paper is to review recent research into the use of the Project-based Learning approach in developing learners' skills, especially in speaking, for the course English for Academic Purposes I for Khon Kaen University The material chosen for this course was the researcher's own written textbook. Throughout this paper the abbreviation, PBL, will be used to refer to the Project-based Learning approach.

**Literature Review**

2.1 Project-based Learning

Learning English through the use of project work is an experience in which learners choose their own projects and create learning opportunities based upon their individual interests by using a variety of sources. Doing the project helps students to develop their language abilities and to be able to apply them in real-world contexts. PBL is classified as a child-centered approach.

*PBL and the theoretical of child-centered approach*

*1. PBL is coherence with the theoretical and practical of child-centered approach because:*

1.1 Learners choose the topics of the project by themselves.

1.2 Learners design their own learning style and choose their own sources.

1.3 Learners learn through hands-on experience.

1.4 Learners have opportunities to exchange knowledge with others.

1.5 Learners have opportunities to integrate their language skills with other disciplines.

*2. Key features of PBL*

2.1 Learners are encouraged to choose the topics that interest them.

2.2 Learners design their own learning style and choose their own sources.

2.3 PBL provides opportunities for the integration of language skills with other disciplines.

2.4 Learners improve their language skills and have opportunities to utilize them.

2.5 The project work is meaningful with an appropriate level of difficulty.

2.6 Learners are able to communicate ideas and findings to others.


2.2 Defining Project-Based Learning

Project-based Learning, so-called PBL, is not a new revolution in education. It has been around for many years; however, the practice has evolved into a more formally defined teaching strategy. It is a systematic approach to teaching that engages students in the sustained learning of knowledge and skills by real-world investigations. It is proving to be an effective method in classroom teaching and learning. Many definitions were given to PBL.

The Institute of Academic Development (2003) mentioned that PBL is a small piece of research. Learners try to solve problems or find the answers for the questions by using scientific process.

Project work is also viewed as "An approach to learning which complements mainstream methods and which can be used with almost all levels, ages, and abilities of students" (Haines  1989).

The Department of Curriculum and Instructional Development (1998) said that PBL is an activity that provides opportunities for learners to study and practice their abilities and interests by using the scientific process or other processes to find out the result of that topic. Teachers act as facilitators and advisors from the beginning of the project; choosing topics, planning the process and presenting the results.

From the definitions above, it can be determined that PBL is a teaching and learning approach that allows learners to study and practice independently under the observation of teachers by creating plans, designing the process, and evaluating the project. Learners are offered opportunities to study on the topics that interest them. They use the language skills and other skills naturally. PBL also promotes the learners' personal abilities in real-world situations. Learners learn through hands-on

experience. After the project is finished, they should be able to present the work and apply their knowledge in real world.

2.3 The Principles of Project-Based Learning

*Haines (1989) mentioned the characteristics of PBL as follows:*

1. Student-centered not syllabus-centered

2. Co-operative not competitive

3. Skills-based not structured-based

4. The importance of the end product

*Many educators agreed that the important characteristics of PBL can be concluded as follows:*

1. The project is interested by learners.

2. PBL is an organized process of learning.

3. PBL is an integrated learning.

4. Learners use a variety of abilities.

5. The project is in alignment with real-world situations.

6. PBL is an in-depth study through information processing from varied sources.

7. Learners are able to draw conclusions by themselves.

8. The project is appropriately presented in terms of processes and findings.

9. The findings can be applied in real-world contexts.

The Institute of Academic Development (2003) outlined the characteristics of PBL as follows:

1. PBL allows learners to choose the topics they interested in and the appropriate levels of difficulty.

2. PBL is an activity that utilizes scientific process in the investigation in order to solve the problems.

3. In PBL learners focus on planning, collecting and analyzing data, as well as, drawing conclusions from the study. Moreover, learners present the results of the study to the teacher who serves as an advisor.

4. In PBL, learners are provided an opportunity to show their talent.

5. Learners are able to benefit by spending their free time doing the project work.

The characteristics of PBL

1. Learners choose the topics they want to study.

2. Learners designed the process with their own sources.

3. Learners are learning independently through hands-on experience.

4. Learners are drawing conclusion by themselves.

5. Learners have an opportunity to exchange knowledge with others.

6. Learners can apply knowledge into their real lives.

There are several key features that assist to direct the use of PBL instruction within a classroom. It is important that the project has a real-world connection. The project needs to allow students not to only make real life connections, but also, to implement learning and apply new concepts by using their knowledge in a variety of education contexts. Working with others is also a key element of PBL. The core idea of PBL is that real-world problems capture the learners' interest as they acquire knowledge.

2.3 The objectives of using Project-Based Learning in language classroom

PBL is aimed at motivating learners to understand and use scientific processes in order to find out the results of the questions or problems using the English language. It also focuses on the independence of the learners and group work. The most important objective is that PBL is aimed at promoting the learners' motivation to learn.

2.4 Benefit of Project-Based Learning

Project-Based Learning offers a wide range of benefits to both teachers and learners. A growing body of academic research supports the use of Project-Based Learning to engage learners, increase their perception of knowledge, and to develop skills. For learners, the benefits of PBL are as follows: For many learners, PBL includes features such as variety, authenticity, enjoyment, and motivation. Learners are engaged in real-world activities that have significance beyond the classroom. Another reported benefit is improving language skills, they have opportunity to use language in a relatively natural context and participate in meaningful activities which require the use of authentic language. Because of project work progresses according to the specific context and students' interest, a further benefit is that students show enhanced

motivation, engagement, and enjoyment. Therefore, they increase interest, motivate students to participate, and can promote learning. Another set of reported benefits pertains to the development of complex skills such as problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, and communication (SRI 2000). After the project work, students knew that being a team member entailed certain obligations. Most of them developed skills for resolving conflict within the group, and learned to be responsible in relation to the roles that had been assigned to them. Most importantly, regardless of language performance and motivation, a large number of learners had seemed to have developed cooperative skills.

In this investigation, it was found that students were more eager to experiment with new language, since they were less concerned with sounding silly. This was particularly important, since it is not uncommon for students to have little knowledge in speaking. This fact is true because they are not provided with opportunities to participate in real and authentic communication activities. PBL removes the gap between knowledge and skills. Learners are encouraged to choose topics that are relevant and interesting for them. They want to achieve a real, specific goal, and are personally involved in the activity. Apart from offering knowledge, project work, also encourages skills development.

For teachers, the additional benefits include enhanced professionalism and collaboration among colleagues, and opportunities to build relationships with students (Thomas 2000). Moreover, many teachers are pleased to find a model that accommodates diverse learners by introducing a wider range of learning opportunities into the classroom. Teachers find that the students who benefit the most from PB: tent to be those for whom traditional instructional methods and approached are not effective (SRI 2000).

2.5 Teacher's role in Project-based Learning

Being a teacher is one of the most responsible and demanding professions. Teachers are expected to help learners integrate into society, gain knowledge, develop skills and abilities, and establish a sense of morality. In Project-based Learning, a learner-centered approach, the teacher's role is to guide and advise students rather than direct them. Playing the role of facilitator, the teacher works with students to structure meaningful tasks and provide coaching in both knowledge development and social skills. The teacher's stage by stage role is clearly outlined by Simon Haines: Initially, the teacher should arouse interest and elicit students' ideas for thematic direction, methods of working, timetables, and suitable end product and resource implications. PBL is possible in the classroom where teachers support students by giving sufficient guidance and feedback. Teachers should direct learners on how to develop the project and encourage student motivation.

Levy suggested that effective PBL requires the teacher to assume a different role. During the project work, the teacher's role is not dominant, but he or she acts as a guide, an advisor, or a facilitator who is involved with becoming a source of ideas and advice. In implementing the project method, the focal points of the learning process moves from teachers to the learners and from working individually to working in groups.

On the whole, PBL requires the teacher to adopt a new, enthusiastic attitude, to acquire a wide range of skills, and to leave traditional position. It could be said that 'leadership' is replaced by 'partnership' the teacher who should really acts as a counselor, assistant, adviser, or consultant. The teacher should also be prepared to give advice and help with overcoming difficulties. It is the duty of the teacher to facilitate the entire process.

2.6 Students' role in Project-based Learning

Student roles in PBL are to build knowledge and to determine real-world solutions. PBL requires learners to engage in intelligently focused communication. This approach forces students to take ownership of their success. In the PBL model students generally work in small, collaborative groups. They find sources, conduct research, and hold each other responsible for learning and completing the tasks. Essentially, students must manage themselves in this approach to instruction.

2.7 Previous research on Project-based Learning

For many decades, a number of studies on Project-based Learning have influenced the teaching methods with many subjects.

Atikarn Thongmak (2009) conducted research on use of Project-based approach to develop English speaking and thinking skills. The findings reviewed that the learners' English speaking skills improved dramatically. The results showed that the students' thinking skills also improved.

Kanitta Naknoi (2005, p. 50-54) investigated the students' abilities in using English for Communication through the use of project work. The results showed that the students' abilities in using English for Communication in the project work learning experiment were at an average level. However, their ability in using English for Communication increased after using the project. The research also found that the level of the student satisfaction in studying English was dramatically increased.

Thomas (2000, p. 1-45) studied the research on project-based learning in 1999-2000. The results appeared that project-based learning is an effective teaching approach because it improved learners' thinking skills and language abilities. Learners' learning achievement increased significantly.

The above researches report positive outcomes and prove that PBL has enormous benefit in teaching approach. It has also been shown to benefit a variety of students'

skills development. These studies have shown that by adaptation and creativity, project work can be successful in language classes.

**Methodology**

This chapter presents the research design and methodology. It has been divided into three main parts: 1) the overview of the study, 2) the research questions, 3) research design and methodology.

3.1 Overview of the study

Currently, Thai students are facing with problems with the English language, especially speaking skills. The lack of proficiency in speaking skills is caused by a number of reasons.     Moreover, times provided for learners to practice speaking in class might not be enough. Finally, a lack of practice in real-world situations is considered to contribute to the weakness. Many teaching approaches have been attempted to solve this problem; however, the advancement in the speaking skills of Thai students is still at an unsatisfactory level

The importance of these aspects have been taken into account, thus, the use of Project-based learning has been utilized in the speaking skills for the course English for Academic Purposes for Khon Kaen University students. The main purpose is to investigate the effectiveness of PBL since it is believed that Project-based learning is a flexible approach that allows learners to develop multiple skills such as research and social skills through a meaningful activity.

3.2 Research Questions

*3.2.1 Research Question*

The research question was to examine the degree of effectiveness of the Project-based Learning in Relation to improving the language learning skills.

*3.2.2 Hypothesis*

The main hypothesis of this study is that the Project-based Learning is effective in classroom teaching and learning because learners are not only developing language acquisition, but are also developing important skills, such as critical thinking skills, collaborative skills, and research skills.

3.3 Research Design and Methodology

*3.3.1 Participants*

The participants of this study consisted of 706 undergraduate students who were studying 000102 English for Academic Purposes I during the second semester of

academic year 2010, at Khon Kaen University. The sample was randomly selected from the total of 4,042 students.

*3.3.2 The design of the course under study*

The course under study was English for Academic Purposes I, which is a 3-credit course. The total number of students studying speaking course was 4042, which was divided into 3 blocks (See Table 3.1 for detail). In speaking skills, the project work was used in teaching and learning activities where learners worked in groups. They formed groups by using self-selection, where students chose their own group members.

Table 3.1: Number of students Studying Speaking Class each block

| Block | Male | Female | Sub-Total |
|-------|------|--------|-----------|
| 1 | 584 | 755 | 1339 |
| 2 | 403 | 605 | 1008 |
| 3 | 619 | 1076 | 1695 |

*Time Tabling*

       The 12 hours of speaking skills was covered over four weeks. The schedule of speaking skills can be seen in Table 3.

| Week | Hours | Activities | Unit | Remarks |
|------|-------|-----------|------|---------|
|      |       |           |      |         |

| | 1.5 | 1.) Introduction to the course. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1.5 | 1) Practice Unit 5 and Unit 6: Discussion Skills | Unit 5-6 | |
| 2 | 1.5 | 1) Practice Unit 7 and Unit 8: Presentation Skills<br>2) Ss Do Exercise Task B (p. 40) | Unit 7-8 | |
| | 1.5 | 1) Ss discuss their topic I: Introduction and Methodology | | |
| 3 | 1.5 | 1) Ss discuss their topic II: Results and Conclusions | | |
| | 1.5 | 1) Ss discuss their topic III:<br><br>Presentation Preparation | | |
| 4 | 1.5 | Ss do Group Presentations | | |
| | 1.5 | Ss do Group Presentations | | |

Table 3.2: The schedule of speaking skills

*3.3.3 Data collection*

In order to answer the research question, the instruments used to evaluate this investigation included Likert rating scales questionnaire and a discussion with the teachers in charge of the course. The following will explains a brief description of each data collection methodology. The questionnaire was constructed as a research tool consisting of four parts of questions and was used with learners in speaking class. The questionnaire was divided into four parts. (1) personal information, (2) students' opinions toward the use of PBL in teaching and learning, (3) students' opinions on benefits gained through the use of PBL (4) students' suggestions on the role of teachers and learners in terms of teaching and learning, content of the lessons, and teaching and learning activities was covered in the last part.

The questionnaire was randomly administered at some speaking classes and was carried out by the teacher of that class in all four week periods of the rotation schedule. Students did the questionnaire after they had finished the last lesson in the speaking class. Another method was        a discussion was conducted with a group

of teachers in charge the course. The discussion topic can be classified into the aspects of PBL and the effect of PBL on learners. Both aspects have been divided into two sub-headings: advantages and disadvantages. The teachers in this group discussion were randomly selected from the total number of teachers teaching speaking classes.

*3.3.4 Data Analysis*

The methods used in analyzing data were both quantitative and qualitative. The data collected from the questionnaire was evaluated separately by totaling the answers per rating scales and then calculating the average scores. The qualitative information was grouped in different categories. The data was statistically analyzed by percentage, mean scores, and standard deviation of respondents answering each question. The results were tabulated so that the overall results of the investigation could be clearly viewed.

**Data Analysis**

The qualitative data was obtained from the group discussion among teachers whereas the questionnaire presented the quantitative data. In the following, the quantitative data was first presented with figures and commentary, followed by the qualitative data, which was categorized into different aspects. A total number of 4,042 students were in the course English for Academic Purposes I. Different groups of samples were selected by a simple random sampling method from those who responded to the questionnaire. Quantitative data from the questionnaire is presented below.

A total number of 4,042 students were in this course. Different groups of samples were selected by a simple random sampling method from those who responded to the questionnaire. The sample students answering and returning the questionnaire comprised 706 students, 266 being male students and 440 being female. The number represented around 17 percent of the total students studying this course.

Table 4.1: Number of students who responded to the questionnaire

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| Male   | 266       | 37.7       |
| Female | 440       | 62.3       |
| Total  | 706       | 100        |

Most of respondents were from the Faculty of Engineering (17.3%), followed by the Faculty of Management Sciences (13.7%), and the Faculty of Nursing (9.3 %) as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: The percentages of students answering the questionnaire

| Faculties | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Engineering | 122 | 17.3 |
| 2. Management Sciences | 97 | 13.7 |
| 3. Nursing | 66 | 9.3 |
| 4. Agriculture | 65 | 9.2 |
| 5. Sciences | 50 | 7.1 |
| 6. Humanities and  Social Sciences | 49 | 6.9 |
| 7. Associated Medical Sciences | 48 | 6.8 |
| 8. College of Local Administration | 42 | 5.9 |
| 9. Fine and Applied Arts | 38 | 5.4 |
| 10. Education | 34 | 4.8 |
| 11.Veterinary | 26 | 3.7 |
| 12. Public Health | 25 | 3.5 |
| 13. Technology | 24 | 3.4 |
| 14. Pharmaceutical Sciences | 20 | 2.8 |
| Total | 706 | 100 |

Table 4.3 Number of student absences from the class

| Number of absence | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| None | 565 | 80.0 |
| 1-3 times | 135 | 19.0 |
| More than 3 times | 6 | 0.9 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 706 | 100 | |

80 % of respondents were always present at the class. Some students missed the class 1-3 times accounted 19 %, and another 0.9 % of students were absent more than 3 times.

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of 9 questions on the students' opinions toward the use of PBL in teaching and learning activity. There were five scales in the questionnaire for the students to choose, ranging from very effective, effective, somewhat effective, ineffective, to totally ineffective.

Analysis of the answer-based on the level of effectiveness in scores

| Very effective | = | 5 | points |
|---|---|---|---|
| Effective | = | 4 | points |
| Somewhat effective | = | 3 | points |
| Ineffective | = | 2 | points |
| Totally ineffective | = | 1 | point |

The scores obtained were averaged based on the following interpretation (Srisa-ad 2002, p. 99-100)

Average score 4.51-5.00 means very effective

Average score 3.51-4.50 means effective

Average score 2.51-3.50 means somewhat effective

Average score 1.51-2.50 means ineffective

Average score 0.51-1.50 means totally ineffective

Table 4.3 Students' opinion toward the use of PBL in teaching and learning

| | Items | $\overline{X}$ | SD | Level of effectiveness |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | PBL motivate learners' creativity and expression | 4.09 | .784 | effective |
| 2. | PBL promote learners to discover their own learning style | 4.03 | .771 | effective |
| 3. | PBL connect learners' experience with their real- | 3.91 | .817 | effective |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | life situation | | | |
| 4. | PBL focus on thinking skills and hands-on experience | 4.24 | .813 | effective |
| 5. | PBL build up relationship between teacher and learner | 4.09 | .850 | effective |
| 6. | PBL build up relationship among learners | 4.21 | .832 | effective |
| 7. | PBL emphasize on cooperative skills | 4.54 | .739 | very effective |
| 8. | PBL allow learners to evaluate their own work | 4.24 | .812 | effective |
| 9. | PBL introduce moral in teaching and learning activities | 3.57 | .887 | effective |

From Table 4.3, the results showed that PBL has a positive effect on classroom teaching and learning. Most students agreed that in the PBL approach, they had an opportunity to evaluate their work and practice important skills such as thinking skills, research, and so on. PBL also engage students through hands-on experiences (mean 4.24). The approach helps learners to establish interaction among them (mean 4.21). Most importantly, PBL emphasizes working in groups which promotes cooperative skills (mean 4.54).

Table 4.4 Students' opinion on the benefits gained through the use of PBL

| | Items | X̄ | SD | Level of effectiveness |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Learners have an opportunity to develop problem solving skills and creativity | 3.98 | .760 | effective |
| 2. | Learners have an opportunity to practice research skills | 4.08 | .775 | effective |
| 3. | Learners have ownership of their learning | 4.03 | .803 | effective |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. | Learners choose the project based on their interests | 3.69 | .883 | effective |
| 5. | Learners find pleasure in learning | 3.81 | .930 | effective |
| 6. | Learners have an opportunity to exchange knowledge and build relationship among themselves | 4.16 | .782 | effective |
| 7. | Learners have an opportunity to evaluate their work | 4.10 | .796 | effective |
| 8. | Learners understand and apply morals in their real lives | 3.64 | .849 | effective |
| 9. | Learners be able to apply knowledge in the real world | 3.94 | .836 | effective |

From the table above, it can be seen that learners' learning process is effective. The level of effectiveness can be ordered from high to low as follows: learners have an opportunity to exchange knowledge and build relationships among themselves ($X$= 4.16), learners have an opportunity to evaluate their work ($X$= 4.10), and finally, learners have an opportunity to practice research skills ($X = 4.08$).

**Qualitative data**

Qualitative data was collected from a discussion with the teachers in charge of the Course 000102. Their comments of the outcomes can be classified into the aspects of PBL and the effect of PBL on learners. The results are as follows:

PBL

*Advantages*

- PBL is an interesting method. It's easy for students to understand the lesson.

- It promotes independent learning.

- The classroom environment is very comfortable and relaxed. Students are allowed to have discussions with members of their groups and move about the classroom freely.

- Students can actually apply the lesson in their real lives.

- The approach offers life-long learning.

- The approach reflects students' responsibilities.

- This approach introduces morals in activities.

*Disadvantages*

- The approach is quite physically and mentally demanding.

- A clear explanation should be given before assigning the project.

- The approach is time consuming.


<u>Learners</u>

*Advantages*

- Students  learn from hands-on experience.

- Learners have an opportunity to practice important skills such as problem-solving skills, cooperative skills, critical thinking skills, etc.

- Learners enjoy the class.

- Learners can exchange knowledge and have a good relationship among themselves.

- Learners can apply this in real-life situations.

*Disadvantages*

- Learners focus on the project more than learning the language.

- Students struggle with the process of the project.

- Teachers should provide more information or examples before assigning the project.

- The time allowed to do the project was too short. It should be extended


According to the comments above, PBL provided huge advantages in teaching and learning activities, especially for learners. Many teachers agreed that Learners have an opportunity to practice important skills and learn by hands-on experience. The approach motivates learners by engaging them in their own learning and provides opportunities for them to pursue their own interests. PBL also makes learning relevant and useful to learners by establishing connections to their real-life issues. Although PBL is considered to be a profitable learning strategy, its implementation faces several challenges because projects are complex endeavors involving many different activities. Most learners have trouble relating to data, concepts and theories. Time limitation is another obstacle, and time should be extended for learners to complete the project.


**Conclusion and Recommendation**

The following conclusions can be drawn from the present study. From the questionnaire, it was found that most of the students agreed that the PBL approach is effective in classroom teaching and learning activities. Data from a discussion with the teachers was mostly positive. PBL provided huge advantages in teaching and learning activities, especially for learners. Many teachers agreed that learners have an opportunity to practice important skills such as critical thinking skills and independent

learning. They are engaged in learning through hands- on experience. This approach also motivates learners by engaging them in their own learning and provides opportunities for them to pursue their own interests. It makes learning relevant and useful to learners by establishing connections to their real life issues. Although PBL is considered to be a profitable learning strategy, its implementation faces several challenges as projects are complex endeavors involving many different activities. Most learners have trouble relating to data, concepts, and theories. Time limitation is another obstacle. It should be extended for learners to complete the project.

In spite of the fact that PBL shows vast advantages in teaching and learning, it is necessary to admit that some problems might appear in PBL as well. First, most students did not use the target language; in this case, English, to communicate while doing the project. Another difficulty is that students were not familiar with the project work although a clear explanation was given at the beginning of the class. Teachers should monitor students throughout the period of project work. Moreover, when doing the project, students are focusing only on the project and not focusing on the target language. The most serious issue was some students felt uncomfortable with the new role of the teacher as a facilitator and adviser, instead of a source of knowledge.

An implication from further research is to investigate the relationship between short-time project work and students' communicative competence. The effect of the project work on the development of critical thinking skills of the students with low performance would be another interesting topic to be examined.

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