Project-Based Learning for Language Instruction

FAS Office of Educational Technology Webinar
February 27, 2015
Presentation outline

- What is Project-Based Learning (PBL)?
- PBL How To
- Digital tools for PBL
- Assessment for PBL
- Examples
What is PBL?

Definition * Benefits * Challenges
Project-Based Learning: Definition

Use of real-world problems to encourage students to acquire and apply new knowledge in an authentic, active context.
Project-Based Learning: Types

**Problem-based**: find solutions to real-world challenges

**Place-based**: complete project within an L2 community

**Activity-based**: explore an L2 topic through hands-on project
Project-Based Learning: In Action

Traditional
Individual students complete workbook activities to practice the imperative voice & food vocabulary.

PBL
Groups of students produce a video of how to make their favorite dish for their online pen pal.
Project-Based Learning: Background

Learning by doing

Socrates
C. 470 BCE - 399 BCE

Apprenticeship model, Middle Ages

John Dewey
1859-1952

Jean Piaget
1896-1980
Project-Based Learning: Background (2)

Task-Based Learning (TBL)

Pre-task
Teacher introduces task & background

Task (Iterative)
Students do task; Teacher monitors

Post-task
Students report and reflect
Teacher ties to real-world
## PBL versus TBL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task-Based Learning</th>
<th>Project-Based Learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher directs activity</td>
<td>Teacher questions and guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student follows directions</td>
<td>Student is active participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on in-class interaction</td>
<td>Project extends beyond class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task is often one-off</td>
<td>Project has longer duration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task focuses on set skills</td>
<td>Project is more integrative</td>
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Possible PBL Benefits

**Students**
- Student-centered
- Can increase motivation and outcomes
- Integrates 21st century skills

**Instructors**
- Increase language use
- Extends informal learning
- Integrates multiple linguistic skills
Possible PBL Challenges

Students
● Deal w/ new learning style/skills
● Issues with groups
● Less linguistic forms may be learned

Instructors
● Increase in prep time
● Management of group work
● Creation of assessments
PBL How To

Steps  *  Recommendations
PBL Steps

1. Create project & assessments
2. Set parameters and constraints for project
3. Create groups
4. Iterative project development
5. Project documentation
6. Assess results
Create project & assessments

- Identify learning goals in syllabus
- Connect project actions to linguistic skills
- Determine project type & scope
  - Problem vs Place vs Activity
  - Mini challenges versus long-term project
  - Deliverables (video, narrative, physical object, etc.)
- Map learning goal to real-world problem
- Create assessments
Set parameters and constraints

- Identify realistic deliverables and timelines
  - Milestone markers
  - Build in buffer time
- Reduce complexity when possible
- Accountability
Create groups

- Evaluate students’
  - prior knowledge of content
  - technical skills
  - group preferences
- Recommended size of 2 - 3
- Mix of experience/levels
- Introduce accountability & roles
Iterative project development

- Assist students’ project plan
- Integrate progress checks
- Build in academic & technological supports
- Utilize web conferencing & websites for group communication
Project documentation

- Encourage ongoing project documentation
- Have shared showcase of projects
- Use blogs to encourage writing skills
- Use multimedia presentations to facilitate oral presentations of projects
Assess results

- **Learning goals**: Have midway and post-project assessment
- **Creativity**: Introduce a component that gauges innovation
- **Group interaction**: Have midway and post-project group performance assessment
Digital Tools for PBL

Websites * Multimedia creation * Hands on & Mapping
Websites for PBL

Applications:
- course material sharing
- collaborative writing
- ongoing and final project documentation
- multimedia uploading and sharing
- linguistic resource bank
Websites for PBL - Google Sites

Advantages:
● easy integration with Google Apps for Education
● permissioning at the page level
● easy copying to other gmail account
Websites for PBL - Wordpress

Advantages:
● NYU-supported
● more aesthetically pleasing
● decent plugin & layout options
● robust blogging platform
● privacy options

http://wp.nyu.edu/
Multimedia for PBL

Advantages:
● Integrate diverse linguistic & cultural knowledge
● Easy to create role-based projects
● Suitable for semester-long, summative projects
● Develop digital storytelling skills
Multimedia for PBL

Applications:
- Multimedia presentations
- Video essays w/ iMovie & NYU Stream
- Interactive timelines w/ JS Timeline
- Audio interviews with Audacity
- Voicethread projects
- Location-based Pinterest collages
Hands on & Mapping for PBL

Advantages
- Cultivate new skills
- Develop multimodal learning
- Introduce hands on and situational learning opportunities
- Facilitates location-based learning
Hands on & Mapping for PBL

Applications
● Enact a real-world skill related to L2
● Design a program or application connected to the local community
● Map or visualize specifics of a community
Assessment for PBL
Formative / Low stakes

Why?
- Gauge prior experience
- Monitor progress
- Encourage participation
- Pinpoint problems

How?
- Introduce peer assessment
- Have each stage of project count
- Allow self evaluation
Summative / Cumulative

Why?
- Students have end goal to strive for
- Students have individual grade
- Can map to L2 standards

How?
- Establish rubrics
- Tie final project to learning goals
Examples

Problem-based * Place-based * Activity-based
START SMALL WITH PBL
Problem-based: Solve social issue

Description:
● Students design a solution for a social issue
● Ex. xenophobia in France
● Flexibility in end product

Tools: NYU Stream; Powerpoint; Prezi; Google Slides; website platforms; cartoon tools
Problem-based: L2 blog

Description:

- Students create a tourism blog or newsletter highlighting cultural topics or issues in L2
- Can integrate virtual penpals or global sites

Tools: Google Sites; Wordpress; Tumblr; Weebly; Wix
Place-based: Tour of NYC

Description:
- Students create a video essay or screencast highlighting their favorite NYC place for a penpal

Tools: mobile devices for shooting; iMovie; NYU Stream
Place-based: Map a language

Description:
- Students map instances of language use
- Document cultural highlights spatially

Tools: Google Maps (Wordpress plugin); TimeMapper (timeline + map)
Place-based: Pinterest Place Pins

Description:
- Students use mapping feature on Pinterest to create a location-based collage
- Create a treasure hunt

Tools: Pinterest (Place Pins); camera
Activity-based: Cooking competition

**Description:**
- Students compete to see who has the best dish (Next Food Network Star)

**Tools:** mobile devices for shooting; iMovie; NYU Stream
Activity-based: “How to” lesson

Description:
- Students create a how to tutorial for someone new to NYC
- Ex. dance; game; food; transportation use

Tools: mobile devices for shooting; iMovie; NYU Stream; graphic design tools
Activity-based: Exquisite corpse

**Description:**
- Students collectively write a story à la Exquisite Corpse game (one writes paragraph in L2, passes along, etc.)

**Tools:** Wordpress; Google Docs/Drive
Activity-based: Clip captioning

Description:
- Students create subtitles or audio voiceovers for various movie/tv clips
- Students record role plays & original scripts

Tools: iMovie; Amara; Captiontube
Activity-based: L2 timeline

Description:
- Students create timeline around L2 topic

Tools: JS Timeline, Time Mapper, Dipity
Thank you!

Contact Us  *  Questions & Comments
How can we help you?

- What are your experiences with PBL?
- What kinds of support would be most beneficial?
- What do you wish you could do?
Contact Us

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