PBLL: Defining High Quality Project Based Language Learning

By Lauren Scheller and Liliana Lopez
Presented by Lauren Scheller
Goals

In today’s webinar, you will gain an initial understanding of:

- high quality PBL
- the difference between PBLL and doing projects
- developing project ideas
Moving from projects to PBLL
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project or Activity</th>
<th>PBLL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students compare leisure activities in Japan and the US</td>
<td>Students create a travel guide for elderly Japanese tourists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students keep a food journal as they try to eat healthy for the week</td>
<td>Students create a campaign to promote healthy eating and fitness within the community</td>
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<td>Students create a PowerPoint presentation about a Spanish speaking country and present it to the class</td>
<td>Students apply to a Spanish speaking organization for a scholarship to study in another country</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students create a Facebook profile for themselves or someone famous in the TL</td>
<td>Students host an open-house to present <em>how-tos</em> on technology for parents in the community</td>
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<td>Students create a menu for a restaurant.</td>
<td>Students write restaurant reviews for restaurants in the local community and create web page to share them with the community.</td>
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## Authentic Novel Example

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<td>Students read a novel and create their own ending.</td>
<td>Students are assigned the role of director of a film adaptation. They present the screenplay adaptation and cast to a group of investors.</td>
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### Holiday Celebration Example

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<td>Students bring in food, snacks and drink and dress up in Mardi Gras colors.</td>
<td>Students plan a multi-cultural Mardi Gras celebration by examining how Mardi Gras is celebrated throughout the world</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students draw and label animals in a chosen habitat</td>
<td>Students create an illustrated book about the life cycles of local wild animals, to be displayed at the office of the County Conservation, online and shared with their partner Target Language school.</td>
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Doing Projects vs. Project Based Learning

Traditional Unit with Culmination Project
- Lecture
- Activity
- Quiz
- Lecture
- Activity
- Quiz
- Review
- Exam
+ Project

Project Based Learning Unit

**Project Launch**
- Engaging and authentic task designed to provide the context for learning
- Activities
- Workshops
- Lectures
- Homework
- Research
- Labs

**Reflection**
- Simulations
- Discussions
- Modelling
- Reading
- Interviews
- Quiz

**Benchmark**
- Creating
- Feedback
- Building
- Writing
- Preparing
- Drafts

**Reflection**
- Authentic demonstration of deeper learning

Culminating Event and Presentations


Project-based Language Learning in Action – National Foreign Language Resource Center
Launch: Introduce students to local TL parents who feel disconnected to the school because many of the school technologies (gradebook, website, twitter, email, facebook page, etc.,) are not in the target language.

Benchmark 1: Students give directions on a specific technology by narrating a video of someone using technology.

Benchmark 2: Students acts as call center operators and respond to client questions about their computer products

Culminating Event: Students host an open house for TL parents looking to learn more about school technologies. In stations, they present demos and answer questions.

(In preparation for the event, students assume roles in the planning process and for the event itself. Students are given opportunities to assess and improve upon collaboration in the TL.)
Defining high quality PBL
GOLD STANDARD PBL

ESSENTIAL PROJECT DESIGN ELEMENTS

- CHALLENGING PROBLEM OR QUESTION
- SUSTAINED INQUIRY
- PUBLIC PRODUCT
- CRITIQUE & REVISION
- REFLECTION
- AUTHENTICITY
- STUDENT VOICE & CHOICE
- KEY KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING, & SUCCESS SKILLS

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Gold Standard PBL: Essential Project Design Elements

Adapted from Setting the Standard for Project Based Learning: A Proven Approach to Rigorous Classroom Instruction, by John Larmer, John Mergendoller, Suze Boss (ASCD 2015). This post is also available as a downloadable article.

It's nice that Project Based Learning is becoming popular, but popularity can bring problems. Here at the Buck Institute for Education, we're concerned that the recent upsurge of interest in PBL will lead to wide variation in the quality of project design and classroom implementation.

If done well, PBL yields great results. But if PBL is not done well, two problems are likely to arise. First, we will see a lot of assignments and activities that are labeled as "projects" but which are not rigorous PBL, and student learning will suffer. Or, we will


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## Project Design Rubric

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Essential Project Design Element</th>
<th>Lacks Features of Effective PBL</th>
<th>Needs Further Development</th>
<th>Includes Features of Effective PBL</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key Knowledge, Understanding &amp; Success</strong></td>
<td>The project has one or more of the following problems in each area:</td>
<td>The project includes some features of effective PBL but has some weaknesses:</td>
<td>The project has the following strengths:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Student learning goals are not clear and specific; the project is not focused on standards.</td>
<td>- The project is focused on standards-derived knowledge and understanding, but it may target too few, too many, or less important goals.</td>
<td>- The project is focused on teaching students specific and important knowledge, understanding, and skills derived from standards and central to academic subject areas.</td>
<td>- Important success skills are explicitly targeted to be taught and assessed, including critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration, and self-management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The project does not explicitly target, assess, or scaffold the development of success skills.</td>
<td>- Success skills are targeted, but there may be too many to be adequately taught and assessed.</td>
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<th>Challenging Problem or Question</th>
<th>The project is not focused on a central problem or question (it may be more like a unit with several tasks); or the problem or question is too easily solved or answered to justify a project.</th>
<th>The project is focused on a central problem or question, but the level of challenge might be inappropriate for the intended students.</th>
<th>The project is focused on a central problem or question, at the appropriate level of challenge.</th>
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<td>- The central problem or question is not framed by a driving question for the project, or it is seriously flawed, for example:</td>
<td>- The driving question relates to the project but does not capture its central problem or question (it may be more like a theme).</td>
<td>- The driving question is framed by a driving question for the project, which is:</td>
<td>- open-ended; it will allow students to develop more than one reasonable answer.</td>
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<td>- It has a single or simple answer.</td>
<td>- The driving question meets some of the criteria (in the Includes Features column) for an effective driving question, but lacks others.</td>
<td>- Understandable and inspiring to students.</td>
<td>- aligned with learning goals; to answer it, students will need to gain the intended knowledge, understanding, and skills.</td>
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<td>- It is not engaging to students (it sounds too complex or &quot;academic&quot; like it came from a textbook or appeals only to a teacher).</td>
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<th>Sustained Inquiry</th>
<th>The &quot;project&quot; is more like an activity or &quot;hands-on&quot; task, rather than an extended process of inquiry.</th>
<th>Inquiry is limited (it may be brief and only occur once or twice in the project; information-gathering is the main task; deeper questions are not asked).</th>
<th>Inquiry is sustained over time and academically rigorous (students pose questions, gather &amp; interpret data, develop and evaluate solutions or build evidence for answers, and ask further questions).</th>
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<td>- There is no process for students to generate questions to guide inquiry.</td>
<td>- Students generate questions, but while some might be addressed, they are not used to guide inquiry and do not affect the path of the project.</td>
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For more PBL resources, visit bie.org

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Key Knowledge and Skills

The project is focused on student learning goals, including standards-based content and skills such as critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration, and self-management.
Challenging Problem or Question

The project is framed by a meaningful problem to solve or a question to answer, at the appropriate level of challenge.
Sustained Inquiry

Students engage in a rigorous, extended process of asking questions, finding resources, and applying information.
Authenticity

The project features real-world context, tasks and tools, quality standards, or impact – or speaks to students’ personal concerns, interests, and issues in their lives.
Student Voice and Choice

Students make some decisions about the project, including how they work and what they create.

Image courtesy of Master isolated images at FreeDigitalPhotos.net
Reflection

Students and teachers reflect on learning, the effectiveness of their inquiry and project activities, the quality of student work, obstacles and how to overcome them.
Critique & Revision

Students give, receive, and use feedback to improve their process and products.

*Image courtesy of Mister GC at FreeDigitalPhotos.net*
Public Product

Students make their project work public by explaining, displaying and/or presenting it to people beyond the classroom.

Photo courtesy of Salvatore Vunono/freedigitalphotos.net
PBLL
Project Ideas
Types of projects:

- Challenge to design, plan or produce something
- Examination of a controversial issue
- Problem to solve
- Investigation of a historical event
- Exploration of a philosophical question
Sources of Inspiration

- Your Content Standards
- Your Community
- Your Students
- Current Events
- Real-World Practice/Problem
- Online Project Libraries
- Your File Cabinet
- Your Colleagues
To Do: Project Idea

Think of a project/activity that you have done with your students or a real world issue or problem that can inspire your students. How can you transform that idea to PBLL?
Resources:

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