

PROJECT BASED LEARNING- DEVELOPING 21ST CENTURY COLLABORATIVE AND TECHNOLOGY SKILLS”

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Abstract

Project based learning (PBL) represents a “hand on projects” type of learning and emphasizes learning activities that are long-termed, interdisciplinary and student-centered. Teachers, especially modern teachers, that want to engage students in these kinds of activities, must find ways to enhance student creativity, provoke students’ interest, critical thinking and also managing skills. The most important feature that represents PBL is collaborative group-work where students are asked to work together, share ideas, organize and manage the time period (deadline) for completion of the task (project). Students’ are also required to take responsibilities, answer questions and provide feedback, becoming in this way, independent learners. Students are regarded as independent learners during the period that they gather personal ideas and then arrange them and share them with the group, putting pieces of the puzzle together. Due to the fact that PBL is a relatively new “technology based activity” which has been recently presented and used on the Balkans, my paper will present PBL and how it is used, the role of the teacher and the roles of the learners, tasks that may be designed etc. All this will be based on my own experience during the 10-week online course entitled “Developing EFL literacy through PBL” with Oregon University. I will further on elaborate my experience and how it worked, what we designed, and most importantly, how a group of five different countries and three different continents succeeded and survived in the project. Cultural diversity, clashes and differences, participants’ level of English proficiency, personal interests etc. will also be examined. Furthermore, the outcomes of the project (the designed website), advantages and disadvantages with concluding remarks will also be an issue. The aim of this article is not only to present PBL, but rather to promote further examination and usage of a modern approach, a project-based approach that will change the view of learning a foreign language and the negative impression of technology based activities in general.

Key words: technology, collaborative skills, project-based learning, interdisciplinary activities etc.

