

# Implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) as a Formative Assessment Tool

## Webinar handout

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### 1. Main Principles of PBL

- centrality and learner-centredness (projects are integral to the curriculum)
- collaborative inquiry
- scaffolding
- feedback and self-reflection
- a public presentation to authentic audience
- purposeful focus on form and explicit language instruction
- simultaneous development of language, content, and skills
- continuous review and monitoring of language use
- prompt addressing of language-related issues
- various PBL components in assessment

### 2. Formative Assessment of Young Learners with PBL

1. **Teachers** supervise the entire process continuously, from the project's initiation to the presentation phase.
2. **Peer feedback** in Project-Based Learning for young learners involves students providing constructive comments and insights to their classmates on various aspects of their projects.
3. **Self-evaluation and reflection** in Project-Based Learning refer to the process where students assess their own work, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and reflect on their learning experiences.

<https://www.britishcouncil.or.th/en/programmes/teach/asean2024>

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### 3. Making PBL more accessible to EFL students PBL

1. **Adapt the course schedule** so that projects either directly align with the coursebook content or become an extended speaking/writing activity at the end of a unit or two. It's important to help students start thinking about and planning their project from the very beginning of a unit, provide target language, structures and models from the first page. Students thus will have an opportunity to recycle the vocabulary, engage in meaningful practice and apply their new skills to create and present their 'end' product.
2. **Develop rubrics and checklists** for different project stages, and share these with students. The checklists could focus on the target language and/or skills you want to assess (e.g., vocabulary usage, sentence structure, communication); during project work, teachers observe and check off language elements as students use them in discussions, presentations, and written components. Similar checklists can be done for collaborative skills, monitoring overall task progress and presentation preparation.
3. **Give comments throughout the entire project**, on whether they use L2 when brainstorming, setting goals, sharing responsibilities, rehearsing and peer correcting. Teachers should praise students for strengths and suggest areas for improvement.
4. Encourage peer assessment and self-reflection: using guiding questions and/or a 5-star system to help students provide feedback to their classmates as well as assess their own contributions; AND Encourage reflection journals or portfolios (or simple pre-made worksheets that are referred to throughout the unit) where students record their Driving Question, challenges, new language, and plan their project.
5. **Offer scaffolded support**, particularly in the early stages, provide templates, language models, functional language and guidance to help students build their language and project skills.
6. **Vary assessment patterns** use mini-group presentations, 'science fairs', whole-class talks, performances, compile 'a book of students' writings AND celebrate achievements: acknowledge students' achievements, both big and small, to maintain motivation and a positive learning atmosphere.

#### Some useful books and resources:

**Alan, B. and Stoller, F.** (2005) 'Maximizing the benefits of project work in foreign language classrooms', *English Teaching Forum*, 43(4), pp. 10-21

**Anderson, J.** (2021) 'A framework for project-based learning in TESOL', *Modern English Teacher*, 30(2), pp. 45-49.

**Fried-Booth, D.L.** (2002) *Project work*, 2nd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**PBLWorks** [dba Buck Institute for Education] (2022) *Project-based learning for all*. Available at <https://www.pblworks.org/>

**Laverick, E.K.** (2018) *Project-based learning*. Chicago: TESOL Press.

**Ribé, R. and Vidal, N.** (1993) *Project work: step by step*. Oxford: Macmillan Heinemann