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# TEACHERS' FORUM Insights Journal

## "EMPOWERING STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE: PROJECT BASED LEARNING AND COMMUNITY BUILDING IN THE CLASSROOM"

**CONTRIBUTING EDITOR'S INSIGHTS** | Contributing editor's writing and suggested activities about the topic under discussion as support for teaching practices.

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS' RESEARCH** | Focuses on guest writers' research based on teaching English.

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS' INSIGHTS** | Guest writers' articles about the topic under discussion

**INSIDE TOPIC** | Current topic introduced for discussion.

**TEACHERS' COLLABORATIVE CORNER** | TALK ABOUT IT | COMPARE AND CONTRAST | CONTRIBUTE  
| Contributions made by teachers around the globe

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# REMARKS FOR THE TEACHERS

The Teachers Forum is a space for teachers to voice and share about their teaching practices and experiences in Education based on work and research on current topic discussion. After Zoom and Facebook Live interactions to talk about a current teaching issue or practice, teachers provide their insights for this journal to contribute and exchange ideas with other teachers worldwide.

## CONTRIBUTING EDITOR'S INSIGHTS

Corresponds to the contributing editor's writing and suggested activities about the topic under discussion as support for teaching practices.

## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS' INSIGHTS

Guest writers' practical and innovative ideas for teaching English based on the topic.

## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS' RESEARCH

Focuses on guest writers' research based on teaching English.

## TEACHERS COLLABORATIVE CORNER (TCC)

TCC is divided into three main sections: **TALK ABOUT IT**, **COMPARE/CONTRAST**, and **CONTRIBUTE**. It gives space to teachers around the globe to share their knowledge, research, and show how their reality goes similar or different from other countries; taking as base the topic under discussion. It also gives them the opportunity to freely share about their daily classroom practices for others to benefit from it.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Special gratitude to **Darzee Mendieta** from **NICARAGUA** for her participation as a **GUEST SPEAKER** during the Sixth Episode of the IELTA Teachers' Forum 2022 in Zoom and Facebook Live.

## DEDICATORY

This publication of the Teachers Forum is dedicated to all teachers in the world who work hard to innovate and are the part of a positive change in regards of the educational field.

## ON THE COVER

It is an image taken during a project based learning class directed to create school campaign about taking care of the body systems. It shows a handcraft of the skeletal system made by the sixth grade students at Alejandro Tapia Bilingual School, Panama.



# Project- Based Instruction Environment

Doris Younes Achkar - Lebanon

Project- based instruction is a pedagogical method in which students are directed to present their gained knowledge. The gained information can be presented in a variety of media such as writings, arts, drawings, three-dimensional representations, videos, photography or technology-based presentations (Blumenfeld et al, 1991).

The importance of project- based (PBL) instruction lies in that the real-world problems that (PBL) offers capture students' interest and provoke serious thinking as the students acquire and apply new knowledge in a problem- solving context. In a project based learning environment, teachers play the role of facilitator with students and work on framing worthwhile questions, structuring meaningful tasks, coaching both knowledge development and social skills, and assessing what students have learnt from the experience (Blumenfeld et al, 1991).

To implement project-based learning in the classroom, you need to follow six steps. While preparing the driving question, the teacher takes into consideration the following questions: what do his or her students need? / Can he/ she guide them to find their own information? / Which information can they use and how? /To share results, what language skills do they need? (Stoller & Myers, 2019).

The first step of PBL is Driving Question (DQ) that provides the purpose of the project -based learning for students and teachers. These questions help in initiating and focusing the inquiry. The project should be limited to one worldly problem and be focused on one action and inquiry. Moreover, these driving questions reframe the standards in ways that are accessible to both teacher and students. The goal of these questions is to ensure that students are concentrating. The driving question also creates interest and a feeling of challenge so that even the most reluctant student thinks, "Hmm, I guess that sounds kind of cool!". In addition to that, these questions guide the project work including the culminating project and daily lessons and activities. The teacher guides students to answer the driving question whether it is a lesson on commas, implementation of time or drill -and-skills with Math problems (Miller, 2015).

Finally, these driving questions help students answer the question "why are we doing this?" If the driving question is good, it encourages the connection of that work so that students can articulate the reason behind daily lessons and activities. The questions can be: What is epic poetry? / How are native peoples influenced by changes in the world? / How does probability relate to games? / Why is science important and how can it help save people?

As for the second step of project- based learning, it is need to know where the teacher in Grade six raises the question "How can we help educate our community and others about the environmental dangers our Earth faces?" While given such questions, Grade six students will immediately start asking more questions as: Where does our trash go? / Where does electricity come from? / Are the animals facing extinction in our area?



What are the alternatives that can help? / What can we do to impact our own community? And What can we do? Some of these questions raised or generated by students can be answered directly while others need research. Then, students need to sort each of the chosen questions into categories: process, content and product. The process is how are we learning? The content is what we are learning? and the product is what we will make to share our learning? as it is shown in the need to know list (Miller, 2015).

The Need to Know List should be kept visible on a project wall so that to guide students to revisit it throughout the project phases to record answers and generate new questions. The Need to Know List creates additional learning targets and monitors individual student's learning. It is also a powerful planning and assessment tool. The questions students not only create more focused and responsive learning targets, but also it helps in planning student-centered lessons, and easily monitoring students' learning throughout the project (Aaron, 2018).

The third step of (PBL) is In- Depth Enquiry that consists of the time where students engage in a rigorous, extended process of asking questions, finding resources, and applying information using the form they like to use in expressing their thoughts and the tools that they find appropriate to present their product (Miller, 2016).

The fourth step is Student Voice and Choice. Having voice and choice in the learning environment is very important. Teachers need to design projects with the appropriate level of voice and choice for students, which depends on factors such as time of the year, age level, content, and objectives. The voice and choice are contextualized based on teacher and students' lives and experiences. Thus, letting students express their voice and choice creates engagement and student-centered learning (Miller, 2016).

The fifth step of (PBL) is *Audience-Presented Product*. It consists of each group of students choosing his or her speaker to present the product that can be a poster on endangered animals, a little house, a story, a play, an oral presentation or a news report based on their class or level. The last step is *Reflection and Revision*. It consists of creating opportunities to celebrate students who intentionally reflect on their work, provide good feedback to revise their thinking and make changes to their project. And how did this project make students feel and what did they learn? (Avid Center, 2021).

Project- based teaching methods motivates students to work in a community, create better work habits and attitudes toward learning and expand their minds and make them think beyond the normal way, find answers to questions and combine them using critical thinking skills to come up with answers.

The four main project- based activities that can be used in all levels are first, 'story birds' that is an artful storytelling website with a number of pictures that teachers can use to make students write a story or a narrative essay on a certain theme as 'my favorite teacher' or create their own ebook (Cirrincione, 2021).

The second activity is charity events that consists of asking students to picture philanthropists, someone who works in the welfare of others typically through donations: Who do they see in their minds? (Amber, 2021)

The third activity is 'page to stage', which is an online resource for drama and language teachers and



students. This resource provides drama games and great tips to create your performance style, dramatic elements, performance spaces and theatrical conventions and is awesome for extended improvisations (Cash, 2012).

The last (PBL) activity is News reports. Students are given the freedom to choose the topic they want to work on and they divide themselves into groups. The teacher asks them to choose a title for their “broadcasting station” and to sketch their plan for the whole term. Then, the teacher provides students with a guideline to start working on their news report. Students need to report real events or unpublished information (Diem, 2012).

### Conclusions

To conclude, (PBL) has become increasingly favored in the 21st century because it develops the 4Cs, communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity and focuses on content learning rather than specific language target. Thus, (PBL) encourages students' autonomy and creativity throughout the course of the project.

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# Project-Based Learning: Gateway for Communicative Competence Among Learners

Joyce Amponsah Animah and Alfred Ennin - Ghana

## Abstract

Language teaching entails more than simply teaching students how to use grammatical elements of the language. The primary goal of learning a language is to enable learners to adopt the language's rules and to communicate with those rules when necessary and appropriately. With the adoption of communicative language teaching, a lot more integrated approaches have been adopted to improve communicative competence in the classroom. This article explains the importance of project-based learning and how it can improve communicative competence among students.

**Keywords:** *Communicative language teaching, communicative competence, project-based learning.*

## Introduction

For decades, ELT theories and methodologies have been developed to assist both ESL educators and learners in improving their second language abilities and teaching practices. A book-centered, teacher-centered, grammar-translation method with an emphasis on rote memory has dominated traditional ESL learning styles (Rao, 2002a). As a result, even after years of intensive language instruction, ESL students perform poorly in oral expression (Fotos, 1994; Rao, 2002b). Students are expected to use the grammatical rules in their daily communication, unfortunately, the grammatical rules can only be produced by most students when given exercises and questions on those grammatical rules. To this end, Language teaching entails more than simply teaching students how to use grammatical elements of the language. The primary goal of learning a language is to enable learners to adopt the language's rules and to communicate with those rules when necessary and appropriately. Linguists and educators realising this challenge developed and encouraged Communicative Language Teaching, a new approach to language teaching in the ESL classroom that aims to help ESL learners communicate effectively with language rules. CLT, as opposed to traditional grammar-based instruction, focuses on both the use and structure of the language, relying heavily on functional uses of language through collaboration and interaction. Many years of trial and development then proved researchers to come to the understanding of the important role CLT plays in learners' ability to communicate meaningfully in the target language, thus developing the communicative competence of learners. (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Ellis, 2001; Musumeci, 1997; Savignon & Bems, 1983).

The term communicative competence discovered by Hymes (1972, 1974) refers to a speakers' capability to speak a language with linguistic proficiency and to use language appropriately in different social contexts. By



recognizing the interdependence of communication and language, Larsen Freeman also states that communicative competence is the primary goal of teaching any language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

The primary goal of CLT is to help learners develop their communicative competence in L2 through communication and interaction with others (Brown, 2002; Canale & Swain, 1980; Mochida, 2002). According to Rickheit and Strohner (2008) an important aspect of communicative competence is the effectiveness and appropriateness of speech during the communication process. "Whereas effectiveness describes the outcome of communicative competence, appropriateness connects it with the situational conditions of the actual social interaction," they write (Rickheit & Strohner, 2008, p. 16). Learners must be proficient in four areas to achieve communicative competence: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980; Swain, 1985).

There are several integrated approaches to teaching communicatively, including immersion, task-based instruction, structured input, and The Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). A higher form of these approaches is the project-based learning, irrespective of commonalities between the task based and the project-based learning, the task for project-based learning often makes the task the focus on the whole term as compared to task-based activities which focuses on a task for a particular lesson.

### **Overview of Project-Based Learning and Its Place in Communicative Competence**

The emergence of PBL was as result of discovering the effectiveness of traditional science courses in preparing students for the real world and problems they would have to solve as physicians (1960s (Boud and Feletti, 1997).

PBL is a student-centred form of instruction which is based on three constructivist principles: learning is context-specific, learners are involved actively in the learning process and they achieve their goals through social interactions and the sharing of knowledge and understanding (Cocco, 2006). It is considered to be a particular type of inquiry-based learning where the context of learning is provided through authentic questions and problems within real-world practices (Al-Balushi & Al-Aamri, 2014) that lead to meaningful learning experiences (Wurdinger, Haar, Hugg & Bezon, 2007).

In PBL, learners are able to acquire the core curriculum and at the same time apply that knowledge together with what they already know to solve problems or to achieve desirable results in a particular task. This is what Markham (2009) describes as PBL integrates knowing and doing. Just like many of the integrated approaches it ensures learners take active part in what happens in the classroom, thus, the load of teachers is shifted to learners thereby making learners autonomous in solving issues and problems on their own (James, 2006). In a more general sense, students are able to develop their writing and reading skills as they engage in PBL. The learner's confidence in communication or speaking actively come to play as they engage and collaborate through their task (Fried-Booth, 2002; Stoller, 2006; Beckett and Slater, 2005).

In the field of ESL, PBL has been considered as another effective way or strategy for ESL teachers in teaching English. This does not make acquisition of the language easy but it also helps learners to use the language effectively outside the classroom in their quest to solve real life situations. Miller (2016) on PBL discussion held that PBL is a teaching strategy that offers English language learners the same opportunity as the native speakers to interact in authentic communication situations. He further asserted that no other





communication situation is as authentic as involving the actual communication situations with real people in solving a realistic problem like executing a project. Scholars such as Simpson (2011) opined four stages of implementing PBL. It is quite interesting how each of these stages help in improving the use of the English Language in communication.

The first step proposed by Sampson is starting the project. This stage involves the learners ability to develop several introductions of topics related to the said project given to the learners. At this stage, the learners get the opportunity to select the topic of interest and relevant to the project. Also, the teacher in charge of the project can create questions to serve as a guide to learners in order to have a general idea or a mental picture about what is expected of them in the project. Based on this guide, learners can readily establish the project outline and plan the method of research, final outcomes and individual participation in the project. Learners are able to select the language they can use in the project based on the guide and the topic selected.

The next stage, which is the developing stage, requires learners to work in groups to bring out their general ideas on the topic with a guide of sources from the teacher. As the learners interact and read the sources provided, they tend to adopt new vocabularies and grammatical structures that can aid them in writing. The same way as learners work in groups, they are able to learn news words and structures from each other and boost their day to day conversation in the English language

The third stage is reporting to class. A stage where learners present their project in class to receive feedback and suggestions from the class. This stage helps learners to improve on their listening skills, a skill which is important in their day-to-day communication in the English Language.

The last stage is *assessing the project*. This is the final stage of the work where learners are expected to do an oral presentation of their entire work as well as receive comments from their colleagues before the teacher gives final remarks. The first three stages prepare learners for this final stage where learners master their communication skills as well as their confidence in presentation. Learners adopt the right use of words and language used in the oral presentation, a skill they achieved in the first three stages. Learners navigate through the language they can use for the oral presentation of their work, a language mastery achieved or adopted through discussion with their team members, suggestions and input made by the teacher and the entire class.

## Conclusion

All in all, project-based learning is a teaching method that requires learners to carry out a project for a longer period of time. A methodology that improves the communication of learners as well as opens the minds of learners on real life situations through public presentation. When English Language becomes the sole instructional language in PBL, it turns into an activity which is achieved through mastery of the English Language in open discussion among colleagues, teachers suggestions and inputs. That is, PBL helps to improve the communication of learners as well as their confidence and competence in oral presentation.

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# Project Based Learning-Related Classroom Activities That Can Engage Students

Jacob Moisob Gundow - Ghana

## Abstract

Students must assume control of the learning process in Project-Based Learning (PBL) by establishing goals, keeping track of them, commenting on them, and maintaining their motivation over the duration of the project. These processes, however, are not effortless or natural for many students. PBL's learning environment and teaching activities methods must therefore be planned to assist students' learning. This paper describes project based-related classroom activities that can engage students.

**Key word:** Project Based Learning.

## Introduction

A systematic teaching method known as project-based learning is described as "engaging students in gaining knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process built around challenging, authentic (real-life) questions and carefully created products and activities" (Buck Institute for Education, 2003, p. 4 cited in Kitsantas, 2013). An authentic teaching model or method is project-based instruction, in which students develop, carry out, and assess projects that have applications outside of the classroom (Blank, 1997; Dickinson, et al, 1998; Harwell, 1997 cited in Railsback, 2002). The emphasis is on long-term, integrative learning activities that are student-centered rather than brief, isolated lessons (Challenge 2000 Multimedia Project, 1999 as seen in Railsback, 2002). The constructivist method, which developed from the work of psychologists and educators like Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner, Jean Piaget, and John Dewey, is where project-based instructional practices got their start. According to constructivism, learning is the outcome of mental construction; as a result, kids learn by building new ideas or concepts based on their prior and current knowledge (Karlin & Vianni, 2001). Students perceive projects to be enjoyable, inspiring, and difficult due to their active participation in the project selection and planning stages (Challenge 2000 Multimedia Project, 1999; Katz, 1994). In Project Based Learning (PLB), the instructor's main responsibility is to design exercises that will boost motivation, promote reflection, and assist learning by providing framework, guidance, direction, and thought-prompting questions. In PBL, the student's job is to take ownership of their education and interpret the ideas and information they come across.

## Strategies or Ideas for Project Based Learning that Encourages Student Engagement

In practice, learning English does not always emphasize syntactic precision or proficiency in grammar usage. Instead, providing opportunities for students to utilize as much English as possible in real-world settings should be carefully examined, particularly for learners with little opportunities to interact with native English speakers and use English in their everyday lives (Poonpon, 2017). Language instructors must



address this issue by using an effective English teaching and learning strategy that encourages students to utilize language with a focus on communicative objectives in real-world contexts rather than just accuracy as in traditional instruction. In other words, it's important to motivate kids to communicate more. The following among others are possible ideas for PBL that encourages student engagement in the classroom and beyond.

1. When choosing a topic, a teacher could set some limitations so that students can choose a particular subject that is in line with the tempo of their existing curricula. For instance, ask learners individually and in group to orally and in writing present stories to class. Secondly, assign them to do the following activities after presenting their stories; Determine the primary idea, the specifics, the cause and effect, and the conclusion, clarify the speaker's goal etc.
2. For ongoing class instructional project based learning, give students a lot of dictation practice to promote careful listening, accurate spelling, and effective sound discrimination. For instance, they can listen for words in a paragraph that, if not pronounced correctly, may be confusing. For instance: (a). Applicants for the post were told to send their applications to the (personal/personnel manager). (b). He had to (adapt /adopt) to the much cooler climate in Britain. (c).The seismograph is a (device/devise) for recording movements in the earth. (d). The teacher (advised/adviced) his student to concentrate more on essay writing. (e). (Matured/Mature) students must be able to manage their own affairs.
3. Send pupils out of the classroom during class to gather data for class related assignments.
4. After class, I send my students out into the world to gather data for their homework.
5. Request that students research local or contemporary issues that affects the school, classrooms or community (such as public transportation, the environment, or elections, recycling, waste reduction, school safety , etc) for vocabulary building.

The qualitative outcome demonstrates that Project Based Learning (PBL) boosts students' self-assurance in using their English as they work together in teams and support one another. With PBL, students/ pupils are frequently exposed to several experiences that help them develop their ability to communicate their ideas to others. Additionally, it makes it possible for students with various competence levels to collaborate and study together. It is worth saying that PBL empowers the confidence level of students probably because of the way they present their works in front of the classroom.

### **Showing the results of student projects**

Students are more likely to be inventive in selecting a topic or methodology and more likely to be rigorous in their own self-evaluation when they are aware that there will be a larger audience. Second, whether their work is presented in class or becomes a recently discovered internet resource, other students can gain from it. Thirdly, if their work is posted online, students can add to or improve it with fresh knowledge and gain from the criticism of others. By classifying or documenting their classmates' work for publishing, student volunteers can gain knowledge ( Egenrieder, 2010). More students can succeed when instruction and learning are personalized, grouped and links to technical disciplines are more likely to become a part of a student's lifelong learning and personal and professional identity as a result of these successful experiences. Through group work, tiered assignments, scaffolding, choice, and possibilities for development from fundamental concepts and enduring understandings, teachers and others can differentiate project-based learning (Schlemmer and Schlemmer, 2008 cited in Egenrieder, 2010).



## Conclusion

There is sufficient evidence to support the claim that completing the interdisciplinary project benefits the students' growth in EFL competence.

Firstly, students gain enough new vocabulary through Project Based Learning activities to increase the length and appropriateness of their responses and to enrich their written and spoken communication with a variety of vocabulary terms related to their area of study. Additionally, as a result of mastering a variety of speech models and structures, students' grammar in speaking and writing has significantly improved, allowing them to perform oral and written communication effectively in both educational and scientific research contexts. Third, when students research and evaluate reading materials associated with their topic, the students would demonstrate considerable progress in reading and writing.

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# Project Based Learning

Nadine Saassouh - Lebanon

## Abstract

Project Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional methodology encouraging students to learn by applying knowledge and skills through an engaging experience. This paper addresses a combination of theoretical concepts and practical ideas for the implementation of PBL in the classroom to elicit students' engagement. To clarify, the author will define Project Based Learning, shed light on the skills it develops, illustrate how it fosters deep understanding, boosts students' motivation and prompts them to take actions. Finally, the author shares a set of activities applied to 11th graders.

**Key words:** project-based learning, academic achievements, deep learning, learners' motivation, critical thinking and problem solving skills.

## Introduction

Stephen Krashen's (Stephen Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition, n.d.) argues that "acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language – natural communication – in which speakers are in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterances, but in the communicative act". This emphasizes the importance of actively engaging students in the learning experience to incorporate what they learn into their schemata. As a matter of fact, this is what characterizes Project Based Learning and makes it replace the traditional classes where teachers talk dominates. Although some teachers believe that Project Based Learning is time consuming, it should be rejoiced as it fosters students' engagement in the classroom, ensures acquisition of language, develops students' cultural awareness, and equips them with skills they need to succeed in life.

## What is Project Based Learning?

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a student-driven, teacher-facilitated approach to learning. Learners pursue knowledge by asking questions that have piqued their natural curiosity. PBL is not a supplementary activity to support learning. It is the basis of the curriculum. PBL is a key strategy for creating independent thinkers and learners. Children solve real-world problems by designing their own inquiries, planning their learning, organizing their research, and implementing a multitude of learning strategies. Students flourish under this child driven, motivating approach to learning and gain valuable skills that will build a strong foundation for their future in our global economy.



## Why Project Based Learning

According to Krauss and Boss (2013), the Framework for 21st Century Skills calls for students to develop mastery in the 4 Cs: communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. Students should master these essential skills for the future, and PBL offers arguably the best way to develop these 21st-century skills. One of the appealing promises of PBL is the opportunity to engage students in authentic, real-life projects (Krauss & Boss, 2013). With Project based learning, students learn by engaging in real-world situations and in a new learning setting where the teacher is no longer the content expert. Students pursue their own questions to create their own meaning, using technology to access and analyze information from all corners of the globe (Krauss & Boss, 2007). In research from Chu et al., Project-based learning makes learners adopt an inquiry mindset in addressing epistemic issues or in developing and completing projects with a relatively open-ended set of answers (2016). Such pursuits can occur within the context of short-term (e.g., single session) engagement, or longer-term (e.g., semester-long) assignments; Such learning scenarios may be structured formally or informally, and take on myriad forms (Chu et al., 2016).

A professor of Educational Computing, Design, and Online Learning at Kansas State University, (as cited in Krauss & Boss, 2007) emphasizes the importance of getting away from traditional thinking when you begin to design a project, “to really engage learners, you have to set up a situation in which they want to ask questions, want to learn more, need to know something they don't already know, and believe it is really important to them and especially to the larger community to find out” (p.63).

## Conclusion

There is sufficient evidence to support the claim that completing the interdisciplinary project benefits the students' growth in EFL competence.

Firstly, students gain enough new vocabulary through Project Based Learning activities to increase the length and appropriateness of their responses and to enrich their written and spoken communication with a variety of vocabulary terms related to their area of study. Additionally, as a result of mastering a variety of speech models and structures, students' grammar in speaking and writing has significantly improved, allowing them to perform oral and written communication effectively in both educational and scientific research contexts. Third, when students research and evaluate reading materials associated with their topic, the students would demonstrate considerable progress in reading and writing.

## Project Applied in Grade 11 Since 2015-2016

I have been teaching English since 2003. As an ESL teacher for eleventh graders scientific sections, I have witnessed so many distinctive behaviors. Being science oriented, my students used to believe that studying English is time consuming and target deviating. So, I truly experienced the struggle to motivate those borderline students who seemed to be constantly exposed to failure. Simplifying tasks, providing easier language input, giving them choices in their graded assignments are no successful means. A hallmark in my teaching was my decision that I should motivate my students beyond the framework of the text. Part of getting students interested was to expand their knowledge on topics they enjoy.



**Part of getting them motivated was to engage them in** authentic and meaningful projects. Instead of answering already-made questions, students have to pose questions, identify problems, search for solutions, choose the best course of action and present their works to the rest of the class. Undoubtedly, communicative projects that addressed real life situations such as collecting data, analyzing evidence, making presentations, designing flyers, interviewing, writing reports for a newspaper... have broken the ice and provoked my students' concern. Rarely had they completed their assignments before; that's why, I felt that I experienced success when watching them being busy conducting their projects. I still remember them being so enthusiastic, defending their future career choices. They had interviewed a professional in that career, presented the importance of that career in the community, and elaborated on the required courses they should focus on in their academic education. In the scholastic year 2015-2016, they worked on community projects that help put their local community on better footing economically. One group thought of soup factory as their local village is known for olive oil production; another group presented a touristic project entitled "Hasbaya by Bike"; the third group thought of a public library for kids; the last team presented their ideas on making a public kitchen for their community elders. In 2016-2017, my 11th graders worked with their peers at Choithram School India on the collaborative project "Cyber Bullying". In 2017-2018, the students experienced deep learning as they completed a project with their mates in Choithram school on Sustainable Development Goal 3- Good Health and Well Being. In 2018-2019, the two classes worked on SDG 1 No Poverty. In 2019-2020, the students of the two schools organized and participated in online conferences on Happy Dose- on the topic "Believing in yourself is the key to good health; SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being. In 2020-2021, they worked collaboratively on the impact of COVID 19 on Environment. Last year, 11th graders worked with their mates in Derby School- UK on SDG 13 Climate Change.

As a director of the orchestra, I facilitated the work done by my students'; they were information users rather than information receivers. They detected the problem, thought critically, shared their findings with an authentic audience, enjoyed the journey and celebrated the success they made. This helped them develop success skills and made their learning joyous, deep, and meaningful.

## Conclusions

Project Based Learning enriches students' knowledge and embarks them on a journey of discovery in which they develop skills they need when they leave the womb of their classroom- skills they need in a workplace where facing problems and providing sustainable solutions are commonplace. Moreover, it guarantees involving students in genuine seeking of information where they identify the problem, define the context, collect data, analyze options, apply content, and self evaluate their exploration. Actively engaging in this process, learners know the significance of the learning experience and incorporate what they learn into their schemata. It is worthy to note that purposeful communicative transactional projects provide students with opportunities to use the language pragmatically and unravel the contradictions of what happens in the classroom and what happens in the world at hand. Thus, the focus is on the learning, and students are given the freedom and the responsibility to explore content, analyze resources, and apply information.

Sharing experiences, solving problems, interaction, intended meanings, communication underscore the social roles of language and are fostered by Project Based Learning. Students may get drowsy from artificial tasks. Authenticity is the key word. Projects based on authentic real-life situations motivate students to use





their potential in the target language for achieving specific purposes. As the director of a drama, the teacher should facilitate the work done by the students, keeping in his\her mind that his\her ultimate purpose is to prepare students to engage in the real life drama- A purpose which is successfully achieved by the implementation of Project Based Learning.

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# Significance of VLOG Task as a Project Based Learning at Tertiary Level

Saliana Binti Sawaluddin and Norazurawati Binti Mohd Amin - Malaysia

## Introduction

Cultivating a student-centered environment to empower students' engagement in the classroom requires teachers' creativity and a well-planned syllabus. Not only restricted to the in-class activities, but language assessments are also crucial to ensure that university students must be able to work independently as well as good in peer collaborations. Teachers at the tertiary have to play their roles as facilitators to guide the students to continue their language learning under minimal supervision so that students are able to continue their language continuous learning through their own capability and responsibility. Most importantly, students must be surrounded and enjoy an attractive language learning environment to preserve students' enthusiasm and motivation towards language practice. Considering these in mind, project-based learning (PBL) could be one of the best keys for conducting assessments on students at the higher education level. Students have to pay more commitment to work on the project other than sharpen their skills in completing the task. On top of this, they will achieve a better understanding of the English language practice and develop confidence towards the language they are using.

Namely as a vlog project, it is designed purposely based on PBL, considered as one of the speaking graded assessments in English 1 (PBD 10102) for the diploma students at Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia (UniSZA). The normal semester takes up to 14 weeks of classes, all 1148 second-semester diploma students have participated with this required maximum five minutes video record. This pair work project needs students to study the concept of vlog trending on social media nowadays; later, they have to create content based on the educational theme set by the course. The objectives of the assessment are met when the students are able to produce an educational English vlog and also a paragraph of academic writing.

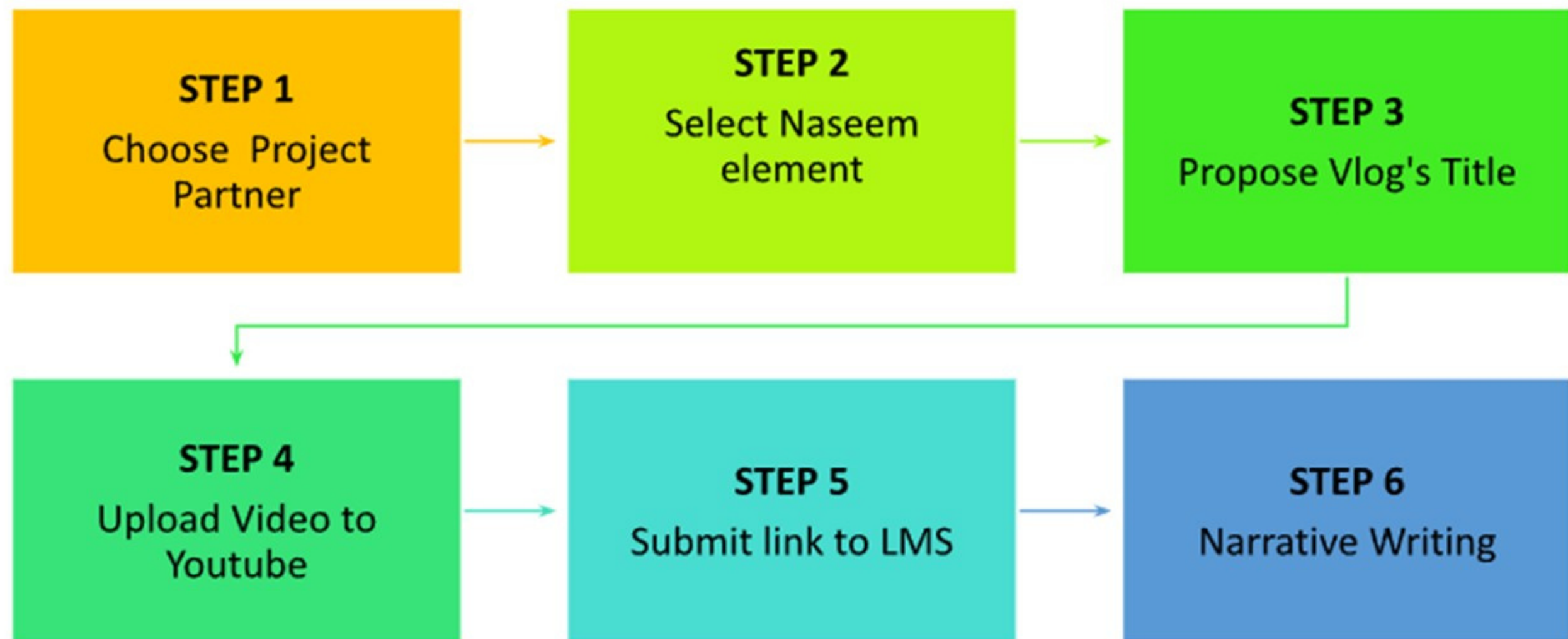
## Implementation of the VLOG Project

Throughout the 14 weeks of the normal semester, students have to work out several tasks (speaking and writing) until they come to the end project. Overall, there are six steps that need to be taken for this project-based learning.



**Figure 1**

Flowchart for the vlog task completion



Note. The image shows the steps to accomplish a vlog task completion according to the author.

First of all, collaboration is essential in step 1 to keep the students stay engaged throughout the project completion. This task allows students to work in pairs, so that they can always interact with each other and socialise. Next, students need to select one Naseem element. In project-based learning, solving challenging problems, curriculum-based and being independent research is very crucial to inspire students (Solomon, 2003). In this vlog project, the initial aim is to introduce and instill awareness towards the Naseem elements applied at UniSZA. First and foremost, these new students of UniSZA (currently Semester 2 when doing this project), students need to understand and familiarise all the elements of Naseem before deciding on their vlog's title. These Naseem elements include eight core values of the university, namely knowledge, Iman and manners, deeds, leadership, collaboration, entrepreneurship, transformation and innovation.

**Figure 2**

Naseem Core Values



Once they have finalised the chosen Naseem element, teacher-student consultation is now open to be started. Students will move to step 3, proposing their vlog's title. Teachers need to review the vlog's title proposed to ensure the originality of the idea and the content outline. Later, when the title is approved, students may start preparing their vlog presentation and recording. The vlog content must reflect their understanding towards the chosen Naseem element, as Andrew Miller, in her writing '6 Strategies for Differentiated Instruction in Project-Based Learning' believes that reflection is an essential component in PBL. From the consultation held throughout the process, students are not only taught to know what Naseem elements applied at the university, but they are also guided and advised on what they need to deliver in their video.

Next, to challenge and flourish students with the real –world language practice, students need to create a Youtube account and post their vlog here (watch this video: [https://youtu.be/F-8N\\_3eMLp0](https://youtu.be/F-8N_3eMLp0)). A question like “how authentic this vlog project that suit most the concept of PBL?”, is simply shown when students are required to have social media (mention here as Youtube) and they need to enlighten themselves on what and how to do vlog by doing self-studying from the vlogs done by the media influencers. Many students confirmed that they never have a Youtube account before and even never tried doing a vlog (watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZGPL0Py0DY>), yet this project has made them succeed in facing their 'camera shy' and speaking English. Next, they need to submit their vlog's link to the university's formal Learning Management System (LMS) called KeLip. The timestamp of the submission recorded by the system will be captured as proof of their task completion. The final assignment for this project-based learning is a narrative writing paragraph. Students need to share their memorable experiences in completing their vlog. The nature of this academic writing task is not set as a test, hence, students will have several chances to submit drafts to their teachers and improvise their writing before the final submission.

## Conclusions

To conclude, this Vlog project has captured the nuts and bolts of the implementation of PBL at the tertiary level. All the critical points of PBL, including independent learning, real-world language activity engagement, collaboration, reflection, authentic language learning, teachers' roles to facilitate, and advice, have rolled into the task given. It is evident that for this vlog project, the engagement between students and teachers in the classroom is really crucial from the first day of the task being assigned. Through discussion, consultation and negotiation, this project-based learning is executed efficiently and effectively. Despite all the challenges, PBL should be thrilled as a new culture in the language learning environment at the higher education level to deliver contagious, creative and competent graduates.

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# Imoro Yahaya

## Ghana

### TALK ABOUT IT

What is project based learning for you?"

*"A learning approach that is student-centered pedagogy that involves a dynamic classroom approach in which it is believe that students acquire a deeper knowledge through active exploration of real - world challenges and problems"*

### COMPARE AND CONTRAST

What has been done in your country about it? Provide some facts and results.

*"The government of Ghana through the ministry of education has introduce a new curriculum that is more of child centered. This is to shift from the old " teacher knows all" to a more activity based learner where the child is at the center of everything."*

### CONTRIBUTE

How can teachers empower students through project based learning and community building? Provide suggestions to other teachers about it.

*"Teachers can empower students through project based learning by allowing students to explore their thinking and coming up with solutions to problems, while the teacher serves as a guide. The student should be given the opportunity to come of with answers to question he or she faces. Group works and projects should be encourage in classrooms, while paying greater attention to self reliance in class."*



# Lena Ramamurthy, Syakirah Shafien, Noor Syamimie Mohd Noor, Maslina Shahidatul Mat So'od, and Nur Hafezah Hussein Malaysia

## TALK ABOUT IT

What is project based learning for you?"

*"Project-based learning (PBL) is of great importance in today's world especially in maximizing students' learning. Such student-centered learning aids students to construct knowledge with their peers in groups. Learning takes place when students ask questions in group discussions, investigating the problem, gathering and analyzing the data, and providing resolutions to the problem. This helps to shape a future ready generation as project-based learning has a great impact in empowering and fostering real life skills which include problem-solving, communication, collaboration, planning, interpersonal skills, social skills and more"*

## COMPARE AND CONTRAST

What has been done in your country about it? Provide some facts and results.

*"In Malaysia, project-based learning has long been emphasized in the educational institutions. Many initiatives have been taken by the government to integrate and foster such learning into the educational system, be it in the class or outside of the class. For instance, project-based learning is adopted in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education."*

## CONTRIBUTE

How can teachers empower students through project based learning and community building? Provide suggestions to other teachers about it.

*"Students' learning has been a constant highlight for us. Teaching the young adult learners could be a very challenging task for all of us, especially to make a shift of this group of young adult learners who have long been raised in a spoon fed culture to be able to adopt the independent learning at this stage. To make this happen, we utilize project-based learning in the graded assessment. Learners get the freedom to choose their group members and group leader. Initial selections and discussions happen in deciding the roles and responsibilities of all members. The project will be distributed and the members will brainstorm the subject given by the teachers. In completing the projects, students will go through a few processes in order to produce the end result. Teachers serve as the assistant or a guide in project-based learning without interrupting the process of learning among the learners. With such active and engaging way of learning through projects, we could observe that the learners could obtain a deeper knowledge of the subject matter as they learn everything through hands-on approach."*



# Judith Anelero

## Ghana

### TALK ABOUT IT

What is project based learning for you?"

*"They are projects which learners are given the chance to participate in finding our a results."*

### COMPARE AND CONTRAST

What has been done in your country about it? Provide some facts and results.

*"Students are given guidelines as to what to work on.*

*Students are given that free will to research on their projects.*

*Students are given the chance to research on what others have worked on so that they can acknowledge them."*

### CONTRIBUTE

How can teachers empower students through project based learning and community building? Provide suggestions to other teachers about it.

*"By giving students the chance to research on their interest areas. Also, giving them the needed aid to accomplish on their projects. By allowing students to interact freely with themselves, teachers and the community as a whole to enhance good results. Furthermore, by allowing them to make good of the available tools to facilitate positive results."*



# Anna Kosenko

## Ukraine

### TALK ABOUT IT

What is project based learning for you?"

*"A very useful means to help me motivate my students on their way to improving their English and make this way more interesting."*

### COMPARE AND CONTRAST

What has been done in your country about it? Provide some facts and results.

*"Unfortunately, it has not been long that project based learning is used in Ukraine, although many teachers now have gone through training and are actively using projects in their teaching practice. As for me, I teach home reading classes and my students always have a lot of fun preparing their projects."*

### CONTRIBUTE

How can teachers empower students through project based learning and community building? Provide suggestions to other teachers about it.

*"I think that projects can make any community stronger and at the same time help individual students to develop their own skills, teach them to interact with others in the best possible way. So, it is anyway beneficial both for community building and for each student as a part of this community. I really hope that this useful means of education will soon be more widely used not only in Ukraine, but through the world. On the other hand, I hope teachers will be more experience in project based learning."*





# Charles Sorngmene

## Ghana

### TALK ABOUT IT

What is project based learning for you?"

*"To me, it is an Instructional approach designed to give students the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills through engaging projects set around challenges and problems they may face in the real World. It presents opportunities for deeper learning in-context and for the development of important skills tied to college and career readiness."*

### COMPARE AND CONTRAST

What has been done in your country about it? Provide some facts and results.

*"In my country Ghana , there are greater similarities and few differences . One, the role of the teacher in PBL in my country has shifted from content -deliverer to facilitator or project manager. Students work more independently as in the true letter and spirit of PBL.For example the Ministry of Education, teachers from Kasenkpe Science Model SHS used their individual strengths in a project based model to teach form one students how to apply STEM to real work situationsGhana has introduced."*

### CONTRIBUTE

How can teachers empower students through project based learning and community building? Provide suggestions to other teachers about it.

*"First, by redefining how students learn. In this instance, students interest is piqued with novel ideas, hands on activities deepen understanding. Teachers also use group work to address the myth that scientists work in isolation. Science rather requires lots of people with different ideas. Teachers can also empower students through motivations. As students are motivated by their facilitator, they get to the grounds with any project. The necessary learning resources must also be provided if teachers would want to empower students through project based Learning."*



# Felicity Anne Aretha A. Dorado

## Philippines

### TALK ABOUT IT

What is project based learning for you?"

*"Learning is vital and continuous - a process of collecting intellectual and actual experiences. Project Based Learning (PBL) is a teaching method in which students learn by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects ("What is PBL?," 2022). By means of having an output based instruction, learners were allowed to activate their creative thinking skills. John Dewey's Theory explains that every individual learn more along by doing the activity."*

### COMPARE AND CONTRAST

What has been done in your country about it? Provide some facts and results.

*"Learners in the Philippines involve in various class-performance-and-output-based activities. Simulation Activities and Role Playing for example are widely introduced in the Philippine Classroom Settings as well as School Monthly Celebration Activities (e.g. Founding Anniversary, Buwan ng Wika Celebration, ASEAN/UN Celebration, Christmas Holiday Presentation, etc.) By this sort of way, students guided by teachers collaborate for planning, preparation, production, and presentation purposes. Intellectual skill for brainstorming made by the group is intended in the planning phases; Preparation and Production phase needs effort and creativity – it is where ideas for costumes, designs for props, backdrop, and theme coincides - also known as the working stage where everybody is doing something and so learning and reflecting while doing it. Presentation phase is where critiquing and feedback was note. Parol - a star-shaped decoration signifying the spirit of Christmas ignites within Filipinos is one of the highlight projects during Yule tide. A parol is a Filipino ornamental lantern hangs on houses and buildings every December, similar to a Christmas wreath, but most of the parols were done with bigger sizes to capture more attention in the eyes of the audience. Pampanga Province is known as Parol Capital in the Philippines. Crafters utilize and recycle things like glasses (fiber glass), plastics, papers, and etc. to make a parol lantern. For the Holiday season, a contest for Parol Making is usually done in schools to challenge the students and also give a token of recognition for such effort. From this example, PBL aims to connect the student to its environment: origin, culture, and tradition."*

### CONTRIBUTE

How can teachers empower students through project based learning and community building? Provide suggestions to other teachers about it.

*"Educators can empower students through project based learning and community building. Classroom and school projects could be a portal to share information and showcase such talents extended to the community. An exhibit of students' works for example in a museum or art fair – by giving an effort to make partnerships with the policy makers and government agencies, education and Project-Based Learning (PBL) application is indeed possible."*



# Daniel Nana Agyemang

## Ghana

### TALK ABOUT IT

What is project based learning for you?"

*"Project-based learning has clear goals, milestones and deliverables and a defined start and end date. It may take hours or months or longer – the duration varies with every project and business need. But the work should be aligned with the ideas inculcated into the project."*

### COMPARE AND CONTRAST

What has been done in your country about it? Provide some facts and results.

*"The Introduction of project based learning in my country took a different turn. Students were of the view that more work has been introduced into their curriculum, but educators were able to curtail that notion."*

### CONTRIBUTE

How can teachers empower students through project based learning and community building? Provide suggestions to other teachers about it.

*"As a matter of fact empowering students with project work makes them go closer to the communities where they will be abreast with happenings there. Bridging the gap between the school and the community will have a sense of responsibility for both parties. The community on the other hand also benefits from the school as it understands the roles played by the latter.*

*I do believe that if project based learning is projected in schools, students will see the relevance of learning not only from their educators but also learn outside the box from the community."*



# TEACHERS' IMPRESSIONS

*"Great sessions. Thank you for this meeting. I learned great learning and teaching approaches from the speakers. Greetings!"*

*\_Maria Gabriela Portal - Argentina*

*"The webinar was relevant to me as a teacher because the organization has been offering timely topics. It helps me to become a competent teacher in the field. I am happy to be part of IELTA!"*

*\_Christianne O. Romano - Philippines*

*"It was a great experience because personally I've learned too much and I'm very grateful with you. Thanks a lot!"*

*\_Rocío Isabel Sabino López - Peru*

*"Feeling proud to be with great scholars."*

*\_Abdul Halim - Bangladesh*

*"Knowledgeable and sharing new insights to learn."*

*\_Dr. Kalyani Rao - India*

## ON THIS SECTION

It is a collection of some teachers' feedback and testimony after participating in the IELTA Teachers' Forum sessions.



ASSOCIATION REGISTRATION NUMBER 11387724

# TEACHERS' IMPRESSIONS

*"Much development can be noticed after the fruitful presentations in the Teachers' Forum "*

*\_Sara Zeidan - Lebanon*

*"It has helped me to really understand how to disseminate the content to the learners due to the use of examples and further explanation by the guests speakers and facilitators as well."*

*\_Judith Anelero - Ghana*

*"I think I've learned a lot and I appreciate the information shared, Thank you so much!"*

*\_Emelia Jane Anak Dingus - Malaysia*

*"It helps to improve the teaching skills."*

*\_Mona Moussa Ibrahim Abi Chaaya - Lebanon*

*"I have gained lots of experience."*

*\_Kwame Adjei-Bediako - Ghana*

## ON THIS SECTION

It is a collection of some teachers' feedback and testimony after participating in the IELTA Teachers' Forum sessions.



# TEACHERS' IMPRESSIONS

*"It was very beneficial and fruitful workshop."*

\_Hayam Elsayed Haroun - United Kingdom

*"It's been phenomenal and insightful."*

\_Gideon Kwame Sah - Ghana

*"It was amazing, I learned new things that are going to help me as a teacher.*

*Thanks so much!"*

\_einaldo Enmanuel Mercado Rivas - El Salvador

*"It is being awesome . A lot was learnt by me in the Forum which truly consolidate*

*my previous experiences."*

\_Charles Sorngmene - Ghana

## ON THIS SECTION

It is a collection of some teachers' feedback and testimony after participating in the IELTA Teachers' Forum sessions.



ASSOCIATION REGISTRATION NUMBER 11387724

# TEACHERS' IMPRESSIONS

*"Yes, a big contribution in my professional life. The topics and expertise they have shared made me realize that teaching and learning should start within us. Because if we love what we are doing, we can also do great things for our learners."*

*\_Dantea P. Beni - Philippines*

*"I have been able to improve in my methodologies and teaching techniques "*

*\_Innocent Nasuk Dajang - Nigeria*

*"It helps me with interesting material and webinars."*

*\_Rina Pamela Chalco - Argentina*

*"Got benefited by developing skills required for my teaching profession as an English language teacher."*

*\_Ganga Ram Paudel - Nepal*

*"I got the chance to hear and exchange views from educators from different parts of the world... And I have also realized the importance of research firstly for our job as educators!"*

*\_Georgia Maneta - Greece*

*"[I]t helped me to improve my knowledge and also to take better decisions in future situations "*

*\_Rocío Isabel Sabino López - Peru*

## ON THIS SECTION

It is a collection of some teachers' feedback and testimony after participating in the IELTA Teachers' Forum sessions.



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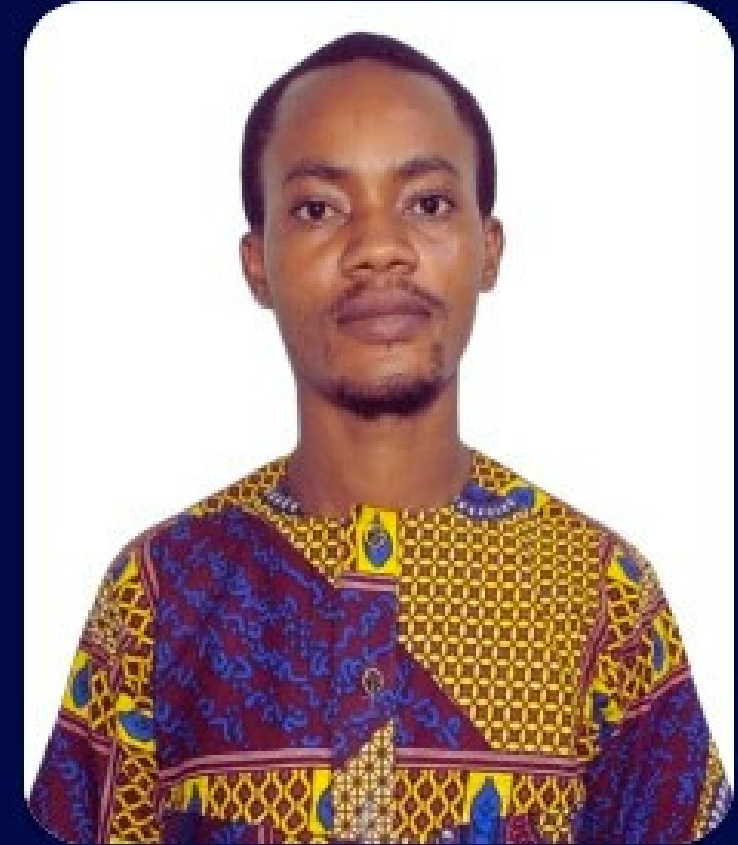
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The edition we developed required teachers to meet and discuss, in the monthly IELTA FORUM sixth episode, about *"EMPOWERING STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE: PROJECT BASED LEARNING AND COMMUNITY BUILDING IN THE CLASSROOM"*, and provide their knowledge of the course topic based in their English language teaching experiences and ideas to support other teachers worldwide.



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