


Chapter 5

Assessing Learning Outcomes Through Project-Based Learning in English Language Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the implementation and assessment of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English language classrooms, exploring the intersection of language proficiency and the development of 21st-century skills. Despite the transformative nature of the approach, assessing outcomes in PBL presents distinct challenges. The chapter draws on Bloom's Taxonomy as a theoretical framework for aligning assessment with cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. It also explores strategies such as rubrics, portfolios, peer and self-assessment, teacher feedback, and digital tools for evaluating both the process and the product in PBL. A case study of a Namibian Grade 8 English class illustrates how learners collaboratively produced a digital newspaper, integrating technology into assessment while developing language and 21st-century skills. The findings highlight the importance of formative assessments in supporting learner growth through ongoing feedback, while summative evaluations provide accountability and measure achievement. The chapter suggests context-sensitive strategies, including rotating group roles and providing professional development for teachers.

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INTRODUCTION

Recently, Project-Based Learning (PBL) has become a more prominent approach, offering a dynamic and learner-centred way to acquire knowledge and skills by exploring real-world challenges and problems (Thomas, 2000; Larmer, Mergendoller, & Boss, 2015). Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a learner-centred pedagogical approach that immerses learners in an extended process of inquiry around real-world questions, challenges, or problems, fostering deeper knowledge through active exploration. Tracing its roots to educational theorists like John Dewey's "learning by doing" and William Heard Kilpatrick's project pedagogy, PBL emphasises student agency, sustained inquiry, authenticity, and collaboration (Cao, 2024).

English's global significance as a lingua franca highlights the need for effective teaching methods in English language education. As teaching methods evolve, Project-Based Learning (PBL) has emerged as a game-changing approach that engages students in hands-on, collaborative projects, developing not only language skills but also critical thinking, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills (Adilah, 2023; Bhandari, 2021). Despite the increasing use of PBL in language education, evaluating learning outcomes remains a significant challenge. Traditional tests often struggle to capture the full extent of what learners gain from projects, especially in terms of collaboration, creativity, and using language in real-life situations. As a result, there is a growing need for assessment models that are based on outcomes, genuinely learner-driven, and aligned with the goals of PBL (Bell, 2010; Wrigley, 1998).

The Purpose of the Chapter

This chapter aims to bridge the crucial gap between innovative project-based teaching methods and effective assessment practices in English language education. As more educational institutions worldwide adopt project-based learning, educators face significant challenges in developing assessment frameworks that accurately capture the varied nature of learning outcomes. This chapter provides both a theoretical foundation and a practical guide, enabling English language educators to design, implement, and refine assessment strategies that reflect the complexity of project-based learning while upholding rigorous standards for language proficiency. By exploring the intersection of collaborative learning, authentic task performance, and language acquisition assessment, this chapter aims to enhance our understanding of how to effectively evaluate learners' progress in dynamic, real-world learning environments.

Additionally, this chapter examines the benefits and challenges of PBL in various assessment methodologies. The intricacy of assessing learning in project-based en-

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