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No product? No project!

Abstract

Project-based learning (PBL) is not a new teaching approach in the foreign language classroom despite the fact that its acceptance as a common practice is just starting to spread, partly because this methodology fits well the requirements of modern competence-based curricula. Yet, adjusting, grading and organising curricular contents around the development of a series of projects is a great challenge teachers need to face. PBL is based on the premise that all projects should have an authentic, interesting and viable goal, triggered by the need to answer a driving question or solve a social problem, whose attainment would engage learners in the execution of sequential tasks with the objective to elaborate a final product targeted at a real addressee beyond the classroom walls.

Deciding on the nature of a project final product and its addressee is the first step teachers must take when planning a project. In this session we will tackle the ins and outs of this action. First we will briefly reflect upon how literature envisages project products as meaningful language outputs. Second, various in-service primary teachers will present examples of students' outputs and will outline the projects developed to produce them. As a wrap-up, we will consider what the presented final products (and the projects they stemmed from) have in common. Finally, the session will conclude with some practical suggestions on how to generate good ideas to design projects with attainable, purposeful products.

Key words: PBL, primary education, competence-based outcomes, real classroom materials.

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