Project-Based Learning

Mesa College Language Conference
How does this pedagogical method work in the language class?
History of Project-Based

- Philosophy of John Dewey.
- Learning theory in the past 25 years.
- Support traditional direct instruction — to show that *knowledge, thinking, doing*, and the contexts for learning are inextricably tied.
Project-Based Learning Defined

- Teaching method that **engages students** in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process.
- This process can last for varying time periods and can extend over **multiple content areas**.
- Based on challenging questions or problems, that involve students in design, **problem-solving**, **decision making**, or **investigative activities**.
- Give students the opportunity to work relatively autonomously over extended periods of time; and culminate in realistic products or presentations.
- ‘driving question’ encompassing worthwhile content that is anchored in a **real-world problem**; **investigations and artifacts** that allow students to **learn concepts**, **apply information**, and **represent knowledge** in a variety of ways; **collaboration among** students, teachers, and others in the community so that participants can **learn from one another**; and use of cognitive tools that help learners represent ideas by using technology...
Methods

The project-based learning approach is often used in small school settings, like charter, because they are affected to a lesser degree by the high-stakes state-mandated testing movement. Although project-based learning can be done in combination with the national standardized testing model (College-World Languages Standards)

In order to create effective project-based learning units, professional development organizers suggest using the following guidelines:

Begin with the end in mind and plan for this end result.
Craft the driving question; select and refine a central question.
Plan the assessment and define outcomes and assessment criteria.
Map the project: Decide how to structure the project.
The process: Find tools and strategies for successful projects.
Methods...

Project-based learning can involve, but is not limited to:

- Asking and refining questions
- Debating ideas
- Making predictions
- Designing plans and/or experiments
- Collecting and analyzing data
- Drawing conclusions
- Communicating ideas and findings to others
- Asking new questions
- Creating artifacts
Teacher’s Role

Project-based learning is only possible in classrooms where teachers support students by giving sufficient guidance and feedback.

The teacher must thoroughly explain all tasks that are to be completed, provide detailed directions for how to develop the project, and circulate within the classroom in order to answer questions and encourage student motivation.

In order to create successful units focused on project-based learning, teachers must plan well and be flexible. In this approach to instruction, teachers often find themselves in the role of learner and peer with the students.

Teachers can assess project-based learning with a combination of objective tests, checklists, and rubrics; however, these often only measure task completion. The inclusion of a reflective writing component provides for self-evaluation of student learning.
Student’s Role

Students generally work in small, collaborative groups in the project-based learning model.

They find sources, conduct research, and hold each other responsible for learning and the completion of tasks.

Essentially, students must be “self-managers” in this approach to instruction.\(^6\)

Results of project-based learning research is mixed.
Select your project idea:
Example:

1. Project idea: Comic Strip (Spanish 1-2)
Project Opener: prediction... (index cards)
Essential Questions (work in pairs)

21st Century Education

Critical Thinking Process

DOK Questions

Topic: Center on health or doctor’s appointment

Remember: this is the entry to project…

1) How can you describe a healthy person?
Essential Questions…

Instructor: (1-2 questions)

1) How can you describe a healthy person?

Students: Write 2-3 question about central idea → Research Process

2)

3)