

## **Implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) Learning Course in ESP Classroom**

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### **Abstract**

Some studies have been conducted concerning the use of project based learning (PBL) in language teaching and learning. Besides, those studies have been fruitful for explaining the benefits of PBL, it is also in compliance with the 21<sup>st</sup> century era where the digital technology influences the young generation to be more creative. That is why the use of PBL in Indonesia today is urgently need to facilitate students to develop their creativity. However, to implement PBL in teaching and learning process cannot be applied freely since every single subject has distinct characteristic. The methodology used in the class is one the crucial issues to determine the successfulness of implementing PBL in the classroom. These can be happened in English for specific purposes (ESP) speaking class which the characteristic of the learning process is technical English skill. Hence, this paper will present how to implement PBL appropriately accordance with the need of ESP speaking class in which the method develops students to have useful research and study skill, such as the use of reference resources and modern technology which are beneficial for learning. The implementation of PBL in ESP classroom will guide to the high English proficiency in some areas especially speaking skill

**Keywords:** Project based learning (PBL), Learning Course, English for specific purpose (ESP),

### **Introduction**

Student-centered learning which involves student as the main point of learning activity allows the student to be actively acquire knowledge and skill based on what they need. This approach becomes so much popular in offending the traditional education, the traditional system which ignores or suppresses learner responsibility (Armstrong, 2012). This point of view stimulates the presence of teaching methodologies; the grammar translation method, the direct

method, the audio-lingual method, suggestopedia, project-based learning (Simpson, 2011).

Project-based learning itself can be meant as the methodology used to gain certain goal of learning by highlighting the concept understanding, broader knowledge base, improved communication and interpersonal or social skills, enhanced leadership skills, and increased creativity. Markham (2009) describes that PBL integrates knowing and doing. Students learn knowledge and elements of the core curriculum, but also apply what they know to solve authentic problems and produce results that matter, so, the core of this methodology is learning by doing.

PBL come out when the need of finding new approaches to teaching language has become increasingly urgent, since the general complaint published almost every day in the media regarding the English language for the last few decades points to the deterioration of proficiency especially among the youths, despite the years they toiled learning the language at school (Othman and Shah, 2013). This also affect to working sector where potential employers claim that school-leavers fare badly in their communication and writing skills, particularly in English

Firstly, the model for PBL emerged from a number of medical schools especially the Case Western Reserve University in the United States of America in the 1950s and McMaster University Faculty of Health Sciences in Canada in the late 1960s (Boud and Feletti, 1997). The concern at that time was on the effectiveness of traditional science courses in preparing students for the real world and problems they would have to solve as physicians. In Indonesia, especially in higher education level, Project based learning becomes one of some methods in developing learning activities suggested by the government (Ditjendikti, 2008). Today, even PBL was adopted in so many subjects, but for English it is still less much

One of English subjects that close to the real world context is ESP, English for Specific Purposes. It is a branch of English language learning which is

focusing the central importance of learners, and their need and interest (Basturkmen, 2010), and comes into being and gradually developed into a multilayered language approach primarily based on learners' specific needs required by their professions or occupations. Kennedy and Bolitho (1984) describe the main basic of ESP, those include education programs with English as the first, and sometimes only, foreign language; the need of English as a common medium of communication as a consequence of the growth of business and increased occupational mobility; the facilitation of access to scientific and technical literature.

Project based learning methodology stimulate students to develop and improve their language fluency and accuracy, and at the same time it build personal qualities and skills such as self-confidence, problem-solving, decision-making, and collaboration (Beckett and Slater, 2005). While ESP emphasize on the main objective which is often to develop student abilities required for successful communication in occupational setting. Further, related to the core of PBL that applied learning by doing concepts, the project based learning methodology seems to be fit to apply in English for specific purposes (ESP) classroom

The PBL which is bringing the real life concept and the distinguish characteristic of ESP, can be potentially integrated to enhance language acquisition and achieve English proficiency. Therefore, this paper will explain the implementation of PBL methodology in ESP classroom.

### **Benefits of PBL in ESP Class**

The benefits of PBL in language learning are various. It is widely accepted that utilizing problem solving activity promotes construction of useful knowledge, develop reasoning strategies and effective self-directed learning strategies, increase motivation for learning, and become effective collaborators (Hmelo and Evensen, 2000). Particularly in language classroom, PBL promotes meaningful interaction in the classroom. The interactions that occur while students were dealing with real-world issues and problems are more meaningful and

authentic than interactions produced during activities such as assigned role-plays or repetition of dialogues.

Since PBL shifts the emphasis on learning activity from teachers to students, it can also help students become more autonomous learner. They will transfer the skills learned in the classroom to their lives outside of the classroom (James, 2006). As to activate learners to interact with each other in listening speaking class, PBL can be powerful. To my assumption, while students are focusing on the problem to be solved, they will try to overcome the linguistic hindrance, retrieve prior knowledge of the language to be used, and finally, become skillful language users.

Further, Markham (2003) gives explanations related to the benefits of applying PBL in teaching and learning activity, those are stated in the following:

1. Enhancing academic achievement

PBL allows students to have their experience about the topic they study through project. The students can correlate the deep experience they get from the project with the topic of the study.

2. Increasing autonomous learning

As PBL give the students a freedom in learning, it gives students full opportunity to select and setting their own learning objectives. They acquire the knowledge of the topic by achieving their own-targeted objectives so that they become more responsible for the learning activity.

3. Gaining important life skills

Through a project, students are involved in certain set of work that may state them in the fieldwork, directly speak to the expert, conducting various observations, and gather material to develop the project.

4. Developing high order thinking

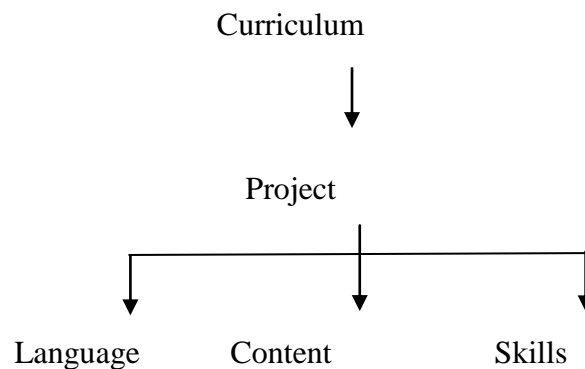
Higher order thinking skills are one of the main benefits of undertaking PBL; students have opportunity to analyze and interpreting data or other cognitive processes that lead to the deep understanding.

5. Increasing motivation

As students choose their own project and set their own objectives, the students will be aware that their work is valuable in answering the question, solving the problems or being beneficial to the community. They are personally involved in the project and simulated to hard work.

**Designing PBL learning course for ESP**

Beckett and Slater (2003) conclude a diagram which is in an English project there are three main parts; language, content, and skills.



Multiple skills are needed to finish a project include various learning and communication skills. Students need to get information to finish their project either reading, or listening to the authentic material (Simpson, 2011).

ESP course design is an integrated, systematic and flexible process, in which consistent review ought to be made on individual sub-processes in terms of the core elements of language use, language learning and learners' specific needs in a target context (Ting, 2010). Therefore, in designing the learning course of ESP by involving PBL approach, there must be some sequence steps in order to maintenance the synchronization between the need of ESP and the use of PBL approach. Wiers et al. (2002) proposed ten steps in deciding curriculum for PBL, those are:

*Step 1: Examine the contextual information about the course*

Examining the contextual about the course will be started by deciding the where the place will be fit with the course, in ESP, the place must be educational institution that intended to specific job. The characteristic of the class is also considered like who are the students, the size of the class, and how long the course will be running on. The type of classroom and the facilities inside the class must be calculated also considering the class will always running inside the classroom.

*Step 2: Identify course goals*

ESP is English program from some field with the purpose to achieve English proficiency in occasional environment. In starting examining the course, the purpose of the course must be clear. In teem of ESP; the purpose is achieving the English proficiency in occasional field. The abilities that will be developed by the course is also considered, whether for writing, speaking, etc. and the most important is what the students accomplish after finishing the course.

*Step 3: Identify learning outcomes*

the outcomes is need to be identified because through this way, what the students are able to do after taking the course as a result can be estimated. Knowing this estimation, will tighten the learning course and it will make the learning course is more focus. For the example, ESP learning course with PBL approach for the student of the airport information desk staff. The course will be adopted as the real activity in information desk, conversation, giving information, presenting something, so the course must be directly connected with the real occasion.

*Step 4: Plan the methods and activities*

Learning course will be not so successful without great activities and strategy. The activities that will involve the students in learning activity determine the quality of the course. In PBL itself, the teacher do not have a big role in a class, but the student will work guided by the problem based activity, the teacher widely act as the facilitator. The strategy of teacher to be facilitator will give students freedom the express what the what, think, and communicate.

*Step 5: Design an Assessment Plan*

Assessment methods that partially fulfill these requirements are (short) essays, take-home assignments, skills assessments and the progress tests. In addition to student assessment, general regulations should be formulated concerning required attendance (usually high in PBL) and extra assignments when attendance regulations are not met.

*Step 6: Produce Materials*

After deciding the course design, the material for teaching and learning process must be suited with real context where the language will be used. The resource of the material should be clear also. This can make the accessibility to the material be easy. It also supports the student learning process. Beside the material suited to the design, the other stuffs are the media and tool. The media has function to deliver the knowledge that implied in the course design to the students, thus, the media or tool determine the success of the learning process.

*Step 7: Produce Assessment Instruments*

Student assessment is an important aspect of curriculum design, especially in PBL. The reason is that assessment should reward the study behavior that is expected from students in a project-based curriculum. Students easily give up their own learning goals when they notice that they are ‘punished’ for this strategy in the examination. The assessments used as instrument of evaluation should comply some principles: providing opportunity to the students to show what they learn and to acquire knowledge, and the concrete problem directly linked with a professional situation.

*Step 8: Implement the Plan*

The learning course needs to be implemented to know the effectiveness of the course. Implementing the course design should be involved the entire person who has interest, administrator, teacher, and students. All the position has different role and barrier in the implementation, by this, they can count and estimate what they can do by adopting the instruction inside the learning course.

Therefore, they work based on their capacity. This step also has function to decide what infrastructure need in the process. Take an example is audio visual, headset, etc.

*Step 9: Develop a Plan to Evaluate the Impact of PBL on Student Learning*

The goal of evaluation is primarily to improve the next learning course. The evaluation can be applied in all the people who are involved in the implantation of the learning course, student, teacher, and society. For students, the evaluation can be taken from students' judgments of educational activities at the level of the learning course, it is also including specific problems, lectures, training (Schmidt, Mdolmans, Gijsselaers, and Desmarchais, 1995) Teacher are a very good source of information regarding the quality of problems. Society is the main evaluation. The goal of learning course is prepared the students to work in the society. The evaluation should be well organized like what instrument will be used to evaluate, survey, questionnaire, observation, etc.

*Step 10: Conduct the evaluation*

The evaluation is conducting to know the result of the learning process. As mentioned above, the evaluation has purpose to seek the weak point of the learning course and develop it to be better in the next period. The main point of evaluation is seeing the change of how successful the course and what next to be improved.

### **Implementation of PBL in ESP Classroom**

Project based learning involves complex and systematic shape in learning activity, but it is flexible to the students to create and construct a project based on their need and want. The project structure helps teacher and student to organize the development of a project activity based on the students' interest and personal contribution to the selected topics for the study. To implement the project based learning in ESP classroom, Simpson (2001) clearly proposes four stages. These are:

*1. Starting the project*

This stage consists of several set of introduction of the teacher related to the project that needed to fulfill by the students. The students may select the topic of interest and relevant to students. The teacher can create guiding questions so that students have idea about what to do and are encouraged to study or develop. Students then establish the project outline and plan the method of development, the final outcomes and individual participation in the project. The project must be challenging and motivating such that students can develop and have the flexibility to work at their world, while team member within the group offer advice and assistance.

2. *Developing the project*

This stage involves the research which is undertaken by all group members either individually, in pairs, or as a group. Group should decide this before commencing the project. Students search for information to answer their driven question, taking a note for each result the produce, any problem appear and way how to solve. This effective and efficient way can be used to improve the project as it development.

3. *Reporting to the class*

This step consists of activity in which focus on the presenting and receiving feedback from other students on the development and problem in the project. The steps occurring throughout the project are assessed to make sure that students comprehend the problem and apply the skills and concept necessary to complete the project.

4. *Assessing the project*

The final product can be evaluated by an individual student, students as a group, a teacher or external audience. This stage gives opportunities to the students to apply and present what they have learnt and understand through their project.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, implementing or integrating project based learning (PBL) which has so many advantages in English for specific purposes (ESP) learning design which emphasize on the real life context based on the specific field of

English create a good combination of learning design. The project as the main activity of the teaching and learning process, and as the result of the combination of the PBL and ESP characteristic guide the students to master the specific term and condition not only in theoretical English but also in practical English.

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