

## STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN IMPLEMENTING PROJECT-BASED LEARNING TASKS

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study is to analyze the experience of students in the implementation of project-based learning. Students, who are studying for EFL in higher education programs at the National University of Uzbekistan, have been assigned projects to help them improve their speaking and listening skills. The research aims to describe students' perception of project-based learning and try to understand what students' overall conclusions are about project-based learning. Feedback forms were distributed to a group of students who completed the assigned projects on EFL. This research data shows from the start majority of students grasped the tasks with motivation and interest and were keen on demonstrating their skills. Although the criteria and project tasks were clear, some students admitted teachers' additional support was critically effective in implementing the projects. The students' feedback forms also refer to the conclusion that project-based learning helped students to reveal the areas and skills they need to improve.*

**Keywords:** *EFL, Project-based learning, feedback, grasp, reveal, assign, implementing, perception, implementation phase*

## Introduction

In response to many advances in technology and other spheres, new methods have emerged in the world of education. One of them is an effective method of project-based learning. Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a student-centered method of learning that encourages learners to investigate and solve real-world problems. In PBL, students work together in teams to identify a problem, collect information, and develop a solution. This type of learning is beneficial for students because it allows them to apply the knowledge they have learned to a real-world situation. PBL can be used in any subject area, and it can be adapted to any level grade.

There are a number of effective ways of using Project-Based Learning in the classroom. It can be incorporated into any learning situation. In the strictest definition of PBL, the approach is used over the entire semester as the primary method of teaching. However, broader definitions and uses range from including PBL in lab and design classes, to using it simply to start a single discussion. PBL can also be used to create assessment items. The main thread connecting these various uses is the real-world problem.

According to the Buck Institute for Education, PBL "promotes problem-solving, creativity and critical thinking; develops communication and collaboration skills; helps students make connections between study and real world" (Norman, 2011).<sup>1</sup>

The main focus of PBL is that students are involved in meaningful projects through which they learn at a deep-seated level and improve critical thinking and creativity skills. PBL is a student-driven, teacher-facilitated approach to learning, knowledge, and skill acquisition. It requires students to collaborate with peers, construct usable knowledge by linking new and old ideas, relate new science content to student lives, and self-regulate across the weeks or months that the project might unfold (Blumenfeld et al. 1991; Krajcik et al. 1998).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.bie.org/about/what\\_is\\_pbl](https://www.bie.org/about/what_is_pbl)

<sup>2</sup> Blumenfeld PC, Soloway E, Marx RW, Krajcik JS, Guzdial M, Palincsar A (1991) Motivating project-based learning: Sustaining the doing, supporting the learning. *Educational Psychologist* 26(3&4):369–398

From this, it can be noticed that a teacher is the organizational manager of the process who needs to establish the procedure for effective group discussions and presentations. He is also in charge to encourage students to give feedback to their colleagues. This feedback is more productive when students have the possibility to update and improve their work according to the feedback delivered. Furthermore, when students are actively engaged in the process of defining the success criteria, they will understand them better, and therefore, they will spend less time thinking about what success means.

## Methods

According to notion of Mergendoller (2018), there are six major criteria elements of PBL high-quality projects.<sup>1</sup> The High-Quality Project Based Learning (HQPBL) Framework was developed by the educators that describe six criteria that must be at least minimally present for a project to be judged "high quality," and those are:

1. *Intellectual Challenge and the Accomplishment* that enables students to learn deeply, think critically and strive for excellence.
2. *Authenticity* through activities where students work on projects that are meaningful and relevant to their culture, their lives, and their future.
3. *Public Product*. Students' work is publicly displayed, discussed, and critiqued.
4. *Collaboration*. Students collaborate with other students in person or online and/or receive guidance from adult mentors and experts.
5. *Project Management*. Students use a project management process that enables them to proceed effectively from project initiation to completion.
6. *Reflection*. Students reflect on their work and their learning throughout the project.

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<sup>1</sup> Mergendoller JR (2018) Defining High Quality PBL: A Look at the Research, Buck Institute for Education. <https://hqpbl.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Defining-High-Quality-PBL-A-Look-at-the-Research-.pdf>. Accessed 8 May 2019

From these points, which is mentioned above, for assessment, we use an accumulation of various strategies and methods. At the beginning of the course, students are represented with main course objectives and main elements of assessment: rubrics for project deliverables, reflections, a diary for project management and time management, search for feedback throughout the course and project development, final presentation for the public, self-evaluation questionnaire and evaluation of teacher's guidance and inducement.

In PBL, students are on all occasions, actively engaged, and they are the owners of the whole process of learning. Their choices in the design of the process and the project are vitally important and the project development process requires students' continuous inquiry. Students and teachers participate together in creating the success criteria and forms of assessment. It derives projects that are typically open-ended, time-consuming and thus take longer to complete. Because of their openness, the projects in PBL cannot be exactly time-framed. It is also hard to predefine the exact milestones of delivery when there are more teams involved in different kinds of projects. In doing small projects, students often work independently. When teacher organizes pair or group work in small projects the work between the students is usually more cooperative than collaborative in nature. The basis for this is diverse: the project assignments are highly structured and offer the possibility for students to distribute tasks, students do not feel the need for collaboration as a result of too structured projects, the process of collaboration takes time and specific skills on the sides of student's and teacher.

More than 80 first-year students of the National University of Uzbekistan were assigned two types of projects. The first one was the interview project in which students have to interview visitors of Uzbekistan to find out what places are well-known in Uzbekistan as tourist destinations for visitors. The second project was designing questions and tasks for authentic listening material, which students find out on the internet and elaborated it in class. For both projects, assessment criteria were provided and explained by the teachers.

The project-based learning was a new method for students and none of the them implemented such kind of projects previously. For this reason, the research aim was to analyze the initial experiences of students and find out how students copied with the tasks. Moreover, it was researched whether the students perceived the importance of projects through distributing feedback forms. The quantitative research method has been applied to collecting data from students. After their project presentations, students were handed in feedback forms (pie chart) where students have to answer questions that were intended to help students to reflect on their perception of the projects.

### Feedback form

1. **How did you feel at the beginning of the project?** \_\_example:  
*curious* \_\_\_\_\_

**Why did you feel that way?**

2. **How do you describe your personal condition in the middle of the project?** \_\_\_\_\_

3. **What thoughts came to you when you completed the project?** \_\_\_\_\_

### Results

Though students' responses in feedback forms varied, we tried to summarize their responses and describe students' personal experiences with one word in each stage.

By analyzing the data using a quantitative research method, we found that 38 students' responses out of 82 (almost 46%) indicated that at the beginning of the projects, students felt motivated to start the projects. In their responses, students expressed eagerness to start projects and demonstrate their skills. Likewise, 27% of students admitted they were interested in the projects. They noted that the projects seemed new and interesting to them. They also mentioned they have never been involved in such project works before. 16% of the students accepted the projects positively. Their answer showed they were neither motivated nor unhappy about the

tasks. They described their experience with words such as optimistic, cheerful, hopeful, and others. The other 5 percent of them, expressed that the project seemed challenging and 4 percent of students stated that they were worried about implementing the projects. Those students explained that they have never done any projects out of the class and the interaction in a foreign language was still challenging for them.

During the middle of the project, 61% of students reported being engaged in the process, while others faced challenges that required additional support from teachers. Most of these students found the extra help helpful in building confidence and overcoming obstacles.

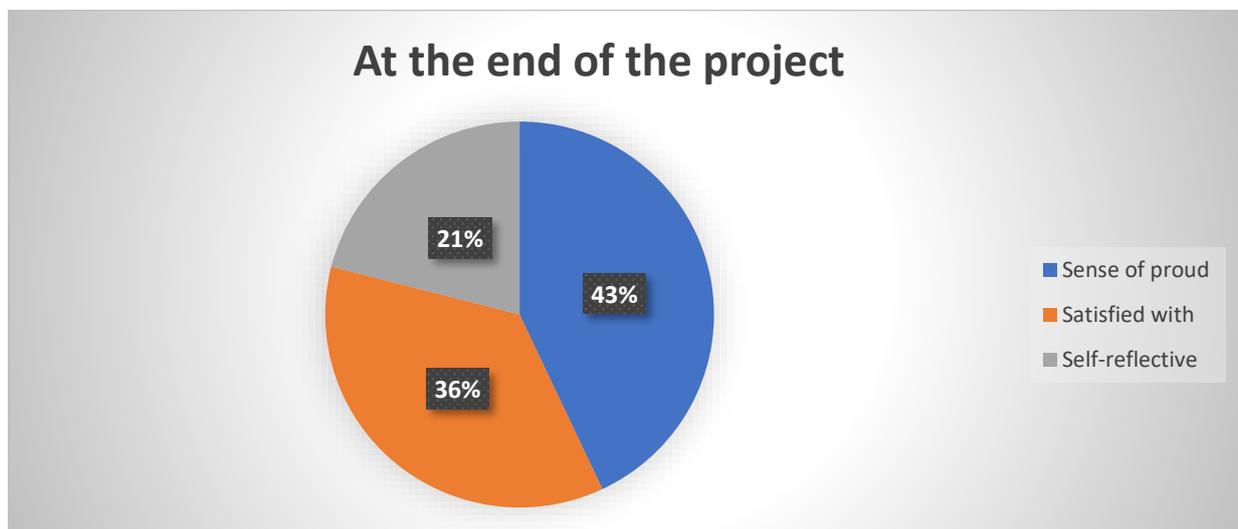
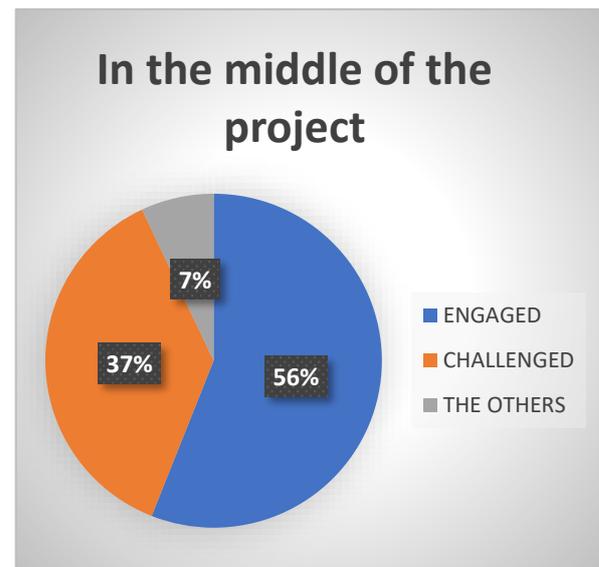
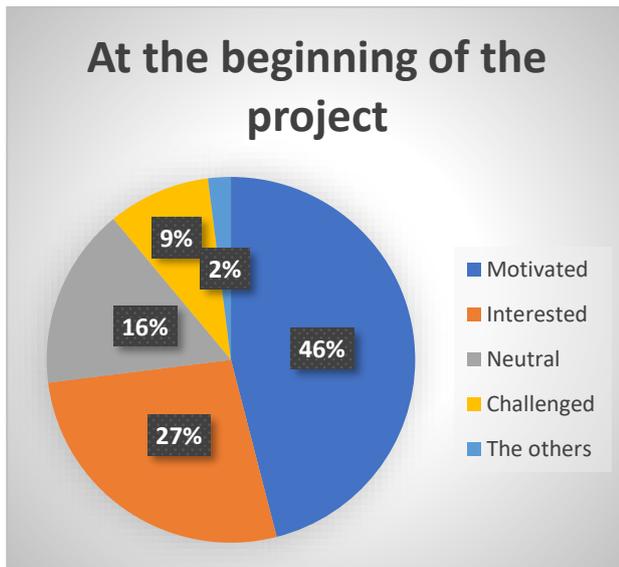
At the end of the project, 41% of students indicated they were proud of their work, while another 36% expressed satisfaction with their progress. The remaining 21% reflected on areas of weakness and skills they needed to improve. As they handed in their feedback forms, many students expressed a desire for more project-based learning in the future, indicating a positive attitude toward this approach.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the data collected from the feedback forms suggests that the majority of students had a positive experience with project-based learning. However, during the implementation phase, of students were engaged in the process, with the rest of the students benefiting from the additional support provided by the professors.

Upon completion of the projects, 43% of students felt proud of their accomplishments, 36% were satisfied with their work, and 21% engaged in self-reflection, identifying areas for improvement. The overall positive attitude towards project-based learning is further supported by the fact that many students expressed interest in participating in similar projects in the future. This demonstrates the potential benefits of including project-based learning in the curriculum to promote student engagement, confidence, and skill development.

## PIE CHART



## REFERENCES

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2. Mergendoller JR (2018) *Defining High Quality PBL: A Look at the Research*, Buck Institute for Education. <https://hqpbl.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Defining-High-Quality-PBL-A-Look-at-the-Research-.pdf>.
3. [https://www.bie.org/about/what\\_is\\_pbl](https://www.bie.org/about/what_is_pbl)