

An Online Sharing Session on Project-Based Learning: From Theories to Implementations

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ABSTRACT

Mengintegrasikan pembelajaran berbasis proyek ke dalam praktik pengajaran dan pembelajaran adalah suatu cara yang mungkin dilakukan untuk menginovasi praktik pengajaran dan pembelajaran di perguruan tinggi yang ada di Indonesia. Program pengabdian masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk membekali para peserta dengan pengetahuan praktis tentang pembelajaran berbasis proyek yang mungkin saja dibutuhkan oleh para peserta ketika mengimplementasikan pendekatan tersebut di instruksi pengajaran mereka. Program pengabdian masyarakat ini dilaksanakan dalam bentuk sesi berbagi secara daring menggunakan aplikasi Zoom. Peserta dari sesi ini adalah tiga puluh dosen Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan di Universitas Jambi. Di dalam sesi daring tersebut, penulis mempresentasikan prinsip-prinsip pembelajaran berbasis proyek (misalnya: keterlibatan di dalam proyek, kolaborasi kelompok, otonomi belajar, dan penonton publik) dan contoh nyata implementasi pembelajaran berbasis proyek di kelas bahasa yang diampu oleh penulis (misalnya: membuat poster digital dan pelaksanaan bazar bahasa Inggris). Sesi presentasi dari penulis kemudian dilanjutkan dengan sesi tanya jawab di mana para peserta tidak hanya bertanya kepada penulis tetapi juga membagikan pengalamannya saat mencoba mengimplementasikan pembelajaran berbasis proyek di kelas mereka.

Integrating project-based learning into teaching and learning practices is a possible way to innovate the practices in universities in Indonesia. This community service program aims to equip its participants with practical knowledge of project-based learning that they might need when implementing the approach in their teaching instructions. The community service program was in the form of an online sharing session conducted via the Zoom application. The participants of the session were thirty lecturers of the Language Education and Literature Program in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Universitas Jambi. In the online sharing session, the author presented project-based learning principles (i.e., students' engagement in a project, group collaboration, learning autonomy, and public audience) and real examples of implementations of project-based learning in his language classrooms (i.e., creating a digital poster and doing an English funfair). The presentation was then followed up by a question-and-answer session where the participants asked questions to the author and shared their experiences in implementing project-based learning in their classrooms.



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INTRODUCTION

Universities in Indonesia gradually need to innovate their teaching and learning practices in the past to be in line with those in today's world contexts, which are more student-centered, encourage

students' collaboration, innovation, and use of technology (Palmer, 2015). One of the possible ways to achieve this goal is by integrating project-based learning (henceforth called PBL) in classroom instructions. PBL is cited widely as "an innovative approach to learning that teaches a multitude of strategies critical for success in the twenty-first century" (Bell, 2010, p. 39). It is also believed to be "a hopeful alternative to the dysfunctional traditional teacher-centered techniques" (Kettanun, 2015, p. 568) and to enhance students' critical thinking, cooperative skills, and learning motivation (Affandi & Sukyadi, 2016). In short, PBL is a teacher-facilitated and student-driven approach to learning (Bell, 2010) that provides opportunities for students to learn a language, skill, and subject content simultaneously by engaging and working on a project (Affandi & Sukyadi, 2016; Mali, 2017, 2018).

In a more specific context, lecturers of the Language Education and Literature Program in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Universitas Jambi are encouraged to integrate PBL into their teaching and learning practices. With this background, this community service program was held to equip the lecturers with practical knowledge of PBL that they might need when implementing PBL in their teaching instructions. Besides, the community service program was also used as a forum for the lecturers and the author to share and constructively discuss their experiences in dealing with PBL and learn from one another regarding the PBL related practices.

METHOD

The main theme for this community service program (henceforth called PkM) was *the best practices for case method and project-based implementations* held by the Language Education and Literature Program (ELL) in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) at Universitas Jambi (UnJa). A week before the program started, one ELL-UnJa lecturer contacted the author via email, explained the purposes of the PkM, and invited him to be a speaker for this PkM.

Based on the email communication, the agreed-upon date for the PkM was February 26, 2022, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. More specifically, the PkM was in the form of a 2-hour synchronous online sharing session, which was conducted via the Zoom platform (<https://zoom.us/>). This online session format was similar to that undertaken successfully by Mali (2022, 2023); Subekti (2021) in their PkM.

In this PkM, the participants were not required to submit any products (e.g., an essay about PBL or a lesson plan integrating PBL principles) at the end of the session. Below is the detailed schedule for that day.

Table 1. The Sharing Session Schedule

No	Time	Activities
1	09.00-09.05	Opening by the Master of Ceremony
2	09.05-09.10	Opening speech by the ELL Department Head
3	09.10-09.40	Session 1 (project-based learning implementation) by the author
4	09.40-10.10	Session 2 (case-method implementation) by the second invited speaker
5	10.10-10.50	Question and answer (Q and A) session
6	10.50-11.00	Final words and speakers-participants' photo session

The PkM participants were lecturers of ELL-FKIP at UnJa. Thirty participants attended the opening sessions, but that number of participants was not fixed as people came and went when the author presented his PBL materials and did his Q&A session. As some of the participants were from the *non-English* department and as requested by the PkM committee, the author presented his materials in *Bahasa Indonesia* (or Indonesian language) to ensure the clarity of his presentation.

In the Q and A session, the author had around fifty minutes to respond to all questions typed by the participants in the Zoom chat box and to those asked directly in the Zoom session. The author welcomed the participants to respond to the author's answers to their questions and share their experiences in implementing PBL.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part was divided into two main sections that present the author's PBL presentation materials. Discussions in each section were supported by relevant literature.

PBL Main Principles

The author started his session by briefly presenting four main principles of PBL that the participants need to use and explore when integrating PBL into their teaching and learning practices.

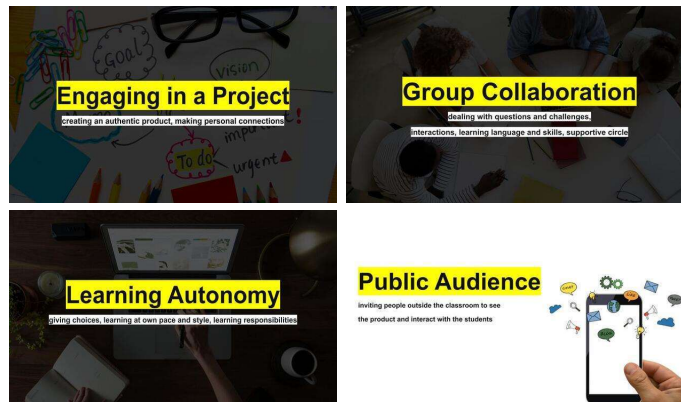


Figure 1. The Author's Presentation Sample Slides on PBL Principles

The first principle was *students' engagement in a project*. As the project's outcome, students are expected to create an authentic product. The term authentic product is not only about a product that students can see or use outside the class (Richards & Schmidt, 2010), but it also refers to a product that is closely related to students' life, personal backgrounds, and interests (Egbert et al., 2021). An authentic product might also mean one that is "meaningful and valuable" (Egbert, 2020, p. 316) to students.

The second principle was *group collaboration*. In doing PBL, students will collaborate and interact with students in a group to address various questions and challenges that might appear in completing their project (Mali & Timotius, 2018; Valenzuela, 2022). At this point, lecturers have an essential role in ensuring that students interact supportively in the group. The lecturers also need to ensure that the project that students do can provide them with opportunities to learn the target language (e.g., learning various language expressions required to perform a task or how to pronounce an English word) and develop non-academic skills (e.g., collaboration and communication with friends or the practice of using various technology applications to create a product).

The third principle was *learning autonomy*. With a deadline to complete the project, students, at some stages of the project completion, need to be given options to learn at their own pace, freedom to use various learning strategies (Yuliani & Lengkanawati, 2017) or technology (see Mali, 2016; Mali & Timotius, 2018) to complete their project. In other words, lecturers should not decide and control everything in the students' process of completing their projects.

The fourth principle is *public audience*. After a product is successfully created at the end of students' project, people outside the class (e.g., friends from other departments or campuses, professionals, parents, or community members) should be able to see the product and interact with the students about their work. We now live in a world, where going public to share our work and telling our story is part of growing (Sniegowski, 2022). Additionally, students might have a double motivation to create their best product when they know that others will see their work (Mali, 2024; Valenzuela, 2022). One possible way to publicly make the students' product accessible was to share it on their social media or campus websites. Another method was to encourage students to join online undergraduate conferences where students can present their PBL experiences and product to receive some feedback from the conference participants and presenters. As students are encouraged to share their work with a public audience, they should not violate any copyright, especially when their work uses files, pictures, or other related materials from the Internet. At this point, the author suggested the PkM participants introduce the Creative Commons website (<https://creativecommons.org/about/ccllicenses/>) to their students.

Examples of PBL Implementation in the Author's EFL Classes

Explanations on PBL main principles were followed by real examples about PBL implementations in some of the author's English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes at a private university in Central Java, Indonesia. The first example was in the author's Creative Writing class (see Mali, 2016), where students had to work in a group of three to write an English poem describing how they felt about their faculty. Then, the students were assigned to illustrate that poem into a digital poster (see Figure 2).

Two main free web-based applications that the students commonly used to design the posters were Canva (accessible at <https://www.canva.com/>) and Postermywall (<https://www.postermywall.com/>). When designing the poster, the students had the opportunities to interact with their group members discussing details of their poster (e.g., color, font, and pictures to add), learn the English language (i.e., writing the poem, checking the spelling and grammar of the poem), and practice using the technology to design the poster. When the poster was ready, students presented it to their classmates and lecturer (the author) in their classroom using English. The author then shared all of the students' posters in a classroom blog so that people outside the school could see the posters. Additionally, the author told the PKM participants that designing a poster to campaign a healthy lifestyle (e.g., for more detailed ideas, read Mali, 2021) might be an exciting project that students could do in their EFL class.

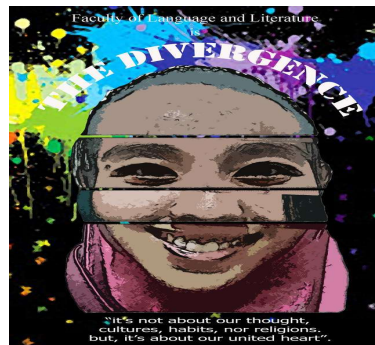


Figure 2. A Sample Poster Designed by the Students in the Writing Class

The second example of PBL implementation was in the author's Speaking for Social Purposes class (see Mali, 2018). One of the students' projects in this class was called English funfair. In this project, the students worked in a group of four people and collaborated to prepare a special food or drink. Then, they had to think about a creative package for their meal or drink and sell it in their stall to people outside their speaking class (e.g., students from other departments, lecturers, and non-academic staff members of the university) on the funfair day. During the funfair, the students had to speak in English when selling their products to the visitors. While the students were communicating with the people and selling their products, lecturers of the speaking class observed and assessed their English-speaking performance.



Figure 3. The Students' Activities on the Funfair Day

Besides the digital poster and the English funfair, the author also presented some other possible projects that the PkM participants can do with their students. The first project is to create a website using a free-website builder (e.g., Site123). This project will provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively with their friends, evaluate campus websites, write English sentences, describe events that will occur on their campus, and create a website using Site123 to promote the events (for detailed ideas of this project, read Mali, 2021b). Another project is creating a digital book. The idea is that the lecturers teaching a writing class can think about compiling students' work (e.g., essays or academic papers) into one single digital book that is accessible to read by people outside the class. Additionally, creating a podcast can be an option. Technically, podcast refers to a digital audio file, usually in an Mp3 format, that people can listen to online or download from the Internet (e.g., visit <https://www.npr.org/programs/>) and use their (portable) electronic devices, such as smartphones, tablets, media players, or computers to play the file. With the increasing popularity of podcasting and growing numbers of podcast listeners worldwide (Vernon, 2021; Richter, 2020), podcasts are also used for language learning purposes (Başaran & Cabaroğlu, 2014; Naseri & Motallebzadeh, 2016) with options of developing students' own podcast materials (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007). For practical steps and stages in creating a podcast, read Mali (2021a).

CONCLUSION

In this PkM, the author has presented some PBL main principles and examples of PBL implementations in his EFL classrooms. Overall, the author's presentation can be done successfully and receives active responses from the participants through the questions addressed to the author's PBL presentation. The only issue that the author faced was related to his poor internet connection at the beginning of his presentation, which made him leave the Zoom session for a minute.

Some recommendations for future PkM programs are as follows. First, in a similar session, ELL-FKIP lecturers at Universitas Jambi can share a project that their students undertake in class, using PBL principles, and discuss the challenges that their students likely encounter while completing the project. Then, one or two PBL experts in Indonesia can be invited to the session to respond to the lecturers' presentations and find possible solutions to address the challenges. Second, the lecturers can share their PBL implementation experiences with (language) teachers in Jambi areas who are probably interested in learning more about PBL. The lecturers might also write a book that provides lesson plans integrating PBL principles and publish it nationally to benefit teachers outside Jambi or Sumatra Island.

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