

Project-Based Learning: Utilization
in a Thai EFL classroom
การจัดการเรียนรู้โดยใช้โครงงาน: การนำไปใช้ในชั้นเรียน
ภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ

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ในประเทศไทย การเรียนรู้โดยใช้โครงงานถูกนำมาใช้อย่างแพร่หลายเพราะเป็นเครื่องมือจัดการเรียนการสอนที่มีประสิทธิภาพ ซึ่งช่วยพัฒนาความสามารถทางด้านภาษาและทักษะต่างๆของผู้เรียนในชั้นเรียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ

บทความนี้ได้นำเสนอ 4 ประเด็นหลัก อันดับแรกได้นำเสนอภาพรวมและแนวคิดของภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศและการจัดการเรียนรู้โดยใช้โครงงาน จากนั้นได้นำเสนอการจัดการเรียนรู้โดยใช้โครงงานในปัจจุบัน บทความนี้ยังได้อภิปรายถึงปัญหาที่เป็นสาเหตุของความล้มเหลวในการจัดการเรียนรู้โดยใช้โครงงานในชั้นเรียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศในประเทศไทย และได้เสนอแนวทางการจัดการเรียนการสอนโดยใช้โครงงานในประเทศไทย ซึ่งจะช่วยให้การจัดการเรียนรู้โดยใช้โครงงานมีประสิทธิภาพยิ่งขึ้นในอนาคต

คำสำคัญ: การเรียนรู้โดยใช้โครงงาน ภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ
ชั้นเรียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศในประเทศไทย

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Abstract

In Thailand, Project-Based Learning (PBL) has been widely used because it is an effective instructional tool which promotes language abilities and skills among learners. This paper, thus, reviews the current implementation of PBL in EFL classrooms in Thailand.

There are four main aspects presented in this article. First, an overview of the concepts of EFL and PBL is presented, followed by the current applications of PBL. Within the context of Thai EFL, further discussion takes place regarding the hidden problems which cause failure in implementing PBL. The feasibility of applying PBL in Thai classrooms is then suggested, which signifies a path towards a more effective utilization of PBL in the future.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning (PBL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Thai EFL classroom

Background

1. English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Due to the thorough dispersion of its international users, English has become well-developed into the language for international communication. As triggered by the great diversity of its users, English has undergone heterogeneous linguistic developments. Based upon the status of the usage concentration, Kachru (1991, p. 179) categorizes the users of English into three groups comprising the following: 1) those in The Inner

Circle, 2) those in The Outer Circle, and 3) those in The Expanding Circle. The language used in each of the circles carries with it a different status. The English in the Inner Circle is spoken as a native language, while it is reckoned as ESL and EFL in the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle, respectively. In Southeast Asia, the status of English as ESL and EFL evolved approximately during the first half of the 19th century when Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam were taken under the British Colony (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 119). Consequently, language learners in the EFL countries have to strive a lot to master the English language. The processes of learning English in EFL countries are restricted within the limitations of classroom settings in which learners have to converse with teachers and friends who also do not have English as their native language. The chances to use English within the settings of EFL are rather meagre. Being placed under the strain of these constraints, obtaining high level of proficiency in English is difficult for many EFL learners. This problem signifies that in order to promote higher levels of language competency of students, urgent steps should be taken to remedy such situations in language teaching. Recently, the idea of learner-centered EFL education has been well-incorporated into the English language pedagogy in the EFL countries. In this article, the literature specifically related to the Project-Based Learning (PBL), which is an offshoot of student-centered learning, has been reviewed. PBL has been deemed as an effective approach for learning because it is a method of teaching that boosts experimental learning as addressed in Silberman (2007:8 cited in Fragoulis, 2009) that “...in experimental learning, learners participate in concrete

activities that enable them to experience what they are learning about, and the opportunity to reflect on those activities”. PBL has been used with diverse groups of EFL learners in different language settings. The PBL approach has proven to be an effective way of learning in which students are motivated via authentic materials and can become engaged in meaningful language conversation. In order to enable learners to reach their optimum learning potential, extensive research on PBL should be further conducted.

2. EFL within the Thai context

English has played an important role in Thai education for many decades. In a typical English classroom in Thailand, a teacher-centered approach is traditionally taken in which teachers take control of their classes and students take on a passive role (Saengboon, 2006). A number of educators have argued that this traditional teaching approach is ineffective since students are forced to memorize instead of truly understanding and learning the content (Thamraksa, 2003). Having recognized the drawback of this traditional teaching approach, the Ministry of Education has initiated education reform in Thailand. The National Education Act of 1999 aimed at creating a learner-centered culture; Foley (2005), agreeing with this, added that there should be desirable balance regarding language knowledge and skills. According to Thai Educational reform, teachers are encouraged to integrate four skills i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing into their language classes. However, in their teaching approaches each of the skills is not equally

balanced. In the Thai EFL classroom, language is still approached as discrete parts with a greater emphasis placed on the form of language rather than the meaning (Prasongsook, 2010). At this point in Thai EFL classrooms, this seems to be crucial because course books are still heavily relied upon. Furthermore, it should be noted here that certain series of EFL course books have placed emphasis on teaching certain skills in one book.

Despite educational reforms regarding teaching and learning activities in English classrooms, the majority of Thai EFL teachers still, in practical ways, use the traditional teaching methods. With these methods, the teacher takes the dominant role in the classroom and often uses lectures as the basis of their teaching approach (Seangboon, 2002). Thai teachers, who have been required to implement the new learner-centered policies, have found them difficult to implement because the teachers themselves have not been properly trained to do so (Wongnoppharatlert, 2001). As a result of the new policies, the learners have been put at the core of the learning process, and they struggle with their new role as active learners. As student-centered approaches rely heavily on the participation of students, some students have been found to reject these approaches because they want to see evidence that they are being taught something. These students cling to the perception that knowledge must be transferred, and as a result, they wait for teachers to “spoon-feed” them (Thamraksa, 2003). Another concern is that language assessment in Thai EFL classrooms does not

include productive language skills, such as writing and speaking. Therefore, teachers have tended to focus exclusively upon particular skills, such as grammar and reading skills that will assist their students in passing their examinations (Wongsothorn, Hiranburana, & Chinnawongs, 2002). As a consequence, the use of teacher-centered among Thai EFL teachers still remains in EFL classes because it is difficult for learners to learn by themselves (Wanchai, 2012). This situation does not only occur in Thailand; it has also been witnessed in many other ASEAN nations, such as China and The Philippines. Nonetheless, these countries have been able to successfully implement PBL approach in their language teaching. For example, in a study conducted by Ke (2010), the Project Based Approach was used with a group of non-English major students at a university in China and the Philippines. In this study, Ke integrated the language activities into the subject contents of geography and tourism management. The students were exposed to authentic communicative situations and were involved at all stages of their learning, i.e., planning developing observation forms, conducting surveys and discussing survey findings. The students reported to have accomplished their tasks and learn to collaborate with their peers in moving toward the same learning goal (Ke, 2010). Tiangco (2005) discussed in his article that the application of PBL into language classrooms in the Philippines generates other aspects of learning because students learn to do problem solving, be creative, and develop management skills in addition to mastering general language ability. It is suffice to conclude that PBL has been used

for diverse groups of EFL learners in different language settings. The PBL approach is proved to be an effective way of learning in which students are motivated via authentic materials and engaged in meaningful language. Perhaps, this instructional practice would be able to offer solutions to problems related to language teaching in Thailand. When PBL approach has been appropriately implemented, the problems related to disintegrating the language into discrete units will soon be solved and learners' other skills, such as thinking skills and cooperative skills can be given opportunities to develop.

3. Project-based Learning

Over the past decade, the student-centered method has become an important component in the educational system, and has played a key role in approaches to teaching and learning. PBL is a systematic teaching approach that improves learners' language skills and development of others skills (Markham, et al., 2003), and as a result, has gained popularity among EFL teachers. Pedagogically, the most important aspect in applying PBL is the integration of the four skills. This type of learning is valuable since it effectively integrates the English skills of reading, listening, writing, and speaking. During the process of carrying out projects, learners need to apply all four skills in order to search for information, write reports, and in the final step, present their projects. Carrying out these procedures enables learners to demonstrate their knowledge in practical ways that integrate the language skills and promote the learning of real language content, not just the dissection of

language forms. Additionally, PBL is an effective approach that allows for the development of multiple skills through meaningful activities, and moreover, functions as a bridge between using English in virtual situations in class and outside the class (Fried-Booth, 2002). In PBL classrooms, learners are encouraged to work in a small group which can further develop learners' skills, such as collaborative skills. When learners work in teams, they discover that they need skills to plan, organize, and negotiate. Because of the nature of project work, development of cooperative skills occurs among learners with different levels of language proficiency. By examining a number of research studies conducted on the subject of Project-Based Learning, this teaching approach allows learners to learn through hands-on experience and in meaningful contexts (Fried-Booth, 2002). Haines (1989) explained that PBL utilizes multi-skill activities, which not only focus on specific language tasks, but also on themes of interest. Thus, this approach provides greater opportunities to promote language ability and to improve important skills, such as collaborative skills.

In the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, PBL can be particularly effective as an approach that can enhance learners' language ability and improve their skills successfully. PBL offers EFL learners the ability to overcome a division between knowledge and skills, helping them to both “know” and “do” (Markham, et al., 2003). It provides learners with opportunities to learn and understand the lesson more thoroughly and to

be able to choose a project that interests them and thereby, be able to use their pre-existing language skills to help them complete the project.

The characteristics of PBL differ from traditional teaching methods; therefore it is important, especially for language teachers, to understand the characteristics of PBL so as to be able to effectively utilize this teaching approach. Within the PBL approach, there are many characteristics that need to be considered. The following section describes the characteristics that have been shared among language teachers in EFL classrooms.

3.1 Characteristics of Project-Based Learning

Although there are a few different processes of conducting PBL projects, among many educators, ideas concerning PBL are similar. This is because the characteristics of PBL are consistent among educators who have studied and implemented this instructional approach (Solomon, 2003 & Stoller, 1997). The characteristics of PBL that have been shared among language teachers in EFL classrooms are as follows:

3.1.1 Learners are at the center of learning (Fried-Booth, 2002 & Stoller, 2002). PBL is a learner-centered approach in which learners are actively engaged in performing tasks rather than in learning about something. Learners are required to produce a product, presentation, or give a performance and in doing so, present the results of the study to the teacher. Furthermore, throughout the process, the teacher serves as an advisor.

In doing so, learners will play a major role in the learning process, while the teacher's role is reduced to that of facilitator or supporter (Bell, 2010).

3.1.2 Learners are provided with opportunities to practice language skills in real world contexts (Fragoulis, 2009 & Stoller, 1997). In language education, the real goal of PBL is to create authentic tasks for language learners in order to achieve comprehensible input and produce comprehensible output by interacting and communicating with others in real-life situations (Thomas, 2000).

3.1.3 Learners are encouraged to work in groups (Beckett & Slater, 2005; Fried-Booth, 2002; Stoller, 2006). They discuss the topic, share ideas and resources, help each other collect and analyze the information gathered, and finally prepare to give the presentation as the final product (Blumenfeld, et al., 1991).

3.1.4 Learners are freely allowed to choose the topics they are interested in and those that are appropriate for their level of difficulty (Fragoulis, 2009). As learners have a significant voice in selecting the content areas or topics of interest and the nature of the projects that they do, they will have more motivation, responsibility, and active engagement in their learning (Blumenfeld, et al., 1991).

3.1.5 Learners take control of their own learning (Haines, 1989 & Solomon, 2003). In PBL, learners work both inside and outside the classroom and as a result, are able to benefit by spending their free time doing the project. Moreover, learners are assigned authentic scenarios and are then allowed to solve the problem by creating their

own paths. The value of this type of process is that it results in building learners' self-confidence, self-esteem, and autonomy, as well as in improving their language skills, content learning, and cognitive knowledge (Stoller, 1997).

3.1.6 Learners are able to present their final project in various forms. Helle, Tynjala, & Olkinuora (2006) specified that PBL generally reflects an end product. The project output can be created in written form, such as in a poster or can be used in an oral mode, e.g. an oral presentation, a role-play, a report, or a stage performance (Haines, 1989 & Stoller, 1997).

All of these characteristics play a key role in supporting the learning process of the students within an EFL classroom. As a learner-center approach, it is important that PBL has a real-world connection so as to capture the learners' interests as they acquire knowledge. Furthermore, during all stages, learners are engaged in doing the work in small groups, from selecting their topic to completing the project. Learners are able to carry out the project both inside and outside the classroom. At the end of the project, they can choose from a variety of presentation formats in order to submit their final project.

Since the PBL approach has gained popularity in language teaching (Beckett, 2002), it would be useful for both teachers and learners to understand their roles in this instructional approach.

3.2 Teachers' Roles in Project-Based Learning

For PBL to be effective, teachers are required to assume different roles than in traditional language classrooms, in which the teacher is at the center of learning (Levy, 1997). In PBL classrooms, the transformed teachers' roles suggested by McGhee and Kozma (2001) include instructional designer, trainer, collaborator, team coordinator, advisor, and monitoring and assessment specialist.

3.2.1 “Instructional designer” is a usual role for teacher in PBL. For this role, teacher must design and plan the lessons. All of the resources available should be taken into account to meet learners' needs while activities, that are well-designed, should be implemented to address those needs.

3.2.2 “Trainer” is the role in which the teacher gives individual instruction to enable the development of skills. The training is accomplished through modeling and helping learners to complete unique tasks.

3.2.3 “Collaborator” refers to a variety of activities that teachers undertake to work with their colleagues in order to improve instruction. These activities include team teaching which is common in PBL instructional approach. Team teaching allows the teacher to actively participate in the teaching process from planning the lesson to evaluating the results.

3.2.3 Another new role for teachers in PBL is “Team coordinator”. The focus of the Team coordinator is on the active assignments in which learners work at their own pace to complete the

project. In addition to opening up opportunities for collaborative learning activities, teachers can create opportunities for peer tutoring and support between learners who have mixed achievement levels.

3.2.4 “Advisor” is one of the crucial roles in PBL. Advisor refers to the teacher who gives assistance, advice or suggestions in a way that enables learners to make sound decisions and to find the information they need to complete a particular task.

3.2.5 “Monitoring and assessment specialist” refers to the new way in which teachers monitor and make attempts to assess and improve learner performance. Teachers and administrators monitor test scores and provide feedback to learners.

In PBL, the above roles become essential to the success of specific activities. In a variety of ways, the new role of teachers in PBL classrooms has vastly more positive effects toward learners than the traditional role of teachers does. First, learners learn more purposefully as teachers effectively plan lessons to enhance learning abilities and meet learners’ interests. Teachers also create opportunities for learners to work in small groups. Therefore, learners with different skill levels have the chance to work together to successfully complete their projects. Meanwhile, teachers continue to monitor and to give suggestions during the phases of project work. Most importantly, after completing the project, teachers will assess the learners’ work and provide some useful advice so that the students’ performance can improve in the future.

3.3. Learners' Roles in Project-Based Learning

In PBL, not only have the teacher's roles been changed, but the roles of learners have also shifted from passive to active (Fried-Booth, 2002 & Stoller, 2002). Learners are required to engage in intelligently focused communication as they generally work in small, collaborative groups. According to Murchú (2005), learners need to be involved in three major roles as self-directed learners, team members/collaborators, and as knowledge managers/leaders. Each of these roles is associated with typical activities.

3.3.1 As “self-directed learners,” learners select their own real-world projects that are related to their interests and experiences. They must also organize their projects and manage the progress that needs to be made on them. This management task extends to managing their time.

3.3.2 Since learners are always divided into groups, the role of “collaborator” or “team member” becomes significant for them. Learners work collaboratively to complete a suitable project, and with respect to the success of the project, there are both individual and shared responsibilities.

3.3.3 “Knowledge manager” is perhaps the most prevalent role in supporting PBL. The focus of this role is on the development of knowledge products. These are often reports, research studies, newspapers, or multi-media presentations that help solve real-world problems.

It can be clearly seen that the new roles of both teachers and learners are equally important in a PBL approach. Teachers are not the center of the classroom, but act as an instructional designer, trainer, collaborator, team coordinator, advisor, and assessment specialist. As a result, the learners' roles have changed from passive into active because they are now required to set their learning objectives according to their interests and work as a team to complete tasks. At the end of the project, learners are asked to present their knowledge product and to present how they accomplished it.

Application of Project-Based Learning in an EFL Classroom

With its proven benefits, PBL is widely accepted by teachers, educators, and researchers (Coffin, 2013; Newprasit & Seepho, 2015; Srikrai, 2008). Many teachers agree that it is an effective tool for the integration of language, and skills (Beckett & Slater, 2005), and therefore, it should be employed in EFL classrooms. The project structure enables teachers and learners to plan the project based on students' interests in the topics. To understand each stage clearly, details of each of each of the steps are summarized below. The four steps of implementing PBL from the following educators (Markham, et al., 2003; Sheppard & Stoller, 1995; Stanley, 2000; Stoller, 1997) are summarized as follows: 1) Starting the Project; 2) Developing the Project; 3) Reporting to the Class; and 4) Assessing the Project.

1. Starting the Project: This stage involves selecting the topic that is of interest and determining its relevance for the students. Teachers provide guiding questions so that students have an idea of what to do. Students then plan the project outline and design the method of development, the final outcomes, and each individual's responsibilities. The project should be challenging and motivating in such a manner that the learners can develop and have the flexibility to work at their own, while, at the same time, within the group, team members can offer advice and assistance. This is an important feature since it contributes to a successful outcome.

2. Developing the Project: This stage involves the research which is undertaken by the learners either individually, in pairs, or as a group. This should be decided by the group before commencing the project. Students search for information to answer their driving questions, and they take note of the results they have received, of the problems they encounter, and of the solutions to solve those problems. This is an efficient process that can be used to improve the project as it progresses.

3. Reporting to the Class: This stage involves presenting and receiving feedback from other students on the progress of the project and the improvements that are being made. The steps occurring throughout the project are assessed to make sure that students comprehend the problems and apply the skills and concepts that are needed to complete the project.

4. Assessing the Project: The final product can be evaluated by an individual student, by groups of students, by a teacher, or by an external audience. This stage allows students to apply and present what they have learned.

It is clear that PBL is a systematic methodology that is suitable for implementing in language classroom (Stoller, 1997). The development of PBL in a classroom can be carefully employed under a process that guides practitioners and students in organizing projects. Despite its positive outcomes and enormous benefits of applying PBL in language learning and teaching, there are a number of challenges that have been faced by teachers and learners in PBL classroom in Thai EFL setting.

Challenges of Project-Based Learning in a Thai EFL context

PBL, as an integrated skills approach, has gained popularity in Thai EFL classroom because it is considered a student-centered approach and because the four language skills can be integrated in the classroom. Several studies have presented the huge advantages of PBL approach (Coffin, 2013; Kettanun, 2015; Meksophawannakul, 2015; Newprasit & Seepho, 2015; Noom-ura, 2013; Pitipornatapin & Kuhapensang, 2015). However, there have been concerns raised by both teachers and learners regarding this instructional practice, especially in language classrooms.

1. Challenges Encountered by Teachers

In Thailand, it is challenging for teachers to apply PBL in language classrooms (Newprasit & Seepho, 2015; Simpson, 2011). Due to a limitation of seminars or workshops in Thailand, the lack of training on implementing PBL in an EFL classroom represents a significant challenge for Thai teachers (Suwannoparat & Chinikul, 2015). Although Intraprawat (2010) introduced a teaching manual for Project-based English language instruction, Thai EFL teachers still feel more comfortable with a teacher-centered approach. A number of teachers have claimed that in traditional approach, they don't have to put a lot of effort into preparing the lesson and creating their own material. Furthermore, teachers also found that PBL is time consuming, and as a result, there is not sufficient time to allow for practice during classes (Ballantyne, 2013 & Pitipornatapin & Kuhapensang, 2015; Rerganan, 2011). Teachers have to sacrifice their free time to give counsel to learners. It was also revealed that due to time limitations, learners' achievement was not significantly improved (Sunaratn, 2013). PBL instruction also differs from traditional teacher-centered methods in many respects including assessment (Meksophawannakul, 2015). Since various assessments such as self-peer assessment, portfolio, and the final project should be taken into account in order to evaluate learners' performance, teachers found it difficult to design assessments that require students to demonstrate their understanding (Simpson, 2011).

2. Challenges Encountered by Learners

In implementing PBL in language classrooms, numerous challenges are found. These do not occur only among teachers, but learners also encounter difficulties in PBL classrooms, including a lack of experience and problems with time-management. Although it has been employed in many EFL classrooms for decades, with regard PBL there is a focus that has been misplaced.

At first, learners are unfamiliar with PBL (Intel, 2003). Kettanun (2015) claimed that Thai EFL learners are attached to memorizing. They find it hard to work with others which can consequently cause them to lose interest in this teaching approach. Thai learners prefer traditional teacher-centered approach because they only need to follow the instructions from the teacher. Thai learners undoubtedly trust in their teachers (Kettanan, 2015). Thiongprasert & Cross, 2008 reviewed in their study that Thai learners prefer their teachers to be a leader of the class and feel comfortable with the teacher-directed classroom. In contrast, they have to be self-reliant within the context of the PBL classroom. In addition, time consumption is considered an obstacle in implementing PBL (Noom-ura, 2013; Pitiporntapin & Kuhapensang, 2015). A study by Borganan (2011) revealed that if the time allotted for the project is too short, the learners tend to finish off the project without considering the quality of their work. Furthermore, learners will tend to focus more on the product rather than on the process itself, accepting that they intend to complete the project rather than learn the language. Learners focused

on conducting the project and were negligent in connecting the language skills to the content knowledge (Ballantyne, 2003). The result revealed that the project work took learners' attention away from their learning since they were not given a clear objective before conducting a project.

Given the limitations stated above, which show that PBL has brought a degree of frustration to both teachers and learners in Thai EFL classrooms, it is no wonder that PBL is considered to be a challenging learning strategy and that its implementation has faced several obstacles. First, there is a lack of experience for both teachers and learners who are unfamiliar with the PBL instructional approach. Hence, they tend to find it hard to get the teaching approach right, especially in the language classroom. In implementing PBL, the limitation of time is another hindrance for teachers and learners. As this teaching approach takes more time than the traditional one, the duration of the class is crucial for teachers to cover the curriculum plans and for learners to complete an effective project. Assessing the scope of the project is another complexity found by teachers in PBL classrooms, because alternative forms of evaluating the learners' knowledge are required. Finally, learners often "misfocus" when PBL is implemented in the classroom. This means that most students focus on the project and the language itself is often neglected. Moreover, learners tend to complete the project without applying the language knowledge that they have previously acquired in class. As a consequence of this, learners do not learn the language as it supposed to be learned.

Feasibility of Project-Based Learning in a Thai EFL Classroom

There are several challenges faced by teachers and learners in implementing PBL, and these challenges should not be ignored. If the following advice is taken, then successful implementation can be achieved.

In terms of a lack of experience, fully implementing a PBL approach can be daunting without having suitably qualified and trained staff. PBL requires planning and management skills with which teachers may be unfamiliar. To overcome this challenge, schools must support their teachers in terms of providing teacher training and workshops that disseminate knowledge related to PBL. Mapes (2009) suggests that teacher training regarding PBL should be conducted prior to implementation. Such activities will improve each teacher's understanding of PBL and hopefully he/she with appropriate training can more confidently and more effectively implement PBL in EFL classrooms. The learners' lack of experience in PBL classrooms is also an important issue that should not be ignored. Both the institution and teachers should assimilate PBL into the class in ways that can increase the learners' familiarity with this teaching approach. Continuously implementing PBL in the classroom can provide opportunities for learners to become adjusted to the approach. Institutional support can also help teachers and students to overcome these challenges and make the most of PBL opportunities (Yam & Rossini, 2015).

The next aspect to be examined is PBL's time consuming nature. An overload of work during the semester often obstructs teachers and learners from implementing PBL (Gaer, 1998). A flexible timeline should be allowed for both teachers and learners (Mapes, 2009). In order to promote in-depth, meaningful understanding, and reflection, both large blocks of time and extended opportunities for learners to explore topics are usually required.

Another equally important and crucial aspect of PBL, which shouldn't be overlooked, is assessment. Training in assessment and evaluation can be very beneficial by creating opportunities to improve the teachers' understanding of assessments and to support them in being able to design effective and authentic assessments for PBL classrooms. Formative and summative assessments are generally used in PBL classrooms (Slater, et al., 2006). Formative assessments is appropriate in providing feedback during the process of conducting project while summative assessment is generally used to provide the overall performance at the end of the process (Markham et al., 2003). Assessment problems could lead to "misfocusing" which is a difficulty encountered by learners that is associated with PBL. Learners may become so excited with the projects that they lose their awareness of the language in the learning process. To solve this problem, teachers should clarify the objectives of their lessons, as well as provide an assessment outline at the beginning of the course so that learners are reminded to focus on the language and integrate what they are learning

into their projects (Grant, 2002). In addition, learners will be able to evaluate their progress (Harmer & Stokes, 2014)

Despite the challenges faced in implementing PBL in Thai EFL classrooms, any obstacles encountered in PBL classrooms can be overcome when both teachers and learners have a thorough understanding of the PBL instructional approach. Furthermore, a comprehensive and constant implementation of this instructional practice in the classroom will be an effective way to increase its efficiency.

Conclusion

This paper has reviewed a Project-based Learning approach used in language classrooms, including the systematic application of PBL in EFL classrooms, along with the associated challenges. In order to implement PBL effectively in a Thai EFL context, it is suggested that unless the conditions for success are already in place, proper precautions should be taken when embracing PBL. This paper has, thereby, provided the feasibility of utilizing PBL in Thai EFL classrooms so that the obstacles faced by teachers and learners in PBL classrooms can be overcome. Therefore, the integration of PBL in a Thai EFL context, which is the main focus of this paper, could significantly enhance its feasibility in the language classroom. Hopefully, this review can become a fundamental guideline leading to a more effective implementation of PBL in Thai EFL classrooms.

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