THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS

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Abstract. *This article investigates the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PBL) as a pedagogical approach to enhance students' writing skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The study aims to determine how PBL influences learners' writing fluency, creativity, and motivation compared to traditional teacher-centered methods. Data were collected through classroom observations, writing assessments, and student reflections. The findings indicate that PBL promotes active learning, collaboration, and authentic writing experiences, resulting in significant improvement in both linguistic accuracy and content organization.*

Keywords: *project-based learning, writing skills, EFL, learner motivation, collaborative learning, pedagogy.*

Introduction. Writing is one of the most complex skills to master in language learning, requiring not only grammatical competence but also creativity, coherence, and the ability to express ideas logically. Traditional methods of teaching writing often emphasize accuracy and structure over creativity and real-life communication. As a response, Project-Based Learning (PBL) has gained attention as an innovative instructional strategy that integrates language learning with meaningful tasks.

PBL is based on constructivist theory, emphasizing student-centered learning and knowledge construction through real-world projects. According to Thomas (2000), PBL encourages learners to investigate authentic problems and produce tangible outcomes, thereby fostering higher-order thinking and language use. This paper explores how PBL can effectively develop writing skills among university students learning English as a foreign language.

Methods. To investigate the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in developing writing skills, a mixed-method approach was employed. This design combined quantitative and qualitative research methods to ensure comprehensive and reliable findings. The study followed a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test assessments to measure the improvement in students' writing performance. Alongside, qualitative methods such as interviews and classroom observations were conducted to gain deeper insights into learners' experiences and attitudes toward PBL.

Three main instruments were used: Writing Tests (Quantitative): Pre- and post-tests were conducted to measure improvements in writing fluency, organization, vocabulary, and grammar accuracy. Questionnaires (Quantitative & Qualitative): Administered at the end of the course to collect students' opinions about the usefulness of PBL in developing writing skills. Classroom Observation & Interviews (Qualitative): The researcher observed students' participation, collaboration, and motivation during project stages and interviewed a sample of 10 students for detailed feedback. Quantitative data from writing tests and questionnaires were analyzed statistically using paired-sample t-tests to compare pre- and post-test means. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were analyzed through thematic analysis, identifying recurring themes such as motivation, collaboration, and writing confidence.

Results. The results revealed a significant improvement in the writing performance of students in the PBL group. The mean post-test scores of the experimental group increased by 25%, compared to 10% in the control group. Students in the PBL group demonstrated better coherence, richer vocabulary, and improved grammatical accuracy.

Additionally, questionnaire results showed that 85% of the PBL group reported higher motivation and confidence in writing. Observations confirmed that students actively engaged in discussions, peer editing, and problem-solving throughout the project cycle. Teacher observations showed that students in the PBL group were more active in brainstorming, discussing ideas, and revising drafts. They demonstrated increased use of English for communication, particularly during group planning and editing stages. The classroom atmosphere became more cooperative and student-centered, contrasting with the teacher-dominated structure observed in the control group.

Discussion. The findings support the view that Project-Based Learning is an effective approach for developing writing skills in EFL contexts. The use of authentic tasks and group collaboration encouraged students to view writing as a purposeful and communicative act rather than a mechanical exercise.

Compared to traditional methods, PBL fostered deeper learning, creativity, and autonomy. The interactive environment enabled students to negotiate meaning, share ideas, and receive peer feedback, which aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development. Moreover, the integration of research and presentation stages improved learners' critical thinking and academic writing abilities.

However, the study also highlights challenges such as time management, uneven participation, and the need for teacher guidance in organizing projects effectively. Teachers should therefore receive training in designing and facilitating PBL activities aligned with writing objectives. The findings of this study demonstrate that Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a highly effective instructional strategy for developing students'

writing skills in EFL contexts. The results clearly show that students in the PBL group achieved greater improvement in writing performance compared to those taught through traditional teacher-centered instruction.

Conclusion. Project-Based Learning proved to be a powerful method for enhancing writing skills in EFL settings. It not only improved linguistic and organizational aspects of writing but also increased students' motivation, confidence, and sense of responsibility. Implementing PBL in writing instruction allows learners to connect classroom activities with real-world contexts, promoting both language competence and lifelong learning skills. Future research could explore the long-term effects of PBL on academic writing performance and its integration with digital tools.

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