

A framework for project-based learning in ELT

Jason Anderson
for Delta Publishing
May 2021



Thanks for coming... who are you?

1. What country are you working in?
2. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
3. What's your (main) teaching context?
 - a) primary / young learners (learners 10 or younger)
 - b) secondary / teens (11-18)
 - c) tertiary or adult
4. Why did you sign up?

Criticality Caution

Always be critical of other people's ideas for your classroom:

- Will they be relevant?
- Will they be feasible?
- Will I have time?
- Will I need to adapt?

Plan for the webinar

- General challenges we currently face
- Project-based learning (PBL) as possible solution (incl. definition)
- Language use challenges
- Ideas for PBL projects
- A framework for PBL projects
- Ways for presenting the 'product'
- Challenges with PBL and some tips
- Some DELTA publications of relevance
- Comments, questions, critique

Please chat away!
Let us know what
you're thinking:
agree? disagree?
question?

What challenges did you mention?

Total responses	56
Themes mentioned	
Motivation of Ls	11
Engagement of Ls	10
Maintaining/increasing interest	8
Online / Zoom challenges	7
Differentiation/different levels/needs	6
Challenges relating to learner speaking	4
Time management challenges	5
classroom management	3
Too much L1 use	2

28 in total (50%) mentioned issues to do with motivating, engaging, interesting learners

“Maintaining learners' motivation and interest; managing time; teacher's talking time”



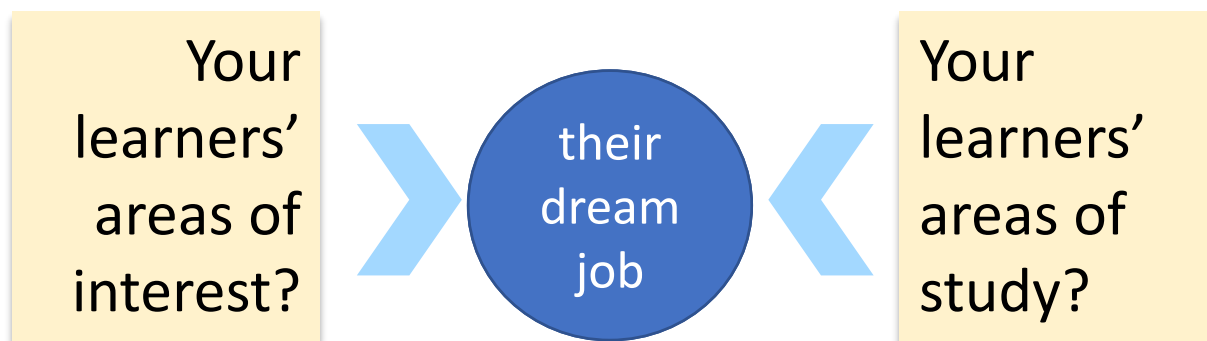
“Answer to different learning levels and styles and maintaining students motivated”



Thanks for your ‘feedforward’
– v. useful and insightful!

A possible solution?

Project-based learning motivates learners, bringing skills and knowledge together. It makes English relevant to learners' areas of interest or study and creates real, tangible products in English (as learners may need to do in their future). There is also evidence of impact on learners' productive language skills (e.g., Astawa et al., 2017) and cognitive development (e.g., Thomas, 2000). Importance of engagement and motivation?
[See Dörnyei, 2018.](#)



A working definition of project-based learning for language teaching

Project-based Learning (PBL) for language classrooms involves learners working in fixed groups for a planned period to research a phenomenon or study a problem, and produce a ‘product’ in the target language (e.g. English) as evidence of their enquiry. It is cross-disciplinary, provides agency to learners (e.g., to choose their topic focus), develops higher order cognition, and includes the development of practical skills in collaborative environments that simulate real world contexts (e.g., work, academic research, etc.).

Based on: Grossman et al., 2018; Moss & Van Duzer, 1998; Turnbull, 1999; Thomas, 2000.

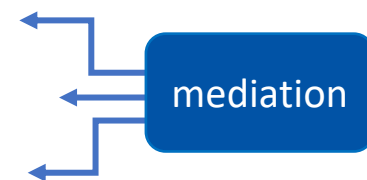
This **product orientation** gives voice to learners’ **creativity**, something Ken Robinson (2006) has argued that schools “kill”. It is through latching onto this that we *may* be able to engage/motivate/interest those more disaffected learners (like me at school 😊).

Language use expectations in PBL

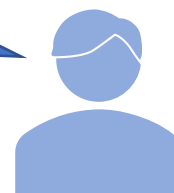
What challenges do you face with language use in the classroom?

In PBL, language-choice can easily be managed in three areas:

1. inputs (e.g. project instructions/overview in English),
2. products (e.g., presentations and reports must be in English),
3. interaction with you, the teacher (you speak English).



“Learners use too much L1 during the project. Then to fix that, I need to take time away from the project to teach the language required to actually do the project. Meanwhile, you end up behind schedule.”



Learners can be allowed to use any languages when working on a project in their groups (inclusive, creativity first). Very often, they will “translanguage”. This is what they’ll do in future work environments.

Higher proficiency learners: in-class discussions in English (include in assessment criteria).


To encourage more speaking practice, plan for spoken presentations in English.

Let's get practical!

Share some of your ideas for possible projects in the chat. These could be projects you've done recently, or ones you've heard about others doing.

E.g. students research and present on an English song they love.


Some of your amazing project ideas




A speaking presentation on a school trip to a planet.

Producing an online brochure on Surviving Lockdown - ways to stay healthy and to look after your mental well-being during the first lockdown

Town planning: E.g. Choose an area in your city and suggest how it can be improved.




Product development - biscuits for different target customers





Sustainability: Don't waste water!"

IELTS task 1 writing. Students devise questionnaire, collate results in diagram, write T1 essay question, then ask peer group to respond to task.



Regions of the UK - history, culture, towns and cities; Prime Ministers of the UK; Periods in the history of the UK



E-twinning:
<https://www.etwinning.net/>

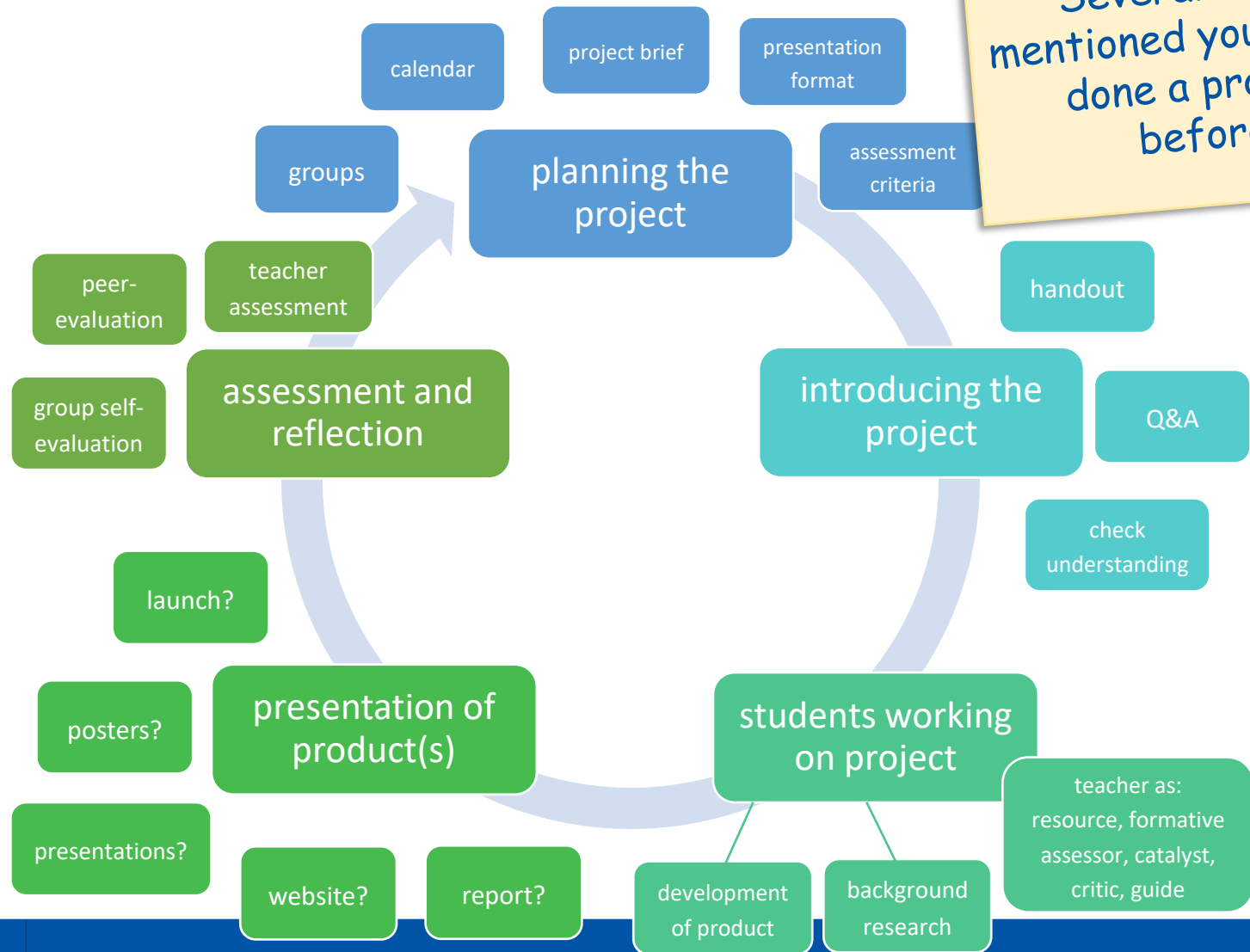
Six ideas for ESL/ELT projects

1. **(Information) Research and present** Presentations to classmates on people, hobbies, places, songs, etc.
2. **Story/article/newspaper writing** Fictional or true, narratives or news stories.
3. **Design problem projects** (e.g. design the perfect classroom; design a monument to a leading figure in our country; design a park for wildlife and people in our city; develop an invention for 'Dragon's Den').
4. **Business problem projects** (e.g. save a failing café or restaurant; create a new app-based language learning service; improve a well known business/community resource, e.g. local supermarket chain, airport, train station).
5. **Research projects** (e.g. research questions: Is social media a positive or negative influence on our lives? Are students happy with the university services? How has life changed since our parents were children?).
6. **'Real product' projects** (e.g. develop a website for English learners planning to take an important exam; plan a school social event; set up/improve an 'invited speaker' events calendar for the school; design subject-specific 'learning posters' for the university canteen).

easier

more
challenging

A framework for project-based learning in TESOL



Product presentation formats

A well designed project may include one, two or more of these:

- Presentations to class (e.g. with PowerPoint, each group member contributes; without PowerPoint – cf. TED talks)
- Poster presentation (with mingle activity)
- Written presentation (e.g. structured report, submitted article)
- Online presentation (e.g. blog post, website, YouTube video/VLOG, podcast)
- Drama presentation (e.g. of historical event)
- ‘Pitch’ presentation (e.g. dragon’s den; pitching to the board of directors)
- Launch of ‘real world’ product
- Publication of research article

Challenging PBL – Some of our critical comments

Student motivation/engagement with the more independent nature of PBL. Digital literacy/research skills being lacking. Students lacking familiarity with peer and self assessment (used to very teacher centred methodology)



Getting not-so-successful students interested; helping students organise great amount of info in a presentation and poor grammar when they start speaking without preparation.



1. tailoring ESP (English for specific purposes) courses for students' professional needs; 2. providing the right amount of support that, on the one hand, encourages students to learn independently, and on the other hand, makes the completion of the task realistic.



Some useful tips for implementing PBL in your classroom

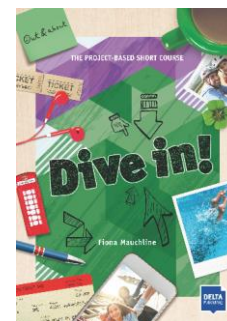
- **Create project groups carefully:** 2-5 learners (ideally 3-4). Plan carefully. Sometimes mixed ability groups work well, sometimes same ability groups force the “hanger on” students to work.
- **Planning is key:** Make sure time frames are realistic. Develop assessment criteria at this stage. Develop project tools (e.g., project ‘rubric’; assessment criteria; calendar; group timesheet)
- **Teacher role:** In early stages, check groups are on task, and their focus is appropriate. Remind learners of assessment criteria. Later on, spend time (10-15 minutes) with each group, getting an update on progress and offering feedback, critique, suggestions.
- **Plan your first project as... a project!** Get together with colleagues in a study group, design and implement a project together with the support of your line manager. Reflect and learn during the process. Present your findings to colleagues at a future CPD event.

Dive in!

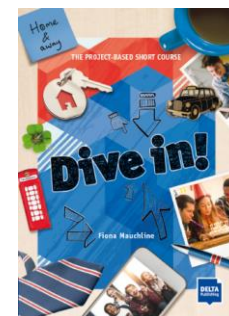
The project-based short course by Fiona Mauchline



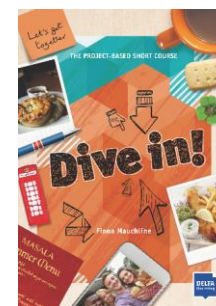
- Four books (modules) designed specifically for short-stay, holiday courses!
- Perfect for A2-B1 teenagers.
- Mix of motivating and innovative activities.
- All modules can be used independently and in any order.
- Topic based and project work focus for 21st Century learning



Out & about



Home & away



Let's get together



Me & my world

Me & my world

CONTENTS

IN CLASS

DIVING INTO ...

- 2 - 7 **Day 1 After-school activities**
Project: Getting started
- 8 - 13 **Day 2 Local shops and ethical shopping**
Project: How's it going?
- 14 - 19 **Day 3 Friendship**
Project: Working together
- 20 - 25 **Day 4 Trips together**
Project: Putting it together
- 26 - 31 **Day 5 Helping others**
Project: Sharing and evaluating



Scan this page to download all the audios and videos you need in this module.

REVIEW QUIZ

- 32 Doing the quiz
- 33 ... and make your own quiz!

LANGUAGE WORKOUTS

- 34 Talking about the past
- 35 Comparing things
- 36 Talking about intentions and ambitions
- 37 Giving advice

OUT OF CLASS

PERSONAL PAGES

- 38 - 39 Our day out: Objectives, details, people, places
- 40 - 45 Journal: Words and phrases and more

LANGUAGE SUPPORT

- 46 - 53 Language bank: Structure reference and functional reference
- 54 - 56 Lexical support: Me and my world and my week

DELTA Augmented App
Audio files and video animation to download.

REVIEW QUIZ and
LANGUAGE WORKOUTS
integrated in the Student's Book

OUR FOCUS THIS WEEK:

Exploring friendship and how to make a positive impact.

BUILDING THE PROJECT



BUILDING THE PROJECT
Daily project work with presentation of results at the end of the week.

CONTENTS

Me & my world

IN CLASS

DIVING INTO ...

- 2 - 7 **Day 1 After-school activities**
Project: Getting started
- 8 - 13 **Day 2 Local shops and ethical shopping**
Project: How's it going?
- 14 - 19 **Day 3 Friendship**
Project: Working together
- 20 - 25 **Day 4 Trips together**
Project: Putting it together
- 26 - 31 **Day 5 Helping others**
Project: Sharing and evaluating



Scan this page to
download all the audios
and videos you need in
this module.

IN CLASS

- 5 teaching days per module
- 3 teaching units per day
- 5 steps to project success

Ideas in Action series

NEW
Available
later this
year



- A combination of practical material and methodology training
- Linking theory and practice
- Ready to use and photocopiable activities
- Adaptable and easy to integrate

*Making
language
matter.*

Jason Anderson | A framework for project-based learning in ELT | May 2021

www.deltapublishing.co.uk

DELTA
Publishing

Jason's other Delta books



Jason Anderson

Role Plays for Today

Photocopiable activities
to get students speaking



Jason Anderson

Speaking Games

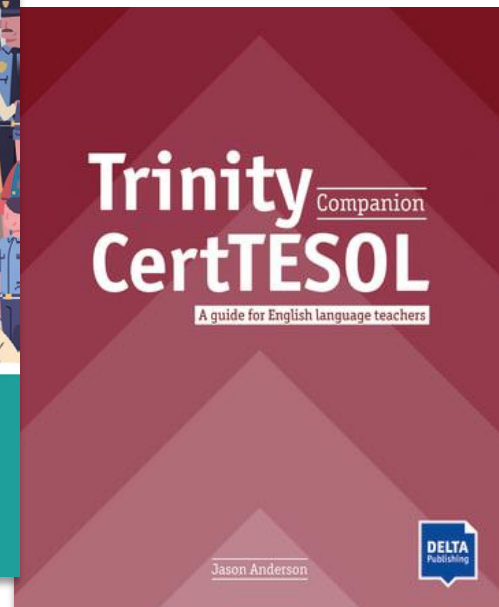
Photocopiable activities to
make language learning fun



Jason Anderson

Teamwork

Interactive tasks
to get students talking



Trinity Companion CertTESOL

A guide for English language teachers

Jason Anderson



Photocopiable resource books: Include interactive activities and tasks to make language learning fun and get students talking!

For teachers taking the Trinity CertTESOL qualification.

*Making
language
matter.*

Jason Anderson | A framework for project-based learning in ELT | May 2021

www.deltapublishing.co.uk



References and resources

Astawa, N. L. P. N. S. P., Artini, L. P. & Nitiasih, P. K. (2017). Project-based learning activities and EFL students' productive skills in English. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 8, 1147-1155.

Dörnyei, Z. (2018). Engaging Language Learners (presentation). See here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg6BSbpVgVU&t=1s>

Grossman, P., Pupik Dean, C. G., Schneider Kavanagh, S & Herrmann, Z. (2018). Preparing teachers for project-based teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100, 43-48. Available here:

http://ler.s3.amazonaws.com/Grossman+et+al+4_2019.pdf

Moss, D. & Van Duzer, C. (1998). Project-based learning for adult English language learners. Washington DC: National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education. Available here: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED427556.pdf>

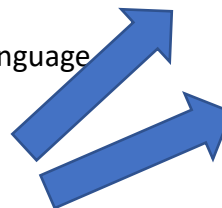
Robinson, K. (2006) Do schools kill creativity? TED talk.

https://www.ted.com/talks/sir_ken_robinson_do_schools_kill_creativity?language=en

Thomas, J. W. (2000). A Review of Research on Project-Based Learning. Available here:

www.bobpearlman.org/BestPractices/PBL_Research.pdf

Turnbull, M. (1999). Multidimensional project-based teaching in French second language (FSL): A process-product case study. *Modern Language Journal*, 83, 548-568.



Two useful resources

- http://www.jasonanderson.org.uk/downloads/Framework_for_project-based_learning_in_TESOL.pdf
- http://www.jasonanderson.org.uk/downloads/Project-based_learning_in_the_English_language_classroom.pdf

