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Maximizing the Benefits of Project Work in Foreign Language Classrooms

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT WORK DIFFERS GREATLY FROM ONE INSTRUCTIONAL setting to another. In some settings, fairly non-elaborated tasks, confined to a single class session, are labeled as projects. In other settings, elaborate sets of tasks establish the process for completing the project and span an entire instructional unit; in settings like these, the benefits of project work are maximized because students are actively engaged in information gathering, processing, and reporting over a period of time, and the outcome is increased content knowledge and language mastery. In addition, students experience increased motivation, autonomy, engagement, and a more positive attitude toward English. Although project-based learning presents challenges for teachers and students (Beckett 2002; Eyring 1997), most project-work proponents assert that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

In this article, we focus on how English language teachers can capitalize on the content and language learning benefits of project work. To explore the topic, we examine the characteristics of under-exploited project work, outline the features that maximize the potential benefits of project work, and present a case study of project-based learning. We conclude with recommendations for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and materials writers who want to integrate project-based learning into their own curricula.

Under-exploited project work

Numerous language educators incorporate what they call "project work" into their classrooms, even though the lessons do not maximize the full potential of project work. For example, in some settings, basic communicative activities used to help students get to know one another better and to promote conversation have been labeled as projects. What often occurs in such settings is that students, when given the chance, join groups with their friends. They complete their non-elaborated tasks in a superficial way without much collaboration. Students socialize, but rarely assist each other with the language and information-gathering demands of the task (if there are any demands).

In some settings, project work is merely a source of entertainment and a break from routine classroom activities. Though projects often focus on challenging, real-world subject matter, students are often solely concerned with the visual attractiveness of their projects, paying little attention to content and language learning. In these settings, teachers often reinforce this misdirected attention by assessing student projects according to their visual appeal, ignoring students' gains in language and content learning.

In other settings, students are constrained in their ability to grow from their projects, either because of excessive teacher control or because of the absence of teacher feedback and guidance during the process. In settings characterized by too much teacher control, we find instructors who dictate each step of the process without giving students any voice in defining the project. Generally, such excessive control inhibits students from taking responsibility for their own learning and developing a sense of ownership toward the project. In these settings, students are rarely asked to provide feedback on the project experience; thus, often the same project is incorporated into future instruction, with no modification, which usually results in the same lack of student engagement. Another problem occurs when repeating students influence new students with their negative attitudes toward the project, further undermining the potential of the project.

Project work can be more effective when teachers relax their control, when students regard the teacher as a guide (Sheppard and Stoller 1995), and when students provide feedback on the experience so that projects can be improved each year. A total relaxation of teacher control, however, is not the solution to a teacher-centered project. In some cases, students are left alone and receive no guidance on the language, content, or process demands of the project. Here, it seems, teachers have ignored both the process-based nature of project work and students' need for support at different stages in the project. Finding the proper balance between teacher guidance and student autonomy enhances the advantages of project work in the language classroom.

Project work that maximizes benefits

Projects that are structured to maximize language, content, and real-life skill learning require a combination of teacher guidance, teacher feedback, student engagement, and elaborated tasks with some degree of challenge. Generally, such projects are multidimensional. A review of numerous case-study reports (Allen 2004; Gardner 1995; Gu 2004; Ho 2003; Lee 2002; Levine 2004; Papandreou 1994; Tomei, Glick, and Holst 1999) reveals that successful project-based learning:

- focuses on real-world subject matter that can sustain the interest of students
- requires student collaboration and, at the same time, some degree of student autonomy and independence
- can accommodate a purposeful and explicit focus on form and other aspects of language
- is process and product oriented, with an emphasis on integrated skills and end-of-project reflection.

The end result is often authenticity of experience, improved language and content knowl-

edge, increased metacognitive awareness, enhanced critical thinking and decision-making abilities, intensity of motivation and engagement, improved social skills, and a familiarity with target language resources.

One way to maximize the potential benefits of project work is to follow the ten-step process advocated by Stoller (1997) and Sheppard and Stoller (1995). The ten steps are summarized below.

Step 1: Students and instructor agree on a theme for the project

The students and instructor come to an agreement on a project theme. Because projects range from structured, semi-structured, to unstructured in terms of the degree to which the teacher defines the project (Stoller 1997), instructors should identify ways (large or small) in which students can develop some sense of ownership toward the project.

Step 2: Students and instructor determine the final outcome of the project

With the nature and objectives of the project in mind, the students and instructor determine the final outcome of the project (e.g., bulletin board display, written report, debate, brochure, letter, handbook, oral presentation, video, multimedia presentation, theatrical performance). At this point, the students and instructor negotiate the most appropriate audience for their projects (e.g., classmates, other students, parents, program director, city mayor, a local business).

Step3: Students and instructor structure the project

After the theme and final outcome of the project are determined, the students and instructor work out project details that guide students from the opening activity to the completion of the project. In this step, students consider their roles, responsibilities, and collaborative work groups. After negotiating a deadline for project completion, students reach a consensus on the timing for gathering, sharing, and compiling information, and then presenting their final project.

Step 4: Instructor prepares students for the demands of information gathering

At this stage, the instructor prepares students for the language, skill, and strategy demands associated with information gathering. With student ability levels in mind, the instructor prepares instructional activities for each of the information-gathering tasks. For instance, if students will be conducting interviews to gather information, the instructor may plan activities in which students have to form questions, ask follow-up questions, request clarification, and take notes. If students are expected to write letters, the instructor might review the format and language of formal letters. If they intend to conduct an Internet search, the instructor may review search procedures and introduce useful note-taking strategies.

Step 5: Students gather information

After practicing the skills, strategies, and language needed for gathering information, students are ready to collect information using methods such as interviewing, letter writing, and library searches. Whenever possible, the instructor brings in relevant content resources to get students started on their information quests.

Step 6: Instructor prepares students to compile and analyze data

At this stage, students need to master the language, skills, and strategies needed to compile, analyze, and synthesize the information that they have collected from different sources. The instructor prepares students to do much of this on their own through tasks that involve, for example, categorizing, making comparisons, and using graphic organizers such as charts and time lines. Numerous training sessions might need to be planned, depending on the types of information collected and the ways in which it was collected (e.g., taped interviews, brochures received in response to solicitation letters, library research, and note-taking).

Step 7: Students compile and analyze information

After engaging in teacher-guided preparatory activities, students are ready to tackle the demands of compiling and analyzing the gathered information. Working in groups, students organize information and then discuss the value of the data that they have collected, keeping some and discarding others. The goal is to identify information that is critical for the completion of their projects.

Step 8: Instructor prepares students for the language demands of the final activity

As in Steps 4 and 6, the instructor designs language-improvement activities to help stu-

dents successfully present the final outcome of the project. Those activities may focus on skills for successful oral presentations, effective written revisions and editing, persuasive debates, and so forth. Some focus on form might be greatly appreciated by students at this point.

Step 9: Students present the final product

Students present the final outcome of their projects, as planned in Step 2.

Step 10: Students evaluate the project

In this last, often neglected stage of project work, students reflect on the language mastered and the subject matter acquired during the project. In addition, students are asked to make recommendations that can be used to enhance similar projects in the future. It is during this stage that teachers provide students with feedback on their language and content learning.

Project work options

The details of project work are largely dependent on contextual factors, language program objectives, and available resources. For instance, in Turkey, at higher education levels, students of agriculture can engage in project work about soil erosion, which is a serious contemporary issue, with the goal of generating possible solutions for deforestation in Turkey. Engineering students can prepare written reports after investigating the advantages and disadvantages of a third bridge over the Bosphorus in Istanbul; they might even send their reports to interested officials. Students enrolled in a vocational school on the southern coast of Turkey might design a website that introduces their town, with an eye toward attracting and building tourism in the area (Hüseyin Yücel, personal communication, May 2004). Academic English-preparation students in their first year of university studies can explore a self-selected topic related to their majors (reported orally to classmates and in writing for their teacher) to prepare them for future studies (Semra Sadik, personal communication, June 2004). Students majoring in physical education may investigate reasons for the limited numbers of Turkish athletes in recent Olympic games. EFL students in the eastern part of Turkey might conduct a survey aimed at determining the causes for low female-student school enrollments, concluding with suggestions, submitted to local officials, for turning around the trend.

Students studying EFL in other countries are known to focus their projects on issues specific to their own countries, regions, and studies. Italian vocational high schools, for example, have structured their curricula around topics of relevance to students in various vocational areas, resulting in brochures for tourists, travel itineraries submitted to travel agencies, school banquet manuals, and many other real-world items. EFL students in Tunisian high schools have explored topics as diverse as mining and traditional marriage practices as part of their project work, culminating in video presentations of their findings. EFL students in Japan are surveying visitors at major tourist destinations—with note pad, tape recorder, and camera in hand—about topics of contemporary interest. In line with such practices, Brazilian, Costa Rican, or Malaysian students could conduct projects with an environmental slant that are aimed at convincing local or national governments to take necessary precautions to protect local rain forests. (See Lee 2002, for a description of a project involving the creation of a booklet that describes an environmentally sound home, with suggestions for environmentally sensitive lifestyles.) These examples, like those in Appendices 1 and 2, represent just a sampling of possible projects and outcomes that can be integrated into EFL classrooms.

Project work: A case study

Here we showcase a real-world project designed for intermediate and high-intermediate EFL students enrolled in the English Preparatory Program, in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University, Eskişehir, Turkey. As part of this semi-structured project, defined and organized by both the teacher and students, students evaluate the effectiveness of the local tramcar system. As part of their data collection, they interview experts from the university, authorities from the city government, and residents of Eskişehir. They also write formal letters to the city to request information and conduct library and Web research. At the conclusion of the project, students present results to students in the School of Foreign Languages as well as to guests from the university and city government by means of a public forum, reinforced by a bulletin board display with findings and recommendations. The principal goal of the month-long project

is to give students a voice in reshaping their town and its tramcar system. By the conclusion of the project, students are able to do the following:

- Gather pertinent information through various data-collection techniques, such as interviews, surveys, and library and Web research
- Engage in critical thinking activities, partially through synthesis activities
- See improvement in their language skills
- Use English with more self-confidence

The project, structured following Stoller's (1997) ten steps, is described below.
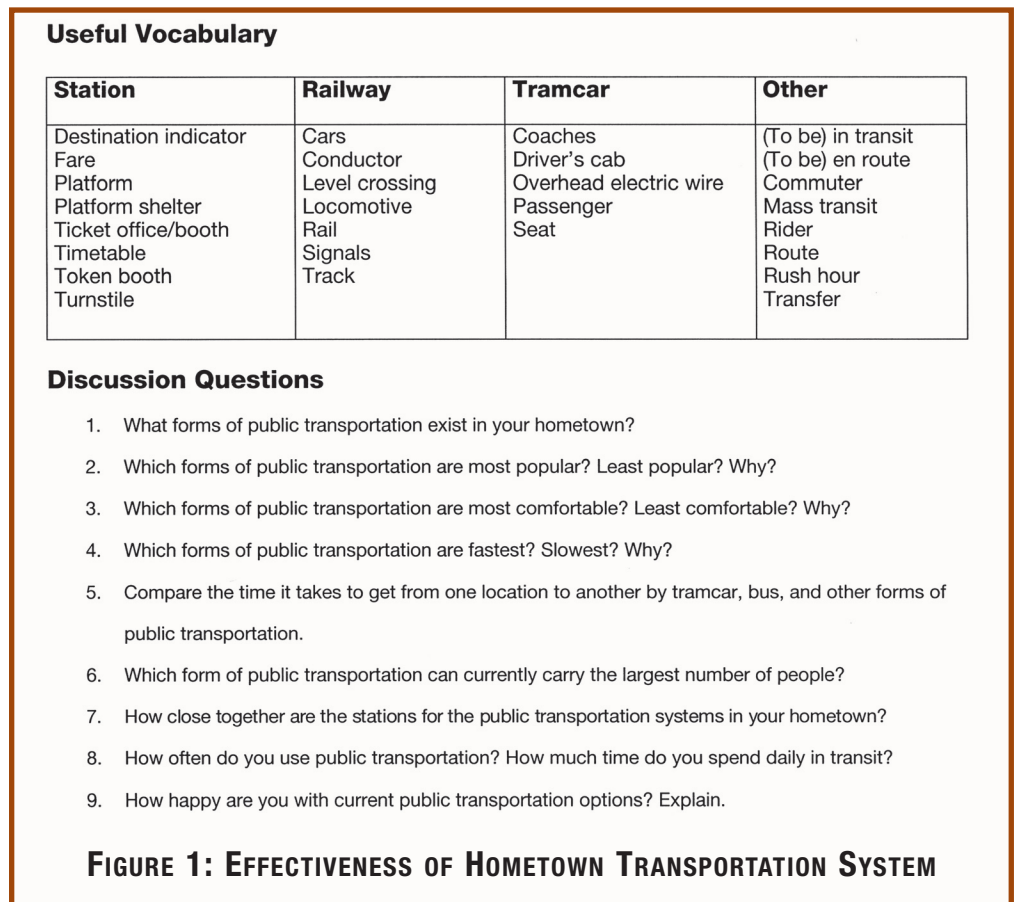
Step 1: Students and instructor agree on a project

The instructor conducts a lesson designed to raise students' awareness of a local tramcar issue. This opening lesson, meant to encourage students to participate in shaping public opinion, elicits students' attitudes toward public transportation, specifically tramcars, and provides them with the vocabulary and language needed to participate in the project.

The instructor asks students where they live and how they travel to school. To facilitate this interaction, the instructor creates an overhead transparency with a grid that lists different forms of transportation, including tramcars. The instructor fills in the grid with students' initials or tally marks to indicate who uses which forms of transportation. After filling in the grid, the instructor asks students to work in small groups, ideally with at least one student whose hometown has tramcar transportation. Students are asked to discuss the effectiveness of their hometown public transportation. A handout providing relevant vocabulary and a list of possible questions guides students in group discussions (see Figure 1).

Follow-up activities are useful to guide students in comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the Eskişehir tramcar system with the systems of other cities. At the conclusion of group discussions, each group reports its

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Useful Vocabulary

Station	Railway	Tramcar	Other
Destination indicator	Cars	Coaches	(To be) in transit
Fare	Conductor	Driver's cab	(To be) en route
Platform	Level crossing	Overhead electric wire	Commuter
Platform shelter	Locomotive	Passenger	Mass transit
Ticket office/booth	Rail	Seat	Rider
Timetable	Signals		Route
Token booth	Track		Rush hour
Turnstile			Transfer

Discussion Questions

1. What forms of public transportation exist in your hometown?

2. Which forms of public transportation are most popular? Least popular? Why?

3. Which forms of public transportation are most comfortable? Least comfortable? Why?

4. Which forms of public transportation are fastest? Slowest? Why?

5. Compare the time it takes to get from one location to another by tramcar, bus, and other forms of public transportation.

6. Which form of public transportation can currently carry the largest number of people?

7. How close together are the stations for the public transportation systems in your hometown?

8. How often do you use public transportation? How much time do you spend daily in transit?

9. How happy are you with current public transportation options? Explain.

FIGURE 1: EFFECTIVENESS OF HOMETOWN TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

most important finding, most worrisome discovery, and any similarities discovered about tramcar systems in other cities.

The instructor then asks students to take a few minutes to fill in a semantic feature analysis grid that juxtaposes different features of the local tramcar and bus systems (see Figure 2). Then students are asked to brainstorm the advantages and disadvantages of the Eskişehir tramcar, considering factors such as the locations of their homes, routes, and tramcar stations (see Figure 3).

After students complete these activities, the instructor elicits suggestions for improving the quality of Eskişehir public transport. The instructor asks students to judge whether it is possible to implement the solutions that they have put forward. Next, the instructor tells students about a project that will help them improve their English and might also

improve the local tramcar system. Finally, the instructor introduces the essentials of the project, giving students the opportunity to fine-tune the project so that they develop a sense of ownership.

Step 2: Students and instructor determine the final outcome of the project

The teacher proposes that students report the results of their investigation, with suggestions for improved public transportation: (1) in a letter to the local government, (2) at an open public forum with invited guests, and (3) on a bulletin board in Anadolu University's School of Foreign Languages. Students are encouraged to include the following in their bulletin board display: a copy of a letter sent to the Eskişehir municipality requesting a modified tramcar system that caters to the needs of university students, written reports, photographs, and transcripts of interviews with

	Passenger		Speed		Frequency		Stations		Comfort	
	fewer	more	low	high	less	more	fewer	more	less	more
Tramcar		√		√		√	√			√
Bus	√		√		√			√	√	

FIGURE 2: SEMANTIC FEATURE ANALYSIS GRID

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE TRAMCAR SYSTEM IN ESKIŞEHIR?

Pros	Cons

FIGURE 3: GRID FOR BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

students, community members, and university experts.

Feedback on this preliminary plan is solicited from students. At this stage, students are also given the opportunity to define their varied audiences for the letter, public forum, and bulletin board display. For instance, besides the Foreign Languages School director, teachers, and students, they decide who else to invite from the university governing council and the Eskişehir municipality.

Step 3: Students and instructor structure the project

At this stage, students help to structure the project. To do so, they consider questions such as:

1. What information is needed to conduct an examination of the local tramcar system?

2. Where and how might pertinent information be found?
   a. Who will be interviewed to determine public opinion? To identify the views of experts on public transportation? To ascertain the views of the local government?
   b. What information might be found at the library? On the Web? At the City Hall? At public transportation stations?

3. How will information be gathered, compiled, and analyzed?

During these deliberations, students decide on their primary roles and responsibilities. For instance, students determine who will conduct interviews; take photos; do library and Web searches; draw graphs, pictures, and charts; finalize the bulletin board display; and make opening remarks, present data, and entertain questions at the open forum. While determining roles, the students' majors are taken into account so they can be assigned roles most closely aligned with their interests and abilities. For instance, students from the fine arts department might be responsible for the layout of the bulletin board display, journalism students can conduct oral interviews, aspiring English majors can write letters soliciting information, and math majors can compile statistics. To balance the workload, students can pair up with others to offer assistance at different points in the project. With the deadline for the final outcome in mind, students reach a consensus about the sequencing of project tasks.

Step 4: Instructor prepares students for information gathering

At this stage, the instructor prepares students for the upcoming language and skill demands of the information-gathering stage of the project. These lessons train students to conduct interviews (e.g., forming a question, posing follow-up questions, requesting clarification and/or elaboration) and introduce them to the standard parts of an interview: polite opening, body, and thank you (see Lee, Li, and Lee 1999, for more details on the various stages of an interview). The instructor might help students determine the level of language formality and content of the questions to be asked of different interviewees. Mock interviews can be conducted with classmates, family members, teachers, or other language students on campus. Audiotaped mock interviews can be reviewed in class for appropriateness, politeness, pronunciation, stress, and grammar.

For students who are responsible for writing formal letters, the instructor introduces writing conventions associated with formal letter writing by means of model letters. Students write several drafts of their letters, followed by editing and revision activities that examine levels of formality, formatting, and linguistic accuracy. Guided peer-feedback sessions represent effective ways to encourage student collaboration and writing practice.

For students who are going to use the Web and library to gather relevant information, the instructor initiates brainstorming sessions in which students consider the best ways to search for information in these venues. As part of this preparation, the instructor may introduce students to relevant search engines or websites on mass transit.

Step 5: Students gather information

After practicing the skills, strategies, and language they need for gathering information, students are ready to conduct informal interviews with students and local residents of Eskişehir. Students who are to conduct formal interviews make appointments and conduct interviews with experts. (The instructor may need to help students find equipment needed for interviews, such as tape recorders.) Stu-

dents gathering information by means of letters of inquiry draft their letters, solicit feedback from classmates and the instructor, and then send out their letters. Students who are to conduct library and Web searches move ahead. Throughout this stage, the instructor monitors students' progress, making sure that they are on the right track, giving them feedback on their language use throughout.

Step 6: Instructor prepares students for compiling and analyzing data

After data have been gathered, students need to compile, evaluate, and synthesize the relevant information. The instructor prepares students for this vital stage of the project by using model transcripts, letters, lists, and grids to illustrate different categorization, evaluation, and interpretation techniques. This is a good time to introduce students to conversational gambits that they can use with each other to negotiate the meaning and relevance of gathered data, such as "I see your point, but…" and "Don't you think that…?"

Step 7: Students compile and analyze information

After students have been introduced to techniques for compiling and analyzing data, they are ready to organize and synthesize their own data. Groups of students discuss the value of their data, discarding that which seems inappropriate and organizing and then evaluating that which seems particularly valuable. Students discuss the best ways to present relevant data to their varied audiences.

Step 8: Instructor prepares students for the final activity

At this stage, the instructor prepares students for the language, skill, and content demands presented by the final written display and oral presentation. A simulation of the open forum provides opportunities to work on fluency, pronunciation, intonation, and conversational gambits that will contribute to the flow of the event. (See Mach, Stoller, and Tardy 1997 for a related discussion.) Students who are not actually involved in the public forum might be assigned different roles for the simulation, such as a representative from the municipality of Eskişehir, representatives of the university governing council, or the director and teachers of the School of Foreign Languages. These students could be directed to

anticipate what kinds of questions the actual audience might ask about the bulletin board display. At the conclusion of the simulation, the class can brainstorm about challenges that might be encountered during the actual open forum, such as irrelevant questions, hard-to-understand questions, and public resistance to findings and suggestions. In addition, possible solutions to these challenges can be discussed, including a list of possible questions and responses, back-up visual displays, and conversational gambits to ask for clarification. A discussion of open-forum logistics (e.g., room set-up, invitations to audience members, videotaping) would be appropriate as well.

Discussions of the bulletin board, with an emphasis on presentation of information, layout, visual appeal, clarity, and peer editing (that focuses on mechanics, grammar, level of formality, cohesion) are appropriate at this point.

Step 9: Students present final product

Students are now ready to mount the bulletin board display and participate in the open forum, representing the final outcomes of the class project. (Videotaping the open forum facilitates meaningful feedback in the final stage of the project.)

Step 10: Students evaluate the project

This last stage of the project serves multiple purposes. On the more traditional side, teachers provide students with feedback on their language, content, strategy, and skill use, using the videotape of the open forum as one means of interactive evaluation. Less traditional, but equally valuable, are the opportunities students will have to: (1) reflect on the language, skills, and strategies that they have mastered to conduct the project; (2) consider the content that they learned to complete the project; (3) contemplate the impact of the project; and (4) offer suggestions for improved project-work assignments for future classes.

Conclusion

We have showcased the details of one project designed for an EFL setting. Although the tramcar theme itself may not be transferable to other settings, because of its very local relevance, basic features of the project could easily be transferred to other EFL classrooms. These transferable features, in the form of recommendations for EFL teachers and materials writers

who attempt to integrate project-based learning into their own curricula, appear below.

- Devise projects with students' immediate and future language needs and content interests in mind, while at the same time remaining vigilant of institutional expectations and available resources.

- Specify language, content, task, skill, and strategy learning objectives in line with students' needs and institutional expectations to maximize the benefits of the project.

- Strive to engage students in all stages of the project. Begin by giving students the chance to structure parts of the project, even if those contributions are small, with the aim of building a sense of student ownership and pride in project engagement.

- Design and sequence tasks with great care. Make sure that (1) skills are integrated to achieve real communicative purposes, (2) students are obliged to use various strategies for meaningful aims, (3) critical thinking is required for successful task completion, and (4) students are held accountable for content learning.

- Integrate tasks that require both independent and collaborative work. Help students reach agreement about different team member responsibilities. Students should view each other as single links in a chain that unite, through exchanges of information and negotiation of meaning, to produce a successful project outcome.

- Be sure to plan an opening activity that promotes students' interests, taps background knowledge, introduces important vocabulary, and builds up expectations for the final activity.

- Take advantage of Steps 4, 6, and 8 to provide explicit instruction so that students not only improve their language abilities but also excel in the information gathering, processing, and reporting stages of the project.

- Allow time for feedback at the conclusion of the project and at other critical junctures as well.

We close by directing readers to Appendix 3 for a list of questions for teachers to consider as they assess the viability of projects for their classrooms and develop actual projects for and with their students.

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APPENDIX 1 | PROJECT-WORK TOPICS: SOME OPTIONS

MAXIMIZING THE BENEFITS OF PROJECT WORK… • *Bülent Alan* and *Fredricka L. Stoller*

Project-work topics fall into a wide range of categories, including the six below. Although topics are essentially limitless, the key to effective project work is the selection and definition of topics that will sustain student interest and engagement for the duration of the project. Final outcomes of projects (see Appendix 2 for some possibilities) should vary in response to curricular objectives and student needs.

1. **Mainstream class subject matter:** Project-work topics can complement themes covered in mainstream classes.
   a. The pros and cons of a new bridge over the Bosphorus in Istanbul (architecture, city planning, engineering)
   b. Theories of the demise of dinosaurs (natural history, biology)
   c. The art of mummification (ancient history)
   d. Impressionist artists (art, art history)
   e. The causes of contemporary human migration patterns (history, civic education, anthropology)
   f. A mock election (civic education)

2. **Vocational topics:** Project-work topics can be connected to students' vocational interests.
   a. The promotion of regional tourism (tourism)
   b. A holiday menu for people with various dietary needs (food services and catering)
   c. Adjusting to a new job: Guidelines for new service workers (retail and service work)
   d. Dental problems: What's a tourist to do? (dental technology)
   e. Advances in computer technology (computer technology, mechanics)
   f. Trends in teenage buying (business)

3. **Sociopolitical issues:** Project-work topics can be tied to students' sociopolitical interests. One good starting point for developing projects with sociopolitical overtones is the set of lessons found in *Language and Civil Societies and Language and Life Sciences* <http://ex changes.state.gov/forum/journal>.
   a. Gender roles
   b. Rights of the handicapped
   c. In defense of human rights
   d. Fighting crime in urban areas
   e. Drug trafficking at the international level
   f. Freedom of speech and press

4. **General human interest topics:** Project-work topics can be linked to general human interest topics, dependent largely on students' ages, maturity levels, interests, and concerns.
   a. Animal communication
   b. Sports and youth
   c. Population growth
   d. Famous individuals
   e. Stem cell research
   f. Family album

5. **Local issues:** Project-work topics are often informed by local issues.
   a. Deforestation
   b. Profiles of minority groups
   c. Mining: Pros and cons

     d. European Union membership

     e. New monetary systems

     f. Economic crises and solutions

6. **Global issues:** Project-work topics often are defined by global issues that are of interest to students.

     a. International terrorism

     b. International efforts to fight air, water, and noise pollution

     c. International efforts to turn global warming around

     d. AIDS, malaria

     e. Civil wars

     f. Water shortages

APPENDIX 2 | FINAL OUTCOMES OF PROJECTS: SOME POSSIBILITIES

MAXIMIZING THE BENEFITS OF PROJECT WORK… • *Bülent Alan* and *Fredricka L. Stoller*

Brochure	Oral presentation
Class newspaper or wall newspaper	Pin and string display
Bulletin board display	Poster
Debate	Research paper
Graphic display	Scrapbook
Guide book	Simulation
Handbook	Survey report
Information packet	Theatrical performance
Letter	Video or film
Maquette	Website
Multimedia presentation	Written report

APPENDIX 3 | CHECKLIST: QUESTIONS TO ASK WHILE PLANNING

MAXIMIZING THE BENEFITS OF PROJECT WORK… • *Bülent Alan* and *Fredricka L. Stoller*

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS: Before planning a project for your students, be sure that you can answer questions such as these.

- How will my students benefit from project work in terms of language improvement (reading, writing, speaking, listening, vocabulary, grammar), content mastery, study skills, real-life skills, strategy use, etc.?
- How will project work assist me in satisfying program objectives? Which program objectives are likely to be met by project work?
- Is project work best incorporated into my course by integrating it into an existing instructional unit or by creating a separate stand-alone project?
- Does my classroom setting—defined by student needs, student abilities, time factors, available resources, and program expectations—lend itself best to a structured project (defined and planned entirely by the teacher), a semi-structured project (defined and planned by the teacher with students), or an unstructured project (defined and planned by students)?
- Which specific language skills, if not all of them, should be given priority to best meet students' current and future needs?
- How much time, in and out of class, can I allot for project work? How will this time allocation impact my planning? Realistically, what can the class accomplish in the time that is available?

- How might Stoller's ten-step framework (summarized in this article) need to be adapted for my teaching situation?

PROJECT PLANNING: While planning a project for your class, pose the following questions and make every effort to find answers to them.

- What project-work topics are likely to (1) sustain student interests, (2) increase student motivation, and (3) ensure meaningful student engagement?
- What can I do to give students a voice in the selection of the project-work theme, the designation of a project outcome, and the process of the project (even if I have structured the project myself)? In other words, what can I do to ensure that students develop a sense of ownership in the project?
- How can the project be designed to build upon (1) what students already know, (2) what they are already able to do, and (3) what they want to learn?
- What resources are readily available for the project theme (in print, on the Web, on video, from different people/organizations, etc.)? What resources might I, myself, collect to share with students? What resources will students be able to access on their own in a timely fashion?
- Which elaborated tasks will help me meet program objectives and assist students in completing the project in a satisfactory manner?
- How can I structure elaborated tasks so that they lead to an authentic experience and critical thinking?
- What activities can I incorporate into the process of project completion that will increase students' metacognitive awareness?
- How will I assign student work groups? Should I group students who are similar or different in language ability, motivational level, etc.? Should I let students form groups of their own or should I assign students to groups?
- How can I structure the project so that it is both sufficiently challenging and manageable at the same time?
- What language and content-learning demands are inherent in Steps 5 (information gathering), 7 (information compiling and analyzing), and 9 (information reporting)? How can I best prepare students for those demands in Steps 4, 6, and 8?
- What grammar points stand out as being particularly relevant in Steps 5, 7, and 9? How, and at what point(s) in the project, can I focus explicitly on form so that students can practice relevant grammar points in a meaningful way?
- How can I structure the project so that there is a proper balance among teacher guidance (and feedback), and student autonomy and collaboration?
- How can I structure the project so that students are engaged in meaningful and purposeful integrated skills?
- How can I conclude the project so that students have the opportunity to reflect on their improved language abilities and the content that they learned as a result of the project? How can I solicit honest feedback from students about the project-work experience so that I can use their insights to assist me in future planning of projects?