

# Project based learning to develop writing skill in English as a Foreign Language



*Aprendizaje basado en proyectos para desarrollar la destreza de escritura en inglés como lengua extranjera*

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## **Abstract.**

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**Introduction.** The Project Based Learning (PBL) method is proposed as a transcendental student-centered method that promotes cooperation and the development of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. ABP contributed to the procedure and, theoretically, to the improvement of writing skills and the teaching-learning process in the classroom. With this method, students interacted with other classmates and teachers; they developed knowledge and improved their writing skills. The mistakes made by the students of Carrera de Ingeniería Industrial de la Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo in writing is the problem studied in this research. **Objective** To determine the influence of the ABP method in the writing of paragraphs, short communicative messages, stories, emails and reports of ESPOCH students. **Methodology.** To obtain data, a questionnaire directed to teachers was used to understand their perspective on PBL respect to writing skill. To assess the writing level of the students, a Cambridge University PET test and its writing rubric were used. The last instrument, an observation guide, supervised the application of PBL in the classroom. **Results** The results obtained were compared between the Control Group and the Experimental Group, the improvement was 0.8 points more in the average score of the first group in relation to the second in the total qualification of the PET test, equivalent to 5%. The systematic observation showed an improvement in the average grade of 0.8 in the general average of the last project executed by the students, equivalent to 18%. In quantitative terms, teachers through a survey reported the benefits of the PBL method in writing skills. **Conclusion.** The application of techniques based on ABP significantly improved writing. This method and the results

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obtained with the applied instruments demonstrated the relationship between the variables studied.

**Keywords:** PBL, writing, English, learning, improvement.

### **Resumen.**

**Introducción.** El método Aprendizaje Basado en Proyectos (ABP) se propone como una alternativa trascendental centrada en el estudiante que promueve la cooperación y el desarrollo de la motivación intrínseca y extrínseca. ABP contribuyó al procedimiento y, teóricamente, a la mejora de las habilidades de escritura y el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje en la clase. Con este método, los estudiantes interactuaron con otros compañeros de clase y maestros; desarrollaron conocimientos y mejoraron su habilidad para escribir. Los errores cometidos por los estudiantes de Ingeniería Industrial de la Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo en tareas de escritura es el problema estudiado en esta investigación. **Objetivo** Determinar la influencia del método ABP en la redacción de párrafos, mensajes comunicativos cortos, historias, correos electrónicos e informes de los estudiantes de la ESPOCH. **Metodología.** Para obtener datos, se utilizó un cuestionario dirigido a maestros para comprender su perspectiva sobre ABP con respecto a las habilidades de escritura. Para evaluar el nivel de escritura de los estudiantes, se utilizó una prueba PET de la Universidad de Cambridge y su rúbrica de escritura. El último instrumento, una guía de observación, supervisó la aplicación de PBL en el aula. **Resultados** En los resultados obtenidos se compararon entre el Grupo Control y Grupo Experimental la mejora fue de 0.8 puntos más en el promedio del primer grupo con relación al segundo en la calificación total de la prueba PET, equivalente al 5%. La observación sistemática demostró una mejora en la calificación promedio de 0.8 en el promedio general del último proyecto ejecutado por los estudiantes, equivalente al 18%. En términos cuantitativos los docentes a través de una encuesta reportaron los beneficios del método ABP en la destreza escritura. **Conclusión.** La aplicación de técnicas basadas en ABP mejoran significativamente la escritura. Este método y los resultados obtenidos con los instrumentos aplicados demostraron la relación entre las variables estudiadas.

**Palabras claves:** PBL, escritura, inglés, aprendizaje, mejoramiento.

### **Introduction.**

The English educating learning system in Ecuador is low. An investigation completed by *EF Education First - Ecuador* (2019) placed the nation in 81st position with low competence. Elizabeth (2010) says the techniques applied in class could be a decided factor that stops the improvement of students' English level. Thusly, a successful technique can seriously contribute in the improvement of the learners' skill. The requirement for a learner focused technique that permits significant communication among learners and teachers and the

utilization of the English language as an instrument to create logical and legitimate information is essential. This research points to discover a technique that upgraded the skill of learners. In the daily practice, it has been seen that 50 students of Industrial Engineering Carrier indicated shortcomings in their English composition. The structure, content and form of the writings composed by the learners proved the trouble in the advancement on this skill. PBL is introduced as a huge and powerful strategy for creating writing skill in the 25 ESPOCH students thought the example. PBL appeared as a choice to accomplish the curricular targets set in class. With PBL, students took an interest in deliberate and interact in real communication. The interaction that they had inside and outside the classroom made it conceivable to them to create inventive projects with a serious extent of criticality while creating communicative skills in English. The reports of the projects, the interaction and the presentations likewise were set up in writing structure. Thusly, PBL was applied to create writing. All the thoughts, establishments, procedures, and materials of this project can contribute altogether to the elaboration of another investigation plan.

To assist the students with creating projects to improve their psychological foundation, while they developed the fours fundamental parts of writing according PET: content, communicative accomplishment, association, and language. This research served to mediate in the unpredictable cycle of writing that incorporates communicative interaction for the creation of particular content in the scholastic and logical field, through the intervention it was conceivable to applied procedures that straightforwardly improved the perspectives notice about writing.

The significance of writing skill to PBL is irrefutable. Studies have been done in a few nations of the world that exhibit how PBL decidedly or adversely impacts the advancement of writing in an unknown language for the development of scholastic, logical, social, and social writings. Ansarian & Teoh, (2018) specifies students involved in critical thinking and project advancement have gotten better outcomes in their capacity to compose. PBL presents genuine activities and projects that represent a scholastic test for students, as Barrett & Moore (2010) avows. The author likewise expresses that the projects depend on the kinds of discovering that individuals complete both in the study hall and in their day by day lives. Larmer et al. (2015) refers to that PBL as a student focused approach, which centers around their thoughts and their longing to make. The writer says that teachers must set up controlling investigations to trade thoughts that will be reflected in relevant academic production. Thusly, teachers think about their ways to deal with the educating learning cycle of English as an unknown language. The author likewise refers to that it is important to instruct students to make a structure that permits them to plan a project and have the option to present a report on it.

PBL was utilized as an inspiring strategy for the development of writing. The method decides the outcomes, Tomlinson & Masuhara, (2010) mentions it is important to have applicable material, the method employed in addition to the sophisticated act of writing in foreign

students, improves their communicative skills. He likewise mentions that starting interest and making no native students notice that communication and task improvement is useful in building up an unknown language Duch et al., (2001) in their research contends that, after the use of PBL, the students advanced in their informative accomplishment, language, and syntax. The author says that teachers must assist students with communicating their thoughts and connect. PBL permits students and teachers to take an interest continually, while students develop their thoughts and convey, the educator evaluates to rouse them to write what they have produced.

The pressing requirement for the advancement of English writing overall is because of the expanding interest for academic scientific production. The globalized world qualities scholarly creation in writing media: papers, postulation, academic articles, books, artistic developments. Craig, (2012) specifies that it is not in every case easy for a nonnative essayist to compose a book in an unknown language. This is on the grounds that writing is a cycle that includes a few phases and components, one of them is writers' cooperation. The writer refers to that PBL is very helpful in the advancement of writing since it permits interaction among writers, teachers, students while they communicate.

Goh & Burns, (2012) confirms that the impacts of Project Based Learning on the educational, and intellectual performance of students and the usage in the instructing of English to improve students' writing skill as the other skills is exceptionally powerful. Tavares (2018) states that PBL is viewed as the most proper technique to persuade, create, and include students in the pursuit for answers for given issues. The writer additionally describes that PBL coordinates not just the writing skill with the other open skill but additionally social and motivational components that the educator and students can enact in class. Craig (2012) suggests that writing can be used as an instrument to transmit information that can likewise be utilized after the presentation of projects.

### **Methodology.**

The current research is quali-quantitative. The outcomes indicated the need to improve writing skills. Three instruments were applied to get data. An observation guide permitted checking the utilization of the methods dependent on PBL. A PET test was applied to the control and experimental group as pre and posttest. Educators answered a questioner to get information about PBL and writing skill.

The data got after a broad bibliographic lecture and the utilization of measurable information indicated improvement recorded in writing skill. Articles, books, theories, and reports were utilized as reference. The work is generally applied and field research. The last correlational level served to evaluate the association between the factors Project-Based Learning and writing skill. This was shown in quantifiable terms, since after the utilization of PBL procedures a meaningful change was observed in writing. A remarkable improvement

affirmed the degree of relation between writing and PBL. The relationship of the variables and their operationalization, along with the most recent affirmation of the hypothesis, PBL improves writing skill.

### Population and sample.

The population and sample were selected by the idea of the exploration. The population is comprised of 50 students partitioned into two groups. The two groups had comparable characteristics, so the example was picked discretionarily.

**Table 1.** Population

<i>Population</i>	Frequency	Percentage
Students	50	100%
Total	50	100%

**Source:** Direct research

**Author:** Larrea M. Ecuador, 2019

**Table 2.** Sample

Sample	Frequency	Percentage
Control group	25	50%
Experimental group	25	50%
Total	50	100%

**Source:** Direct research

**Author:** Larrea M. Ecuador, 2019

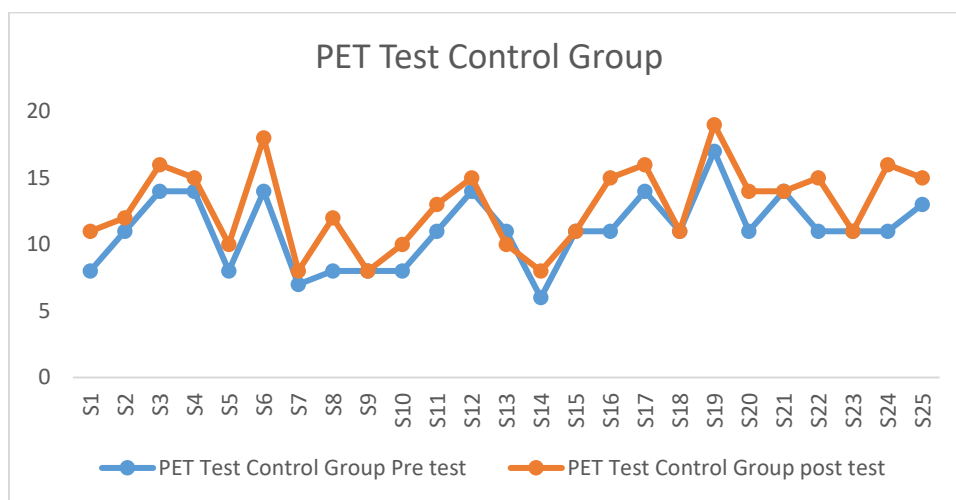
### Results and Discussion.

After serious work data was aggregated. The speculation was confirmed, the utilization of PBL improves the level of writing. A meticulous assessment made it possible to quantify the level of the students with a PET test. It was confirmed that the students of the experimental group have truly improved their capacity to write comparable to the control group. The utilization of PBL permitted the students of the Industrial Career at ESPOCH to improve their writing skills. Even though there is likewise an improvement in the Control group of 1.8 point in the overall score, there is a difference of 0.8-point corresponding to the overall capability of the Experimental group. Task based learning has helped students improve the viewpoints evaluated in the PET test. The main target of this test was to evaluate the connection among PBL and writing skill. Assessment gatherings of 50 students were given

normalized PET tests and Cambridge writing rubrics. These were compared in a pre and posttest.

These were the outcomes gotten in the Control group and experimental group. Factual diagram 1 shows the quantitative changes in the degree of students in their substance skill, Communicative Achievement, association, and language.

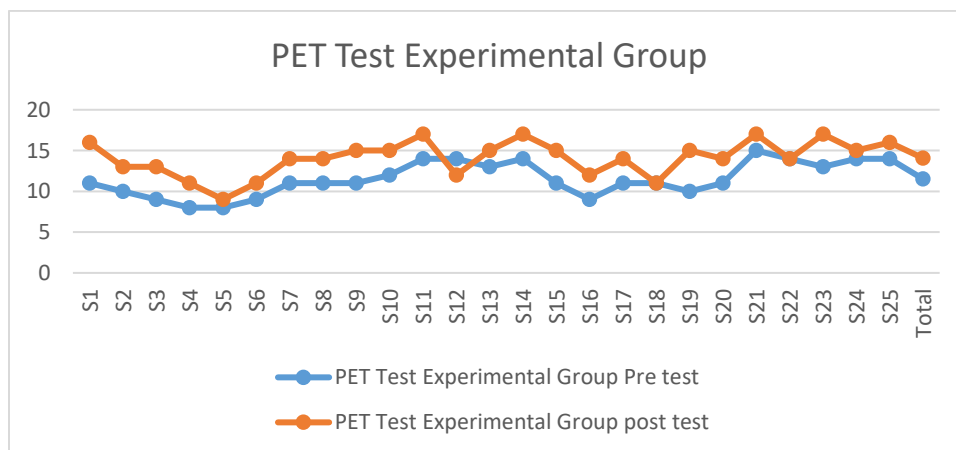
**Graphic 1. PET Test Control Group**



**Source:** Direct research

**Author:** Larrea M. Ecuador, 2019

**Graphic 3. PET Experimental Group**



**Source:** Direct research

**Author:** Larrea M. Ecuador, 2019

**Perception Guide.**

The guide permitted the assessment as well as the improvement in the use of PBL. After broad work of information assortment, estimating, the use of PBL, and broad and careful search of information, it was resolved that students have really improved their writing skills. The use of PBL has advanced with the development of writing skill in ESPOCH students. The outcomes acquired in the observation are positive. The degree of the students has improved. Between the first and the last project there is difference in the score of 0.8. PBL has helped students improve their level. This improvement after the utilization of PBL is because of the use of applied strategies dependent on this method. The use of PBL can improve the sub-skills essential for writing. The projects created by the students had the principle goal of improving this ability and this could be accomplished with PBL. To decide if PBL upgrades the advancement of writing skills, students took the PET writing test once more, the improvement was confirmed in all aspects assessed by the rubric, this information agreed with the observation guide.

**Table 3.** PBL Observation guide

<b>PROJECT BASED LEARNING OBSERVATION RECORD</b>				
<b>Evaluated Issues</b>	<b>Project 1</b>	<b>Project 2</b>	<b>Project 3</b>	<b>Project 4</b>
PBL Structure	3.6	3.3	4	4,2
PBL Facilitation	3.7	4	4.1	4,4
Students' participation	3.4	3.6	4.2	4,5
Resources	4	4	4.2	4.3
Assessment	3	4	4.5	4.5
Classroom Learning Environment	3.8	3.9	4.1	4.2
Writing report	3.2	3.4	3.8	4,3

**Source:** Direct research

**Author:** Modified from Stearns, (2012)

### **Survey.**

The survey was done with the 12 colleagues who made up the example of this research. The teachers' reactions, by and large, demonstrated acknowledgment, fulfillment, and a positive view of the PBL technique to improve composed skills and the English language when all is said in done. The teachers confirmed that the PBL Method emphatically impacts the



improvement of their students' writing skill. The teachers affirmed the prominent certainty they felt when they students write reports, messages, and stories, and that thusly they improved other interpersonal skills to communicate in class.

### **Discussion.**

*EF Education First - Ecuador*, (2018) mentions that The MCREL brings up the degrees of language capability. It is mentioned that writing skill must be importantly aced. This suggests, that writing must be coherent, exact in argumentation, useful to transmit data and thoughts, present unique and solid points, checking data and get information about issues or clarify them with sensible accuracy. Considering these worldwide guidelines, in numerous nations of the world it is viewed as vital for foreign language instructing to ace the English language. In Ecuador, a B1 level least is required in advanced education.

This global standard has provoked another conception about the educating of writing. József (2001) says that the goal of the teaching method of writing must investigate the association models of writings in L1 and L2 and consequently encourage the acknowledgment of contrasts those points. The author examines another student-centered communication pattern, his rule centers around the incredible impact on intellectual hypothesis of Hayes and Flower (1981) who notice that a student can get data about writing through the idea articulation and perception conventions. The research referenced above permitted PBL to be consolidated into the writing aptitude educating and learning measure. This ideas is shared with Colombo (2011), who declares that the utilization of PBL has gotten positive outcomes in the development of writing and the other communicative skills. These statutes prompted the theory that PBL creates writing skills in a foreign language, in any case, the extent of this method is yet being researched.

Bowkett (2014) thinks that is imperative to develop communicative skills since writing is fundamental to produce really accurate communication. This intellectual and physiological cycle can decide the degree of students in a foreign language performance. In this way, it is noticed that writing is an intellectual cycle where the performers send and get data. It is likewise mentioned that the right way of writing is created with constantly practice and reflection, it is fundamental to give students the pertinent instruments to become astounding writers in foreign languages, thusly, educators must inspire students to take an interest continually in class, fabricate certainty and offer them the chance to build up this basic ability.

Therefore, Ediger (2010), mentions the fundamental teachers' task is to assist students providing the tool to develop communicative skills. Interestingly, it breaks down the contrast among writing and talking as beneficial skill. This writer refers to that writing is an incorporated ability that creates after some time, despite, talking is done at the same time of communication. Another attribute of writing as opposed to oral aptitude is that writing is answerable for moving characters while oral communication is the combination of sound



spontaneously, so when teachers dissect the ramifications of writing, they can comprehend the multifaceted nature of this cycle.

For Beckett & Miller (2006) PBL is an effective method that can help students compose, encode, and interpret data continually. There are numerous components in this cycle. In this mind-boggling work, students utilize every one of their assets to deliver what is known as writing. Consequently, a clarification about the mental cycle of this capacity is advanced. At the point when this cycle improves, the degree of English of the student's increments. The most significant components are collaboration, support in the study hall utilizing the proper strategies, methods, impression of the educator and students in the pre, during and post writing measure. PBL could contribute in each one of these components planned to improve the things assessed in the PET rubric, intuitive correspondence and the inspiration of students and educators in the study hall were likewise improved.

In this way, writing as a communicative skill can be tested. Cambridge in its worldwide tests, evaluates the four communicative skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Krauss & Boss, (2013) PBL can help learners to create writing in class, it is a significant advance to dodge the conventional approach wherein students do not reason and communicate thoughts. PBL let cooperation also students grow socially and while they interact with other learners.

Napitupulu & Shinoda (2014) agree language is created with genuine cooperation, the writer prescribes teachers to pick the right technique to permit students to rehearse their writing skill and, simultaneously, create basic reasoning, self-assurance, and the obtaining of new information. As clarified over, the PBL encourages the student to build up every one of these skills, it makes reference to that language is basic not exclusively to create content yet in addition to communicate thoughts, emotions and convey thoughts to other people. Alan, B. & Stoller, F. L, (2005) says all essential skills are interrelated and permit to improve the nature of the transmission of thoughts. Without writing it is difficult to create communication at academic level, throw this skill student can pass on thoughts with accuracy. To assist students to acquire writing skill teachers need to give a lot of instruments to sort out thoughts, impart considerations, and build lucid writings, in this sense PBL is an efficient instrument.

Finally Bowkett (2014) avows that writing is an important skill that strengthens information about language and sentence structure. Students can learn terminology and language structure when writing through reflection and practice. Dissimilar to the origination of language structure in traditional methods, for example, the Grammar Translation Method, PBL is an academic instrument that improves communication skills. The author emphasizes that language is an asset to interchange thoughts and not only an arrangement of rules. Effective communication is achieved with interaction. The absence of a method that permits interaction regularly restricts the transmission of thoughts. PBL permits students' cooperation to grow communicationally and socially.

## Conclusion.

- The overall target was accomplished since the applied instruments permitted to decide the viability of the Project-Based Learning Method to build up the English-writing skill in ESPOCH students. Thusly, the experimental group indicated a superior improvement than the control group, as they were exposed to exercises identified with linguistic skills, terminology, and the statement of different thoughts and emotions through interaction with others. In like manner, the PBL added to arousing the enthusiasm of students towards getting the hang of writing and the English language as a rule. Which was all proven in this investigation, as much as it was conceivable to spur students to utilize the English language as a hard copy just as to create in them a strong ability to learning and great utilization of it.

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