

# Project-based Learning and Pedagogy in Teacher Training for English Language Learning

Hetty Roessingh and Wendy Chambers

# Introduction

- Advance a project-based approach (PJBL) to teacher education based on social constructivist principles
  - Provide a template for structuring PJBL
  - Provide exemplars of student work.
-



# Eight Guiding Principles



Instructional design  
is learner-centered  
and flexible.



## Principle 2

The instructor requires content area expertise and pedagogical competence (Garrison & Anderson, 2003).



## Principle 3



A central question(s)  
or problem focuses  
and provides the  
catalyst for learning.

---



# Principle 4



Teaching and learning objectives are explicit.

---



# Principle 5

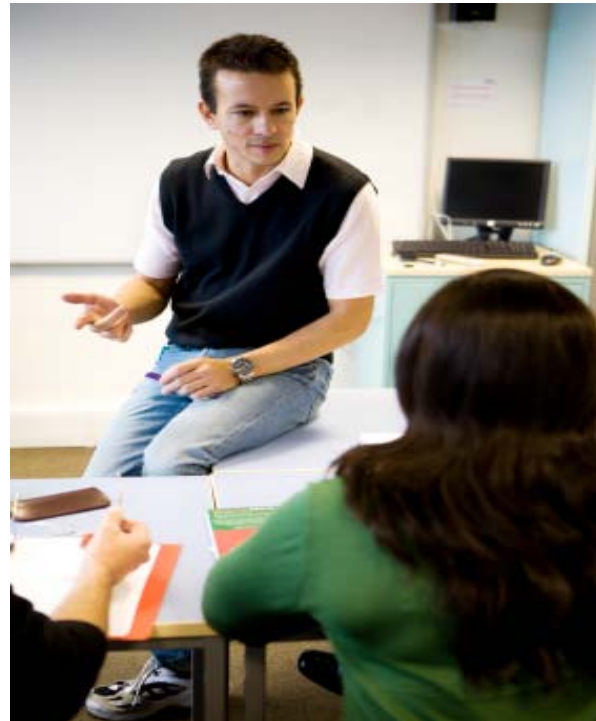
Learning tasks are authentic and engaging.



Critical reflection and higher-order thinking skills are promoted.



Instruction is mediated and integrated.



Learning is monitored by well-defined formative, summative, and self-reflection assessment strategies.



“A quality educational experience is the dynamic integration of content and context created and facilitated by a discipline expert and pedagogically competent teacher”

(Garrison & Anderson, 2003, p. 4).

---



# Project Overview and Examples





# Project Overview



# Project Overview & Rationale

The project overview serves the following functions:

- it is an introduction to the topic(s) included in the project,
- it situates the project within the framework of the course goals and objectives, and
- it provides a clear explanation about the purpose of the project.

Blackboard  
Materials

---

# Sample Project Overview

Welcome to Project 6 of your studies. This project builds on Project 5. Together these two projects will produce learning resources for a thematic unit designed for a group of ESL learners at an intermediate language proficiency.

In Project 6, you will be extending Project 5 with a series of newspaper and magazine articles (i.e., authentic text). You will analyze these articles for their overall appropriateness to support the development of English language proficiency and provide cultural information...

---

# Learning Objectives

The learning objectives are stated explicitly.

Sample learning objective:

“ To use various computer and web-based tools to aid in creating a small package of learning materials appropriate for Intermediate level learners. This will include reworking/manipulating text so that it can support the **key reading strategies** of **contextual guessing** and **morphological analysis**. It will also include designing a few learning tasks that will provide our learners with opportunities for engaging and interacting with text, recycling their learning and providing independent practice for newly acquired and developing skills and strategies.”

---

Key concepts are stated explicitly.

Sample key concepts:

1. Thematic organization allows for intentional sequencing, spiraling, recycling, and integrating macro skills (i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking).
  2. Text often contains information that can be accessed through the use of visual representations.
-

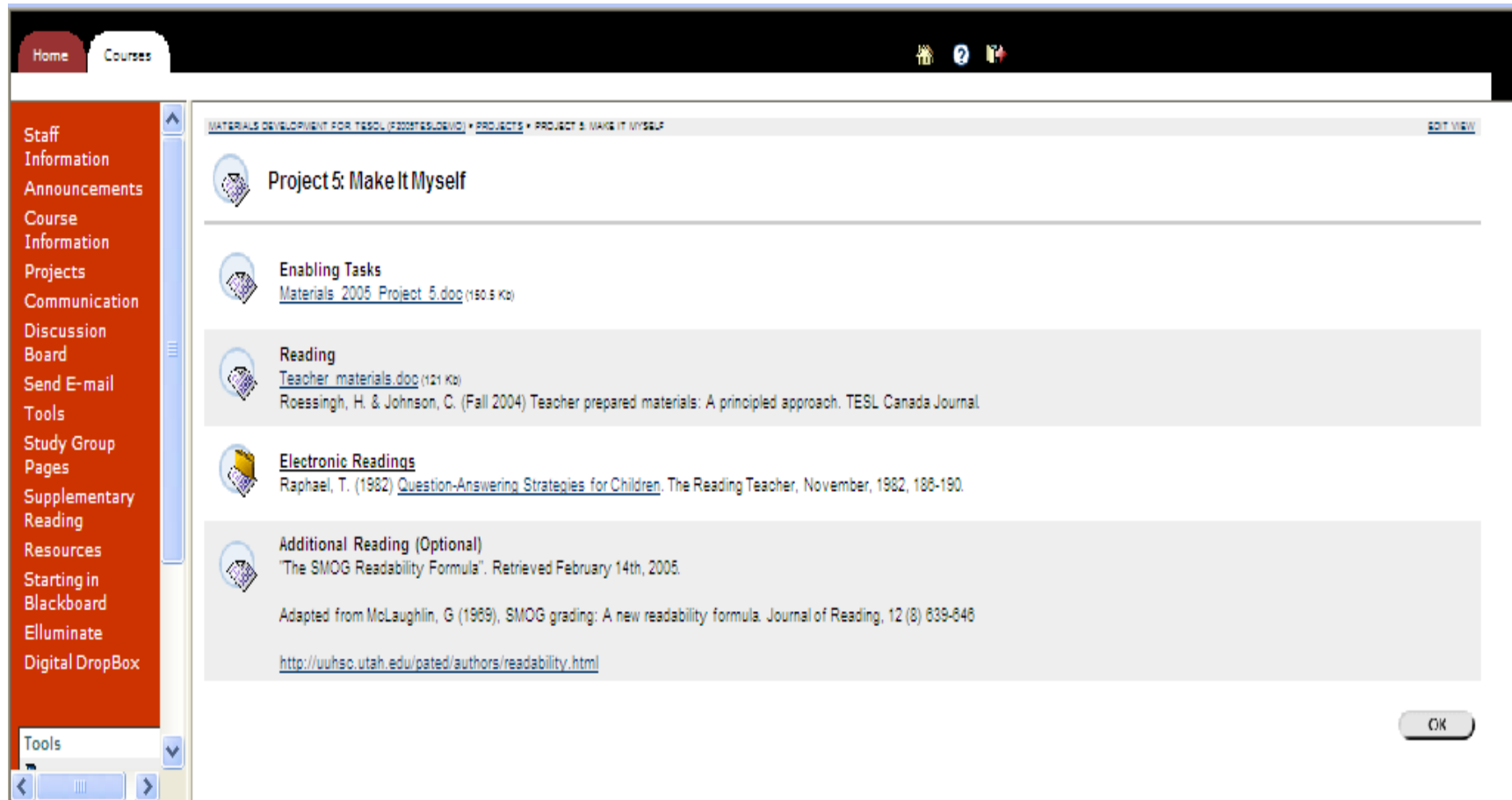
# Materials and Resources

- Initially, the instructor will provide the primary learning materials and resources and these may include:
  - relevant literature,
  - multimedia resources,
  - learning repositories, and
  - social networking applications (e.g., blogs, wikis).
  
- Instructors are responsible for adapting course materials in response to learners' interests (Sims, Dobbs & Hand, 2002).

Learners are encouraged and expected to find additional resources to contribute to the learning community.

---

# Materials and Resources



The screenshot shows a Blackboard course interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'Home' and 'Courses'. Below the tabs is a breadcrumb trail: 'MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT FOR TESOL (F2002TESOLDEV) > PROJECTS > PROJECT 5: MAKE IT MYSELF'. A left-hand navigation menu lists various course options: Staff Information, Announcements, Course Information, Projects, Communication, Discussion Board, Send E-mail, Tools, Study Group Pages, Supplementary Reading, Resources, Starting in Blackboard, Elluminate, and Digital DropBox. The main content area displays the course title 'Project 5: Make It Myself' with a document icon. Below this, there are three sections of resources:

- Enabling Tasks**: Includes a document icon and the text 'Materials 2005 Project 5.doc (150.5 Kb)'. There is a small 'OK' button at the bottom right of this section.
- Reading**: Includes a document icon and the text 'Teacher\_materials.doc (121 Kb)' followed by the citation: 'Roessingh, H. & Johnson, C. (Fall 2004) Teacher prepared materials: A principled approach. TESL Canada Journal.'
- Electronic Readings**: Includes a document icon and the citation: 'Raphael, T. (1982) Question-Answering Strategies for Children. The Reading Teacher, November, 1982, 188-190.'
- Additional Reading (Optional)**: Includes a document icon and the text: 'The SMOG Readability Formula'. Retrieved February 14th, 2005. Adapted from McLaughlin, G (1969), SMOG grading: A new readability formula. Journal of Reading, 12 (8) 639-646. <http://uuhsoc.utah.edu/pated/authors/readability.html>

At the bottom of the page, there is a 'Tools' dropdown menu and navigation arrows.

# Enabling Tasks

- Embedded within the design of projects are enabling tasks that perform the following functions:
    - provide a sequence of structured learning experiences that access and build on the learners' background knowledge and experience,
    - clarify the purpose and expectations of the project,
    - direct learners to materials and resources,
    - create learning momentum (McKenzie, 1999), and
    - provide opportunities for collaborative learning.
-

- Culminating from learner engagement with the learning tasks is the construction of an end product or a concrete learning artefact (Blumenfeld et al., 1991).
  
  - Assessment of a project may take different forms:
    - A checklist of the required components necessary for successful completion of the project and/or
    - A detailed grading framework with analytic descriptors along a scale.
-

# Assessment Strategies

## **Project 6: Mini Thematic Unit**

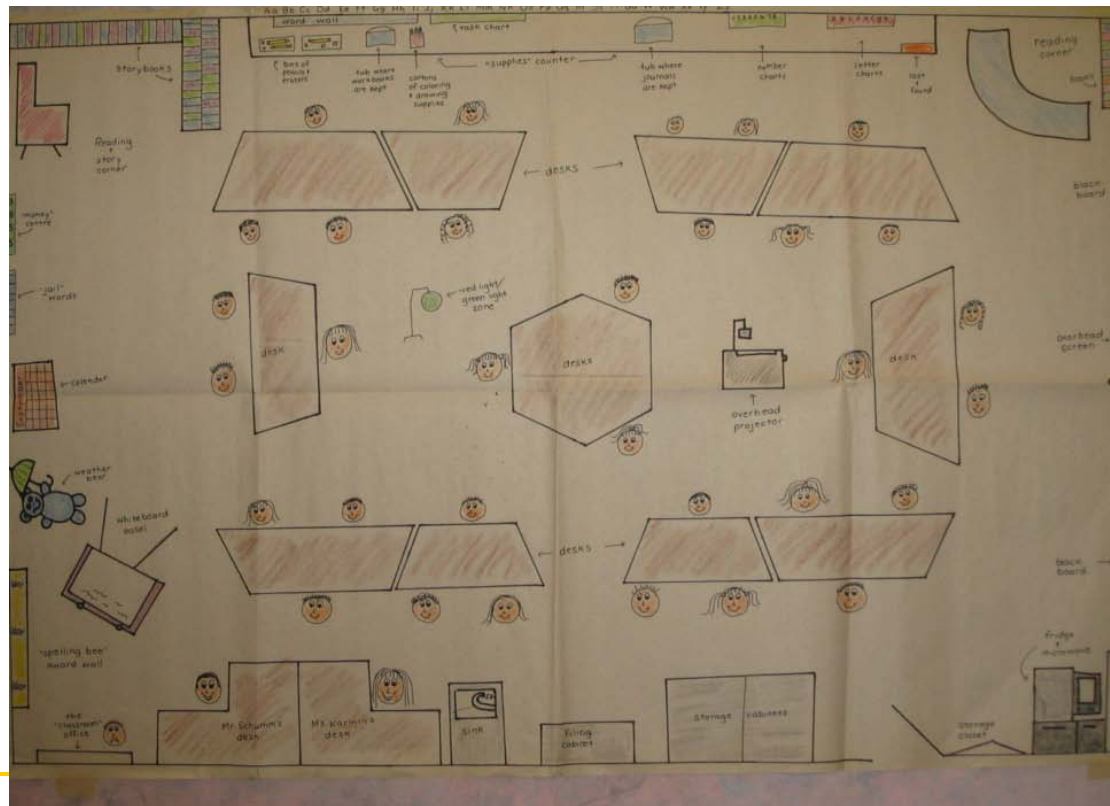
Grade: Value: 20%

The mini thematic unit must include the following components:

- A brief statement of the intended audience for your materials addressing age, proficiency level, learning needs and interests.
- The teaching context in which these materials will be used. Are you constrained in any way by limited access to computers, video equipment or copying facilities?
- Re-written text and accompanying learning tasks (Task 1).
- Readability statistics (Task 2).
- Analysis of the materials (Task 3)
- Key visuals (Task 4)
- A brief reflection on the work of creating the thematic unit.
  - 1.What are the most salient ideas you gained from this project?
  - 2.How has your understanding of materials development changed as a result of completing this project?
  - 3.In what ways has your understanding of language learning and teaching changed as a result of completing this project?

# Sample B.Ed. Project

## Sample Baccalaureate-level PJBL Artifact: Visual representation of classroom layout





# Sample M.Ed. TESL Project

**Sample Graduate-level PJBL  
Artifact: Materials Design for ESL**

---

# Concluding Comments

- A social constructivist approach recognizes the prior knowledge and experiences both pre- and in-service teachers bring to training programs (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001).
  - Project-based learning invites students to link theory to practice by ‘doing’.
-

# Concluding Comments

- A balanced epistemology characteristic of a project-based approach facilitates the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, competencies, and dispositions required to make the successful transition from practice to situated praxis over time.
-

# References

- Blumenfeld, P., Soloway, E., Marx, R., Krajcik, J., Guzdial, M., & Palincsar, A. (1991). Motivating project-based learning: Sustaining the doing, supporting the learning. *Educational Psychologist, 26*(3), 369-398.
- Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (2001). Beyond certainty: Taking an inquiry stance on practice. In A. Lieberman & L. Miller (Eds.). *Teachers caught in the action* (pp. 45-58). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Garrison, D.R., & Anderson, T. (2003). *E-learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. London: Routledge-Falmer.
- Kilpatrick, W. H. (1921). Dangers and difficulties of the project method and how to overcome them – A symposium. *Teachers College Record, 22*(4), 283-288.
- McKenzie, J. (1999, Dec.). Scaffolding for success. *The Educational Technology Journal, 9* (4). Retrieved September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005. <http://www.fno.org/dec99/scaffold.html>
- Sims, R., Dobbs, G., Hand, T. (2002). Enhanced quality in online learning: Scaffolding planning and design through proactive evaluation. *Distance Education, 23*(2), 135-148.
-

# Contact Information

Hetty Roessingh

[hroessin@ucalgary.ca](mailto:hroessin@ucalgary.ca)

Wendy Chambers

[wlchambe@ucalgary.ca](mailto:wlchambe@ucalgary.ca)

