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Developing Communication Skills Through Project-Based Tasks

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Project-based learning (PBL) has been identified as a potential method for closing the gap between classroom instruction and real-world application. PBL involves students being placed in the role of learners, active participants in their own learning experience. The focus of PBL is on providing students with a direct, hands-on learning experience. In other words, instead of merely delivering content to students, PBL provides students with opportunities to develop knowledge and skills through real-world experiences. Experiential learning theory is consistent with the nature of PBL. Hguyen and Tuoang (2024) cited Kolb and Fry's work on this issue: "Experiential learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." Experiential learning occurs when individuals are actively engaged in the learning process. This type of learning is very applicable to communication studies. Communication is not a theoretical skill; rather, it is a practical skill that is developed through the act of communicating. Therefore, providing students with an opportunity to develop their communication skills in a real-world setting will help them improve their communication skills.

In addition to developing their communication skills, students gain additional benefits from participating in project-based learning. One benefit is developing teamwork communication. Teamwork communication is a critical component of any successful team effort.

Salim et al. (2025) state that, regardless of whether you work individually or collaboratively with others, your ability to communicate effectively is a key factor in success. As mentioned earlier, students will develop their communication skills through participation in group-based projects. In addition, they will also develop the skills needed to function successfully as members of a team. These include: (1) expressing themselves clearly, (2) listening to others, (3) managing disagreement and conflict, and (4) working together to achieve a common goal. While students can develop some of those skills through individualised tasks, developing all these skills will likely occur through participation in group-based projects (Salim et al., 2024). Furthermore, research indicates that creating structured collaborative learning environments increases student engagement and adaptation (Adnan et al., 2024).

Finally, another advantage of project-based learning is that it provides students with the opportunity to develop their communication skills in a variety of ways. Too frequently, classroom communication activities are limited to academic settings and do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to apply what they have learned in real-world contexts. By framing the project in a realistic, relevant context, PBL enables students to apply the concepts they have studied in their coursework. For example, students could be required to create multimedia presentations using digital tools, develop websites, or even run product or service campaigns. Research demonstrates that when students are given direction and appropriate digital tools for a project-based task, they produce more effective communication outputs (Krisnan et al., 2022).

There is evidence that providing students with flexible learning options enables them to engage

in more open and creative learning environments, thereby increasing motivation and participation in learning (Wan Mustapha et al., 2019). This provides further support for incorporating PBL into post-secondary education. Additionally, PBL offers researchers opportunities to investigate student engagement, communication confidence, teamwork dynamics, and the transfer of real-world skills. Furthermore, the effect of PBL can be observed in students' academic performance and in their preparedness to communicate in real-life contexts. This corresponds to current trends in higher education, emphasising the production of graduates who are competent in both knowledge and application.

Overall, incorporating PBL into communication courses represents a significant move towards more relevant and meaningful teaching practices. PBL transforms learning from passive understanding to active involvement. When students are given the opportunity to learn through action, communication is not something they simply study; rather, they continually practice and develop it.



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