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**THE APPLICATION OF PROJECT BASED LEARNING  
IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOMS**

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**Thesis**

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(k vyzvednutí u sekretářky KAN)

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*V Plzni dne 15. června 2015*

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Milena Kalabzová

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The thesis deals with the topic of the application of Project Based Learning into English classes. The main focus of the background chapter is to define what it involves for a teacher to implement PBL into English classes. The thesis shows how PBL integrates language and content learning process and the points, which unwind from that connection. The work states several conditions that successful PBL implementation roots from and there is a PBL framework presented with clearly defined phases that English learning context requires. The second part of the thesis represents the practical part and outlines the research conducted by the method of a document analysis. It explores the genuine works of fifteen English teachers and their experiences with the PBL execution. The research focuses on listing the problematic areas that were considered troublesome by the teachers. The results of the research present eight major problematic themes and subsequently their subthemes that confirm the need of careful preparation for PBL and propose what fields English teachers should concentrate on when preparing students for PBL stages. The results also reveal that teachers should not to underestimate PBL time management and the decrease of initial motivation.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In the postindustrial society there has been a growing call for a change of demands on educational results and didactic approaches and Project Based Learning (PBL) represents nowadays an approach to learning which may meet several students' needs. For one thing it offers a skill-based practice for another it symbolizes the focus on students who should become involved, show inner motivation and creativity. The main advantage is that students deal with real subject matter by working on the real problems. It emerges that this sense of solving an authentic difficulty, in the area of group work and cooperation experience has the potential to help students learn. However, project work comprises quite a complex topic since its implementation and usage at schools lays increased demands both on organization and psychological aspects of teachers' work. This thesis first explores general PBL characteristics that are valid to any school subjects and then focuses mainly on the features of PBL that are distinctive to English classroom background. The work tries to identify major aspects English teachers should be acquainted with before they start promote PBL in their English classes. The theory part offers not only the PBL framework that covers main PBL stages and documents. Moreover it deals with the problematic issues English teachers may experience during the project work such as the usage of mother tongue during the group work or whether and how teachers should ignite the initial motivating sparkle in students.

The preparation for PBL represents a kind of schizophrenic situation since on one hand teachers are supposed to plan the whole project work carefully, on the other hand, PBL experts point out that teachers cannot or should not plan the content in advance since all the PBL advantages basically derive from the fact that project work should be proposed by students, filled mainly with students' ideas and driven by students' work. Hence, the purpose of my thesis is to investigate what elements are involved when conducting a successful implementation of PBL into English classes. The work outlines in what areas teachers and subsequently students should be systematically prepared in advanced for project work.

The first part of the thesis, the Theoretical Background chapter, provides English teachers with the theoretical basis for carrying out PBL and it identifies the elements of PBL breeding ground from which project work should derive from.

The following chapter of Methodology focuses on the conditions in which were explored fifteen theses that were written by English teachers and which are based on the real realization of PBL into English classes. For the teachers it was mostly the first time they were conducting PBL in their English lessons. The theses originate from four different Czech universities and are explored by the method of document analysis.

The next chapter of Results introduces the findings concerning the research of the theses. The data from them were analyzed and classified and subsequently presented into eight categories and their subcategories that represent the problematic PBL areas. The research identifies the problems and states which of them may be expected and thus preceded by targeted preparation.

In the last but one chapter there are listed some implications of this thesis along with possible suggestions for further research. The thesis concludes with a brief summarization of the whole thesis.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The first part of this work covers basic issues concerning PBL that universally emerge in education. First, PBL is defined by several possible characteristics. Second, there are introduced potential benefits, components and most challenging areas of this method. In addition, an overall PBL classification is translated to capture the variety this methodology offers. Then, the second part deals with the differences that emerge from implementing PBL into the English teaching context. On this point, the work shows how PBL integrates language and content learning process and the points which unwind from that connection. More importantly, this thesis outlines conditions that successful PBL implementation roots from. And finally, a particular PBL framework is presented with clearly defined phases that teaching English classes requires.

### Characteristics of Project-Based Learning

**Definition of PBL.** The definition of Project-Based Learning as such is not a definite one since as Coufalová (2006) claims different authors within their own definitions point out various features of PBL. Some of them favour practical importance in definition of PBL, others highlight the elements of active learning and previous students' experience or the significance of the project aim. Tomková, Kašová and Dvořáková (2009) confirm that PBL can be both defined and classified differently; once it can be regarded as a complex method of tuition while other authors rank it among organization forms. In addition, it may as well be thought of a type of educational strategy. According to Thomas (2000) "Project-Based Learning is a model that organizes learning around projects" (p. 1). Subsequently he specifies projects as complex tasks that are "based on challenging questions or problems, that involve students in design, problem-solving, decision making, or investigative activities; give students the opportunity to work relatively autonomously over extended periods of time; and culminate in realistic products or presentations"(p. 1). Due to a diverse various definitions, Coufalová (2006) distinguishes four main points that proper PBL should include and that capture the main concept of PBL. This definition originates from Stanislav Vrána, a director of experimental schools in Zlín, and is described as follows:

Project-Based Learning is:

- 1 An enterprise.
- 2 An enterprise of students.

- 3 An enterprise of which results students took the responsibility.
- 4 An enterprise which follows a concrete goal.

This definition characterizes well all important features of PBL and Coufalová considers this definition as a main criterion when judging whether a specific PBL has fulfilled its basic essence. Moreover, Tomková et al. (2009) add that PBL is mainly based on active student's approach towards their own learning and like Coufalová expresses the need to distinguish PBL from the concept of thematic tuition (TT) which shares some similar features with PBL and is sometimes incorrectly labeled this way, however, their style of work is alike. Whereas in the former the determining aspects are the student's responsibility plus their relationship towards the activity and actual active share on it, in the latter concept the action comes from teachers and is by them organized in detail, elaborated, ruled and assessed. The main difference is seen that TT elaborates a theme into broader aspects whereas PBL aims directly towards a final product. Nevertheless, PBL and thematic tuition can be mutually combined and very often one originates from the other (Tomková et al., 2009). Svobodová, Lacko and Cingl (2010) agree with this view and add that combination of thematic tuition, traditional education and PBL enables a complex development of students' skills, knowledge and personality.

**Basic features of PBL.** Despite the unambiguous definition of PBL there is generally a united agreement with its basic features together with the view that PBL must not be considered a replacement for other teaching methods but solely a complementary one that cannot substitute mainstream educational methods (Svobodová et al., 2010). The basic features that legitimate PBL content should derive from the definition above and fulfill the four main principles that PBL (a) comes from the needs and interests of students; it enables them to fulfill their need to gain new experiences and be responsible for their work; (b) PBL comes from a concrete and actual situation thus it is not restricted by school premises but even parents and others from student surrounding can be involved; (c) PBL is interdisciplinary; (d) PBL is above all an enterprise of a student; (e) the final product of PBL brings a concrete product and the process and result should be recorded; (f) PBL is usually carried out in groups; (g) PBL connects school with its neighborhood since it supports school integration into broader society and actual life (Coufalová, 2006). Furthermore Haines (1989) claims that PBL can be used with nearly all levels of

proficiency, ages and abilities of students. Heines points out that PBL is student-centred not a syllabus-centred approach to learning and once project work is launched into, students should become responsible for all major decisions such as choice of topic, working methods and the nature of end products. Additionally Heines argues that PBL supports co-operative rather than competitive atmosphere, which increases the probability of students' success. He sees having a clearly defined and agreed upon end product as the vital feature of any Project-Based Learning contrary to Patton (2012) who lists three different basic features as keys to successful projects: implementation of public exhibition, multiple drafts working and peer critique.

**Origin of Project-based learning.** The roots of PBL can be found in experiential education of the American educational reformer John Dewey at the turn of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in the USA. He is considered being an ideological father of PBL and the main figure of progressive education at that time. Dewey perceived a child as a complex human being and pursued students felt the inner urge for learning along with their realization of reasons for studying. According to Coufalová (2006) he enforced the motto “learning by doing” and laid the theoretical foundations of PBL, nonetheless, the founder of PBL method is considered his fellow-worker American pedagogue William Heard Kilpatrick who was emphasizing the significance of student interest and suggested concentrating the educational content into work of projects. His main interest was to develop children's personality as such and laid stress on student responsibility towards their own learning. One should also mention that Patton (2012) two popular phases of PBL, the first happening at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the other one during the 1970s. However, he argues, the latter phase acquired PBL temporarily a bad reputation due to perceiving it as unstructured and lacking rigour. All the same, according to Patton, this stigma has been shaken off since then mainly by the greater knowledge of PBL principles and their implementations (2012). Besides, Coufalová (2006) mentions that PBL was introduced in the Czech educational system in the 1920s and 1930s by Dewey's Czech students and the reviving was again registered after the Velvet revolution in connection with the gradual transformation of the Czech National Curriculum System.

**Advantages of PBL.** It emerges that PBL represents an interesting complement into the school tuition since it carries several advantages. It remains to be seen that the introduction of

Framework Education Programmes (FEPs) into the Czech educational system has supported the legal re-introduction of PBL into the Czech curriculum. PBL has been expanding firstly due to the development of the Internet and globalization, which enables an easy access to huge amount of information these days, and therefore changes the demands on educational results and creates the environment for broader PBL implementation (Svobodová et al., 2010). Secondly, Jezberová et al. (2011) confirm that PBL is one of the educational methods that may develop several key competences described in FEPs in complex and informal ways. The main developed competencies are mainly personnel and social ones. It is quite likely that fast changing and less predictable working conditions these days will lead people to the necessity of changing employments repeatedly and thus having the ability of learning something new is desired. Beyond any doubt it is PBL that makes use of mutual cooperation and communication among students, in fact, it supports team cooperation and significant personnel characteristics like responsibility, autonomy or spirit of enterprise. Heines (1989) highlights the facts that project work increases student motivation and interest into the subject owing to emphasis on the based features mentioned above. First of all, it is the student involvement into the choice of working project that increases their inner motivation since all students bring into work their own ideas, view and individual approach. Herewith PBL serves for all abilities within a class and even relatively weak students may be able to use other talents valuable for collective success. Secondly, PBL provides contacts with reality and students may apply the knowledge they have theoretically learnt as well that students may try to solve practical problems. Next, it emerges that PBL enables to connect knowledge from other school subjects and students are to learn how to work with information from various sources, such as the Internet, books or information from friends, parents.

Next, one should also mention that PBL presumes realization of project work mostly in project teams which is another feature that students should be prepared to so that one day they can be prepared to work in successful teams. The issue of group work or group collaboration, which are specific teaching methods with their own rules, advantages and disadvantage, cannot be expanded on in this work, however, there will be written out main points and recommendations later on for their successful implementation into PBL.

Finally it transpires that working on project supports development on student creativity. As Taddei (2013) states, creativity is these days as important as literacy. He argues that the goal

of education should be to encourage students to creative and logical thinking along with solving problems. Taddei suggest that schools should support creativity of both teachers and students and should develop creative programs in which students can work on both collective and individual projects. He also reminds teachers the necessity of giving feedback to students and offering them the frame within which they would be able to realize their own projects. Svobodová at al. (2010) claim that PBL supports the development of creative thinking by the fact that students are in the control of the project development and with the help of teachers they decide the ways of reaching the set goal.

**Possible restrictions and disadvantage of PBL.** As Kratochvílová (2006) points out PBL must be considered only a complementary teaching method and should be used only in specific cases where the student personnel development is in mind. There are several reasons why PBL is still not sufficiently used and overestimation of this method is one of them. She warns that over-usage may threaten to meet the School Education Programme's (SEP) goals given by the curriculum. In the second place, she states that this teaching method is demanding in terms of preparation time, materials, school technical equipment as well as the project organization and student discipline. Heines (1989) suggests that teachers should reconsider the potential benefits that project work may cover with the potential problems that are associated with them. To begin with, he mentions that students should be mature enough to be capable of working independently on their projects. He also mentions the importance of which approach of tutoring teachers adhere to. Heines discourages teachers from using a directive approach to teaching and recommends a non-directive one that would support student participation and motivation. Similarly Heines warns teachers that controlling the entire project work is a highly demanding process. It requires the ability of group work from students and also teachers should know their students in order to estimate their abilities together with their limitations. Furthermore Svobodová et al. (2010) recommend teachers should find a balance between teacher's intervention into work and letting pass student ideas. In their work they also indicate most frequent mistakes that teachers should generally avoid:

- Choosing too demanding themes and goals that are hard to fulfill in the given time and out of the student's limits or knowledge.



- Underestimating the preparation to project work; ignorance or little experience may lead to teacher's failure.
- Underestimating student's abilities of group or team working.
- Making mistakes originating from incorrect central project planning.
- Planning too short or too long project work; each project must have a start and an end.

Finally they point out the fact that although a good preparation is one of the necessary keys towards the success of PBL, the initial preparation itself is partially impossible considering the core of any project work which is that students are those who influence the fulfilment of project work along with the choice of topic and goals. Thus, teachers should be aware what the recommended proper preparation covers and be familiar with their role in the PBL, the student's roles and all stages that are necessary to embrace in order to succeed.

**Components of PBL.** There are four key components that PBL consists of and also their qualities influence the success of this method. First it is the role of teacher.

Jezberová et al. (2011) argue that teachers' role changes from a person who passes on information and knowledge to someone who helps students in their learning activities; teachers shift from the traditional role of a lecturer or a classroom expert to more roles which are derived from individual PBL stages. Heines (1989) lists basic teachers' roles of a guide, facilitator, manager, counselor, or an evaluator, depending on the teaching context and the PBL stage.

The second important component is the role of students. Needless to say that all students must be involved into the project process to make PBL work. Therefore teachers ought to organize activities of each student so that he or she would correspondingly bring their best into the work. Consequently teachers should ensure that each student knows what he or she learns and why they learn it. This is very important mainly in case when the project is suggested by a teacher and as a result, it is his responsibility to clarify the purpose. Needless to say, that if students do not realize the sense and the meaning of PBL, they will not become an active part of it. Subsequently, Hutchinson (1992) claims that students should participate on the project from the planning stage to the presentation and evaluation one, which means that although it is the teacher who comes with the idea of PBL, it is students who elaborate it into its concrete shape. It is quite likely that this will help them to identify with the whole work. In the same way, teachers

should make sure that students regulate their own process of learning and that they learn how to assess their peers or their own performance (self-assessment).

Third element of PBL represents the content of curriculum. This content is bound generally by the FEPs and on the school bases by the SEPs, and teachers may connect it with the content of their project. As Dvořáková (2009) states, on the one hand PBL method can relate either to one or more subjects that have both theoretical and practical orientation. On the other hand, Dvořáková claims that PBL can be aimed only or mainly at training key competencies and concentrating on teaching factual knowledge may become subsidiary.

Finally, the last fourth part is symbolized by the surrounding in which PBL realization is carried out. In fact, PBL can be done solely in the classroom; however, it is much more useful if the realization part goes beyond the school surrounding. Teachers can offer students the opportunity to meet everyday reality. In other words, they can not only learn how to deal with official authorities or their employees, they also may use this connection to reality as a source for various authentic materials (Haines, 1989).

**Types of projects.** There are various ways PBL can be characterized and sorted out. It depends on many factors including the age of students, their level and interest, the constraints of time and space or the level and the extent of teacher's experience with PBL. William Kilpatrick, the founder of the project method, distinguished only four types of project work, in consideration of the aims. First, there were problem-based projects, where intellectual problems were solved, then construction-based and evaluation-based projects and finally drill-based ones, which were aiming at gaining a certain skill. Nevertheless, today's classification is much more variable, the following over-all summary was originally formed by J. Valenta, later loosely adjusted by J. Kratochvílová (Appendix 1).

According to Dvořáková (2009) the most crucial viewpoint in PBL is who is actually the proposer of the project. The thing is that the best starting point for any project is generally considered the so called spontaneous projects which are the projects that are proposed by students themselves. These projects have very strong motivation potency, students elaborate on problems that relates to real students' interests and it ensures their maximum involvement, at least at the beginning of project work. However, it seems that there are not so many opportunities for the origins of such kind of projects in the classrooms and Coufalová (2006) states that it can be

caused for one thing by not creating suitable conditions in the classroom where the atmosphere of mutual trust, tolerance and collaboration must be present. For another thing, there is also an opinion that despite the fact that contemporary students face several problems in their personal lives they are used to seeking the answers to them elsewhere but in the school lessons.

Then, even though spontaneous projects are actually the only right projects to carry out, considering the core the PBL definition, in the educational practice teachers operate mainly with two different initial procedures. Firstly, they come up with the topic, elaborate it in advance, prepare all the materials and then present it to students as project work. Or, in the second place, teachers come up with the topic or a problem, students accept it and elaborate it themselves with the help of teachers. Kratochvílová (2006) strictly distinguishes these two approaches and the former one considers as a principle of TT whereas the latter still fulfils the basic of PBL idea and its goals. It is this stage where the teachers decide whether project is their or students 'enterprise; unquestionably PBL and TT start differing here also in the aims, output, motivation of students, roles of teachers and demands on students as well as methods of assessment. Since the initial part of PBL generally belongs to most significant one in the whole PBL procedure, it will be dealt with later on in more detail along with the other aspects of above typology.

## **PBL in English Classes**

**PBL in Language Education.** According to Beckett (2002), in the context of second-language (L2) education, PBL has a variety of terms that he finds interchangeable, such as project work, project method, project approach, project-oriented approach or project-based instruction. He claims that this method was firstly applied in L2 setting more than 20 years ago in order to provide learners with chances "to interact and communicate with each other and with native speakers of the target language in authentic context" (2002, p. 54). Beckett also argues that in comparison with general education there are seldom researches on PBL in L2 education. And moreover, he alerts that in contrast to teachers from general education, L2 teachers evaluate PBL process with mixed feelings. It emerges that implementing PBL in L2 education shows increased tension in students. Beckett points out that although the teachers were positively evaluating this method due to effective integration of subject-matter content, language skills as well as social and cognitive skills; some students were expressing dilemmas and frustrations (2002). Beckett views this state from cultural, philosophical and linguistic perspectives with one major recommendation

to L2 teachers. He acknowledges that though PBL has a deep potential for teaching and learning functional language, teachers must show the potential benefits also to students through an accepted systematic framework that enables students to see the possibilities of learning the language through this method. Otherwise, students may more desire teacher-centered learning approach with traditional learning from textbooks, which for students may represent the real work of learning English. In the event of this fact, a systematic framework will be introduced in the later part of this work.

**Role of PBL and Language Acquisition.** Although Fried-Booth states in 1990 that there is still not fully accepted knowledge of how people learn and primarily “ how the language of the classroom is absorbed and later put to use outside the classroom” (1990, p.11), since then there has been a great shift of perception of this issue. Social constructivist theories of learning emphasize mainly that learning a language is a social, dynamic process and learners learn when they interact with one another (Dale, Tanner, 2012). Input theories of L2 acquisition propose that language input should be meaningful, relevant, also realistic and multimodal. In addition, output theories argue that learners need to produce language in order to learn it and more importantly students need to experiment in English lessons, be creative and make mistakes on the way. Furthermore, cognitive learning theories state that if people’s brains work harder, people remember things more efficiently. These theories of learning suggest that learning a language comprises of making personal meaning from new material and combining it with what is already known. According to Dale and Tanner, language learning happens when learners themselves make sense of what they are learning thus it is necessary to relate activities in the language classroom to real life in order to enable them to transfer the personal meaning (2012, p. 12).

In connection with these theories, there have been several new methodologies introduced and as Richards (2006) puts it, most of them arise from the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. There are various methodologies that originate from this approach and that share with PBL similar attitude towards learning. One of them is a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) method and the connection with PBL is described later on in this work.

Beyond any doubt, when it comes to relation between PBL and teaching English language, PBL is considered as another very practical methodology which can bring substantial

benefits to language classrooms. Hutchinson (1992) considers the merits of PBL in terms of the process of learning, language content, and educational values.

Firstly he points out that from a CLT approach, methodology of PBL captures the two fundamental elements of it, such as the concern for motivation and the concern for relevance. Richards (2006) argues that “Communicative Language Teaching can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom“ (p. 2). In CLT real and meaningful communication is its defining characteristic where language is regarded as a tool of communication used in a real communication context. It emerges that this kind of approach better facilitates second language learning; for one thing it enables students to work with relevant, purposeful content, for another it represents the teacher’s role more as a facilitator who creates classroom friendly climate where learners learn through collaboration and sharing. All in all, Hutchinson (1992) argues that in respect of motivation both PBL an CLT share the same features such as that it covers personal experience, personal work of the learners, and correspondingly it helps students not to see language as a remote and unreal thing, quite on the contrary, since they use it in real, relevant context of their own lives. Thus, as a result, PBL helps to integrate the foreign language into the system of the learners’ own communicative competence.

Secondly, Hutchinson (1992) states that PBL „enables students to rehearse the language and factual knowledge that will be of most value to them as language users“ (p. 13). As Haines (1989) agrees, PBL, in the context of language teaching, is focused more on reaching agreed goal in task rather than on specific language targets. Hereby, students are provided with opportunities to recycle known language and skills, they apply and adapt what they already know, since specific language aims are not beforehand prescribed. Haines claims that in PBL students can use language more creatively than in common controlled practice exercises, and thereby, most projects involve practicing of a number of related skills like speaking, writing, reading or listening in varied activities. Fried-Booth (1990) reminds that all four mentioned skills are to be used in a naturally integrated way as students are offered the opportunities to apply the language skills already acquired, in a situation which is challenging and real to them.

Thirdly, Hutchinson stated that PBL functions as a bridge that brings closer together the culture of English speaking world and the learner’s own world. Hence, it enables a reciprocal

cultural communication, which the author sees as one of the most important benefits of learning a foreign language.

Moreover, Ribé and Vidal (1993) see PBL as a chance for students with poor linguistic skills to be in project work actively participating as they may make use of their other talents in other non-linguistic tasks and consequently improve their confidence and general attitude towards language learning.

However, one should also mention the possibly challenging issues that PBL brings along in the area of language teaching. To begin with, most teachers are afraid of students speaking their mother tongue instead of using English. In such case, Hutchinson acknowledges that this is very probably to happen mainly during the teamwork, nevertheless, he advises not to considerate it as a drawback but as a natural phenomenon about which there is no need to worry as long as the final product is in English, students are provided with useful translation activities from various source materials and they have the opportunities to practise productive skills in English. Then, some teachers express their concerns about the loss of their firm control over the weaker students so that they would be not able to cope with the work. This again might happen, yet, with the right teacher's attitude, solid regular class preparation and the responsible working and social environment, those students are not neglected but either incorporated into co-cooperative learning groups or dealt with independently by the teacher, who, in his role of facilitator, is able to devote them more time. The last main concern is associated with correcting students' language and with the number of language mistakes they are to make during the process. This problem deals with the areas of language accuracy versus fluency and their potential balance. On the one hand, teachers should recognize which stages of PBL are more crucial to the need of accuracy practice and which stages are to produce language which is both accurate and fluent (Haines, 1989). Haines reminds that one of the main aims of PBL is to build students' confidence and over-correction of teachers is likely to doom this goal.

To resume the role of PBL in English acquisition, it emerges that if PBL is carried out with a careful preparation, right teacher's attitude and decent knowledge, it comprises not only the general benefits that has been described in the first part of this work but also it produces further advantages. With respect to the English language, PBL affords students to practise the target language they have consider needful, in real and meaningful situations. They are to express

their own language needs along with creation of their own chosen end product; hence, it reinforces the learning of both language and the concrete content of PBL.

**PBL and CLIL.** As it was already mentioned, there is a certain relation between these two different methodologies of CLIL and PBL when it is related to language acquisition. As Dale and Tanner (2012) argue CLIL is a way of teaching where subject content is taught in another language, in our case, it is English. They point out that CLIL is content-driven, yet, it not only deals with teaching subject aims but at the same time with teaching language goals. And these basic twofold CLIL aims are identical with those of PBL objectives when it comes to PBL application it into English classes. As Dale and Tanner claim, this integration brings various benefits to students in English classes which are identical to those merits connected with PBL. They both include developing greater motivation, higher cognition, communication skills along with developing advanced intercultural awareness. Both CLIL and PBL appeal to variety of learning styles and as a consequence, “learners who spend time focusing on *how* language is used (form), as well as *what* is being said (meaning) also progress faster in learning a language” (Dale, Tanner, 2012, p. 12).

Dale and Tanner also allege that there is a link between implementation of CLIL and greater collaboration among subject and language teachers, which, as a result, may lead to initiation of cross-curricular projects. However, likewise with PBL, there is neither single CLIL pedagogical model nor one methodology in practice and as a consequence of it, CLIL methodology is highly flexible due to a wide range of contexts (Coyle, Hood, Marsh, 2010).

The point I want to make is that if teachers of English wish to implement general PBL structure into their English classes they should pay attention to these challenges that CLIL teachers encounter and they should learn the ways of dealing with:

- How can I activate content? How can I activate language?
- How can I evaluate the level of the materials I am using? How to find out the level of difficulty of a text?
- What sort of multimodal input can I provide and how can I help learners to understand it?
- How do I choose which aspects of language to focus on?
- How can I deal with new vocabulary and how can I help learners remember it?
- What kind of writing can I do with learners, which writing activities?

- How can I assess content and language?

All these challenges that are to find in CLIL lesson are to be inevitably dealt with in PBL while pursuing integration of content and language aims in the PBL process. The educational solutions to these problematic areas go beyond the extent of this work; nevertheless, it covers essential knowledge of several key educational themes such as: first, an awareness of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development concept and the knowledge of its application; then, having the notion how to provide scaffolding by using various supporting learning strategies that make the content and the language more accessible e. g. the employment of the framework of Blooms's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives; finally, being familiar with using rubrics for assessment, review and feedback (Dale, Tanner, 2012).

## **Organizing PBL in English Classes**

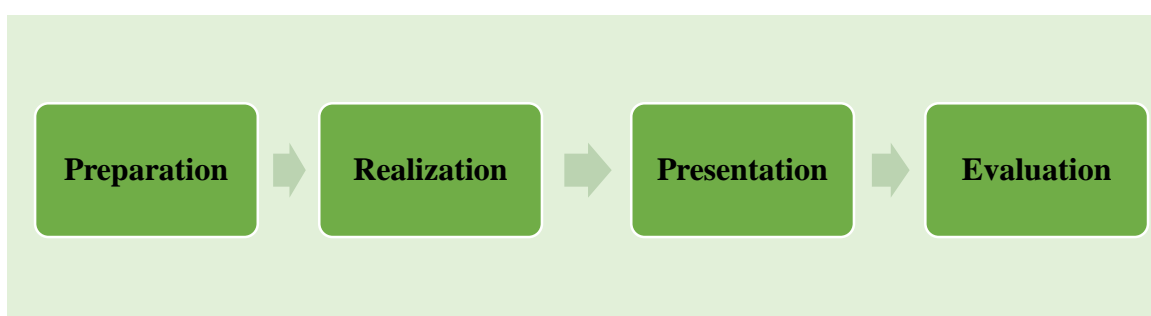
It emerges that although PBL offers students great space for autonomy, it must not be considered as unprepared improvisation which is orientated solely on student's interest. Quite on the contrary, PBL is necessary to plan for one thing from the viewpoint of time and position of the project within the curriculum, for another planning should cover the knowledge of the educational goals that should be met and level of their difficulties. Preparation is the key to making project work a success and Hutchinson (1992) argues that the understanding of project work and the ability to deal with it lies in learner-centered characteristic of PBL which dwells not in the question *What?*, but rather in the question *Who?* Who makes the decisions? It has been mentioned above that spontaneous projects are rare, so it is usually the teacher who provides the basic topic, nevertheless the content and the product are determined principally by the learners who on the one hand are given the space for creative work and independent decisions, yet, on the other hand, all that happens in a carefully prepared teacher's plan. The planning itself represents very demanding activity for teachers, yet in comparison with TT, teachers do not plan in advance students' activities as such but merely the essential outline for the whole project work, the main stages, their interconnections plus all the documentation that is important to fill in and store.

The first thing to consider when introducing PBL into the lessons Svobodová et al. (2010) claim that is indispensable to get ready in three areas. The first thing to ponder is whether students are ready for this kind of method. It is not correct to present PBL method to them without any preliminary practice. The second point is that teachers who have never implemented



any project work are not likely to lead students towards a successful realization of PBL and therefore must familiarize with the issue of it and correspondingly gather information from more experienced teachers or their work. And the third point is that teachers should plan very carefully their first project work, so called “pilot project”, which sounds as a matter of course, however, according to the authors, there are still many cases in which project work was realized with little or no preparation.

This brings us to the ways PBL can be implemented. Various authors suggest different divisions, for the sake of this work there is a model of PBL described which is carried out within the framework and documentation of project management alongside basic steps advocated by Allan and Stoller (2005). According to Svobodová et al. (2010) project management and PBL are based on the same principles, in fact, project management is a long-standing approach towards realization of extensive and complex tasks and what is more, from the point of management there is no difference between working on projects at school or any other (business) organization. Hence, according to project management principles, project work is divided into four major phases which are: preparation phase, next realization phase, then presentation phase and finally evaluation phase. However, in order to capture the entire sight on the whole system of PBL, I summarized the necessary general circumstances as a separate phase that constitutes kind of breeding ground for method of PBL which cannot be omitted in the school environment.



*Figure 1 PBL Phases adapted from Svobodová et al. (2010)*

**PBL breeding ground.** When When teachers think of implementing PBL into their lessons they and their students should “already know what it means to work PBL-style”, (Lamer, 2013, para. 1), which covers several areas.

To begin with, Kratochvílová (2006) points out that PBL can work only in the interactive teaching environment. Beyond any doubt, this kind of environment should promote an

atmosphere of participation and attention and is related to the Czech school transformation as well as to the student-centered approach in which teachers accept students not only as objects but also as subjects of their own development. This new approach towards teaching suppresses still prevailing transmission teaching approach and exercises constructivist teaching one that stresses active learning, mutual interaction among students and the teacher and emphasizes group cooperation, rather than just passing on ready-made knowledge to passive students. In this kind of background teachers should assess students 'potentiality; they allow them to become authentic personalities by working in equal relationship and socially suitable classroom climate. Kratochvílová emphasizes that students work and learn at their full potential when surrounded by safe and secure environment (2006).

Similarly, more authors agree that teachers should also gradually prepare students for working in PBL in other several ways (Svobodová et al., 2010; Heines, 1989; Ribé and Vidal, 1993; Fried-Booth, 1990; Patton, 2012). In this case, Oakley, Brent, Felder & Elhajjlike argue that students should be explicitly taught skills that require high performance teamwork as these particular skills are not inborn and their lack may promote student's frustration and resentment towards working in a manner of small-group learning. Oakley et al. consider that those explicit steps should be given to students beforehand to help them learn mainly project management, time management, conflict resolution and communication skills (2004). This view is strongly supported by Larmer (2013) who, before introducing PBL into the class, inquires whether students:

Are they able to work in teams, conduct inquiry, and make a presentation to an audience? Have they ever been asked to think about an open-ended question or use problem solving strategies? Have they ever had to complete a complex task over an extended period of time, one that involved planning, organization, and processes for critique and revision? Do they know how to use the Internet or the library to find answers to their questions? Do they know what a rubric is? (para. 2).

Here he recommends to approach the foundation-laying job that would let students to practise the necessary basic PBL skills summarized into 4 C's competencies which are critical thinking, collaboration, communication and creativity. Lammer argues also that students should be in the habit of cooperation among peers and used to giving and receiving critical feedback.

Whereas Fried-Booth (1990) calls this foundation-laying approach incorporation of Bridging Strategies that covers training in advance particular activities; Haines (1989) labels these pre-project tasks as Lead-In Activities. In the Czech context, FEPs introduce those particular 4C's as Key Competencies (KC) in the SEP (Pecina, Zormanová 2009). Formation and developing KC have become the main objectives of the Czech education where KC are defined as a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities and values which are significant both for individual's participation in the society and individual's personal development. FEPs recognize six KCs as complex utilization of the acquired abilities and skills; for each competency there are defined levels of abilities that unfold into separate skills that are the concrete base of PBL foundation-laying job. Soule (2014) describes those particular skills as both means and targets of PBL that must be developed and nurtured both in students and teachers to ensure high quality of PBL, which brings us to the principles in which KC are recommended to be acquired in the foundation laying job.

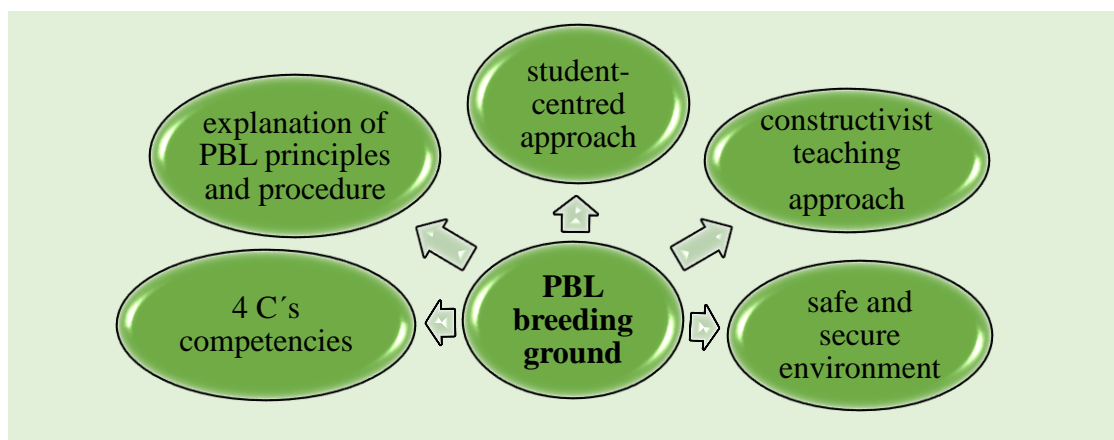
Firstly, According to Research Pedagogical Institute of Prague (VÚP), KC are results of the overall educational process, thus they should be developed and exploited in all subjects, not just in one, otherwise they will not be adopted. Secondly, it is also teachers, not just students, who must gradually learn how to work with new teaching styles, strategies and methods aiming at key competencies. Next, key competencies are interconnected and multifunctional. In addition, teachers must learn how to unfold separate competencies, elaborate them into concrete students' activities and simultaneously find criteria for their assessment (2007). What is more, Hansen Čechová (2009) claims that it is the assessing of KC that actually contributes to their development primarily via self-assessment, where reflecting on experience is incorporated. This view supports famous John Dewey's thought that "we do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience" (Clements, 2015, para.6), hence reflection skills and self-reflection particularly must be deliberately trained as such. As a result, students prove their current level of KC not by being tested, in fact, they demonstrate their level of KC by the degree of mastering particular assignments. Therefore, the PBL foundation-laying job consists of particular tasks or activities aiming at following (key) competencies.

To start with, Lamer (2013) claims to practice the Problem-Solving (critical thinking) Competency in problem-solving activities, setting students construction or open-ended tasks and letting them analyze various sources of information. In particular, Coyle et al. suggest webquest

technique or jigsaw tasks to attend these cognitive issues (2010). Next, Lamer argues that Communication competency should be taught by encouraging students how to be active listeners, how to ask questions and practise speaking skills with the help of rubrics. Similarly, creativity is best to train in various methods supporting divergent thinking such as brainstorming, brain writing, mind mapping or the method 635.

Finally, the most important seems to be training teamwork skills and collaboration within Social and Personal Competency, where teachers need to prepare students in several ways. Students should be practicing group communication, fulfilment of discipline, keeping the mutual agreements or equally importantly they should be able to respect the group leader with his or her instruction. Then, students should be similarly taught how to lead the group and coordinate it. Next, students ought to know in advance how to present their opinions, stances and suggestions when solving joint tasks and problems. They ought to learn how to play various roles, how to deal with conflicts, show differences of opinions, divide tasks among the team etc. Moreover, teachers ought to be familiar also with the natural group stages, developments of group dynamics and their impact on teamwork (Kasíková, 2005). Above all, Oakley et al. recommend teaching students to use peer rating system as another effective device for improving and assessing team or individual performance along with teaching them establishing various policies that support cooperative learning (2004). Similarly, Petton (2012) stresses the importance of getting students into the habit of creating multiple drafts of works, which has a great impact on students with regard to their assignments, learning or self-esteem. Petton advocates that it should be students critiquing each other's drafts and highlights training critique sessions, teaching students basic rules of critique and recognizing differences between instructional critique and peer critique along with its types and various protocols.

To resume, although PBL is generally considered as an effective complex method representing great deal of beneficial outcomes, yet, it requires the breeding ground consisting of five fundamental pillars that PBL stands on and which are indispensable to get familiar with when pondering PBL implementation, both for teachers and students.



*Figure 2 PBL Breeding Ground*

**Phases of PBL in English Classes.** Once teachers feel they and their students are prepared to work in a PBL style and the skill-foundation-laying job has been introduced, then a teacher may think of launching a project work. On this point Allan and Stoller (2005) recommend teachers to consider these preliminary questions (Appendix 2) when thinking about launching a new project work to maximize the benefits of project work. Nevertheless, this well designed checklist of questions is originally based on Stoller's ten-step PBL framework (Allan, Stoller, 2005), however, in this work we will be dealing with the newest Stoller's framework, which has been adapted to seven steps by consolidation of steps 4&5, 6&7 and 8&9 into particular cycles (Stoller, 2013). With regard to the documentation, Svobodová et al. (2010) states that one of the key characteristic of PBL is its documentation and stresses the importance of leading a clear written evidence of the exact educational goals, individual activities along with their outcomes and planned out responsibilities. Next, projects are logistically complicated and the whole process must be recorded in regular intervals just as the final outcome and following assessments. For the purpose of this work, the main documentation is drawn from project management procedure, yet, it is enhanced by other protocols that I have recognized meaningful to incorporate. One might also mention that Miller (2011) regards social media platforms such as Edmodo, as other great ways for sharing ideas with real PBL evidence and documentation of collaboration among students.

**Preparation phase.** According to Miller (2011), the main thing teachers should bear in mind is to help students to create authentic, engaging and relevant projects and following instructions help teachers to guide them through the sequence of preparation steps. Though these

steps must be at least partially pre-planned by the teacher, the content is mainly class-generated and thus it meets the central demand that the project is an enterprise of students (Ribé, Vidal, 1993). The preparation phase is gradually recorded into a logical framework form and covers:

1. Selecting the purpose.
2. Determination of the educational aims.
3. Selecting the final product.
4. Creating a general structure, timeline and regular check-ins.
5. Forming teams.
6. Producing the final written framework.

#1. *Selecting the purpose*. In order to create a compelling student project, it seems to be a crucial point how to awake students' inner motivation. As it was said, spontaneous projects are rare and random, thus if teachers plan to meet educational purposes in PBL and keep the project under control it may be *them* who suggest the theme, not students, however, there is a great emphasis on how they do it. For instance, Lamer and Mergendoller (2012) advise that before introducing the project work itself, teachers should launch it with an "entry event" that arouses students' interest and initiates their questioning. The motivation props could be anything from featuring a film, music or showing a mock correspondence to arranging a lively discussion, or an invitation of a guest speaker. Actually, this stage corresponds with the first stage three-phase model of constructivist teaching, where teachers activate and map of existing students' prior knowledge and personal experiences along with arousing emotions around the topic, which helps to set up a scenario of personal interest. According to Hansen Čechová (2009) mainly methods of brainstorming and mind mapping are favourable to employ with students at this stage. One should also mention the Need to Know Form, which Miller (2011) calls "a living and breathing document" (2011, para. 16) where students are asked what they need to know so that they can accomplish the presented project.

The result of this first crucial step, Ribé and Vidal (1993) see in eliciting an idea that becomes the basis of the whole project and what Lamer (2012) calls a "Driving Question". According to him, a good driving question should be open-ended, provocative, complex and should link to the core of educational goals that a teacher intends to teach students.

#2. *Determination of the educational goal*. Once the topic and consequently driving question are selected, the teacher with the help of students formulates the driving question into the

clear, concrete, practicably attainable and measurable objectives of PBL. Svobodová et al. (2010) claim that a well-chosen educational goal lays in learning both new content and language skills. On this point, Patton (2012) advises teachers carry out “backward planning” that states everything students are expected to learn in the project from the knowledge to specialist skills or competencies and think the ways of assessing them. In addition, students should also agree on the choice of suitable title for the whole project.

*#3. Selecting the final product.* Patton (2012) distinguishes three main types of final outcomes which may be a product, a performance or a service (2012). Yet, the choice of final products (Appendix 3) can be almost endless, depending on student’s interest, style of learning, experience or creativity. Lamer and Mergendoller (2012) state that students should be allowed the “Voice and Choice” in products, which will allow to use their strengths and what is more, it keeps them engaged and invested. This opportunity to option enables students to personalize the learning and makes project meaningful to them. Besides, students and the teacher agree firmly on assessment criteria in forms of a rubric so that students would know exactly in advance what particularly they should pay attention to and what the transparent evaluating standards are. And moreover, clear criteria allow students to peer-assess or self-assess better in various tasks. As Mergendoller and Thomas (2003) state, students should be involved in developing the rubric and be able to restate it in their own words, which they may conduct easily if they are shown a model of the type of product they will be creating. This, according to Patton (2012), first, will give them a clear vision and second, can be used a basis for assessment criteria. In connection with the final product and its presentation, students as well need to discuss and agree on their public audience, to whom and when they are going to present their work finally, apart from their classmates and the teacher.

*#4. Creating a general structure of the project.* At this stage, first, students structure the project by discussing what, why, where and how decisions. Mergendoller and Thomas (2003) let students to brainstorm questions before completing a research plan. Similarly, students consider how and where the needed information will be gathered, compiled and analyzed. Correspondingly they will decide on the provision of all tangible material they can use during the project. Next, students define several project milestones plus their deadlines and write them into a Milestone Table (Appendix 4) serving as a basic time line for the whole project where students can tick fulfilled stages. Then students with the teacher’s help consider individual steps and

procedures of their solutions and they create a Table of Individual Tasks (Appendix 5) that has to be carried out to meet the educational goals. They will think out everything they will be doing, label those activities and decide on their primary roles and responsibilities according to their interest and abilities. In addition, they should analyze the possible risks and suggest preventive measures before completing Risk Management Plan (Appendix 5). Last but not least, it is important to plan regular check-ins with students and schedule critique sessions which ought to follow draft deadlines (Patton, 2012).

#5. *Forming teams.* During previous deliberations are students are divided into particular co-operative groups, managed by a group leader. On this point several authors show different attitude in terms of instructor-formed teams vs. self-selection ones. While Coufalová (2006); Heines (1989) prefer spontaneous group formations, which are based on specific interests or friendship; other authors advocate instructor-formed teams (Oakley et al., 2004; Kasíková, 2005; Mergendoller and Thomas, 2003; Miller, 2011). They favour establishing heterogeneous groups which are established by teacher's choice. There are several benefits that justify that attitude. Firstly, teachers are able to place behaviorally challenged, uncooperative, domineering or unpopular students in appropriate groups. Secondly, they can match the grouping pattern to the educational context or goal. Thirdly, weak students are provided with good modeling of effective learning approaches and tutoring from strong students. And lastly, instructor-formed groups may have fewer propensities for cheating; students do not incline toward covering one's plagiarism or failure to participate in group efforts, due to weaker pre-existing relationships between students (Oakley et al., 2004). However, Svobodová et al. (2010) claim that later on, when students master PBL process, they can compile their working teams on their own. Besides, as regards functional grouping, Oakley et al. suggest having all students fill out the Getting to Know You form (see Appendix 6) at the beginning of the school year. This form serves several purposes and authors claim this technique as a helping tool for creation a good team compositions. Most authors recommend to form three- and four-person teams, however, Oakley et al. warn that initially students may object to instructor-formed-team's creation and appeal to teachers to seek out more information about successful dealing with student resistance to cooperative learning (2004).

#6. *Producing the final written logical framework.* In this final stage of the preparation phase, teachers fill in the logical framework in which they specify individual project stages and milestones including the time and organizational schedule.



**Realization phase.** This phase covers stages of launching project work; planning and realizing concrete activities along with project finishing. It consists of:

1. Information gathering cycle.
2. Information processing cycle.

#1. *Information gathering cycle.* Allan and Stoller (2005) claim that within this first stage of the realization phase, teachers should prepare students for the language, skill and strategy demands connected with following information gathering. At this point teachers determine the language demands of the information gathering process and structure instruction activities to prepare students for each of the information-gathering tasks. Teachers prepare and carefully scaffold various tasks to promote students ‘understanding of the content material along with the progress of critical thinking skills. Stoller (2013) lists six potential different sources for the information gathering and for each different source names various Specific Language and Content Supporting Techniques or Methods (Appendix 7).

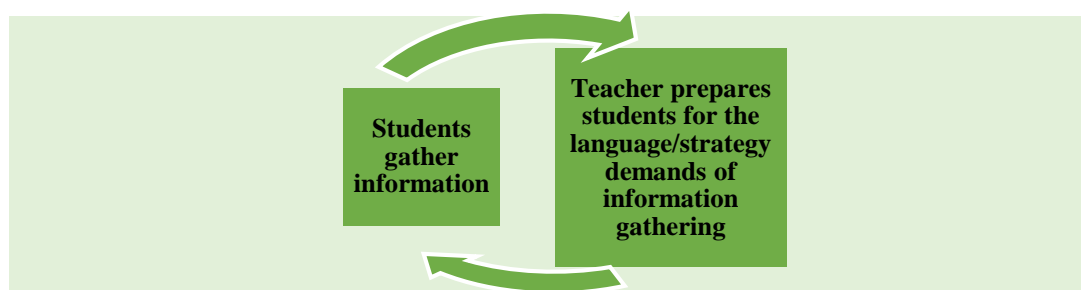
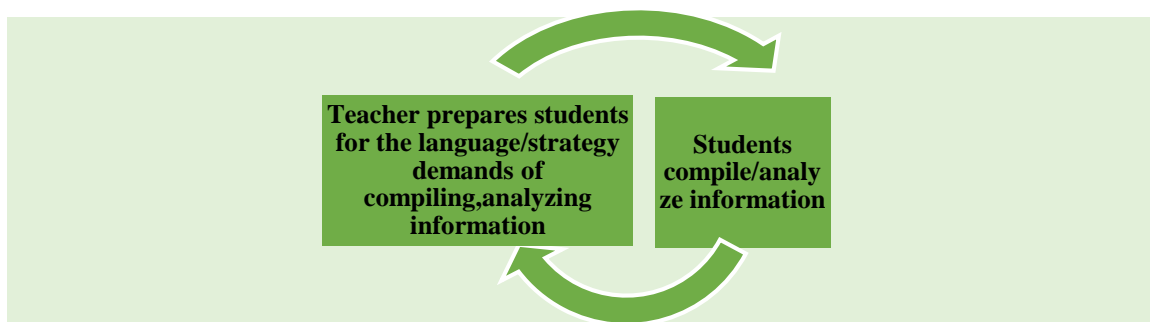


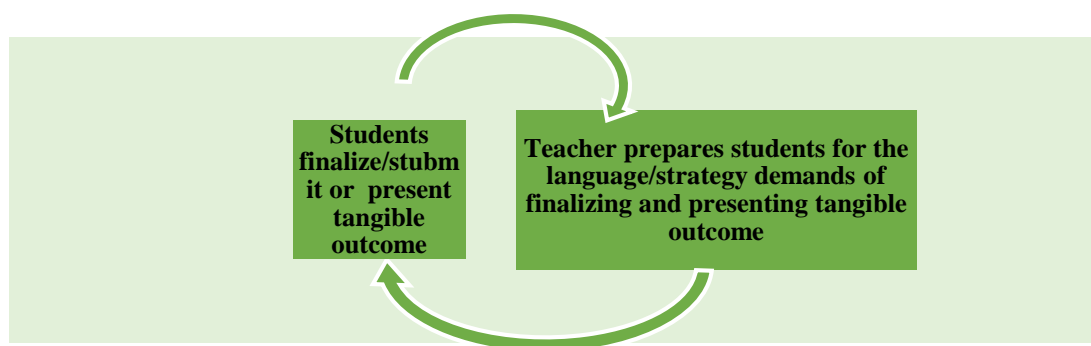
Figure 3 Information Gathering Cycle (Stoller, 2013)

#2. *Information processing cycle.* Once students collected the information using diverse methods of gathering, teachers have the opportunity to teach them how to process this gathered information. Stoller (2013) again sees this as a cyclical process where teachers prepare the tasks where students practise how to categorize, make comparison, identify, analyze, organize and compile the useful information for completion of the project. Students working in groups may also use various graphic organizers like charts or time lines, depending on ways they were gathering the information (Appendix 7) and furthermore they discuss the value of data they have collected. Allan and Stoller argue that “the goal is to identify information that is critical for the completion of their projects” (2005, p. 12).



*Figure 4 Information Compilation & Analysis Cycle (Stoller, 2013)*

**Presentation phase.** Students present the final outcome on the bases of initial decisions and standards. Stoller describes this stage as Information reporting cycle, where teachers create language activities helping students successfully present the final project outcomes (Allan, Stoller, 2005). Those practicing tasks usually involve teaching of paraphrasing, presentation skills, depending on the manner in which students are going to present their work.



*Figure 5 Information Reporting Cycle (Stoller, 2013)*

**Evaluation phase.** PBL assessment does not concern only the final product, in fact students are assessed throughout the process of PBL, which stresses formative assessment and accepts the necessity of final summative assessment. There are four main sources of the assessment in PBL like self-assessment, peer assessment, teacher or outside expert/audience assessment (Patton, 2012). Students are assessed during regular check-ins, critiques sessions on the bases of their multiple drafts. Patton (2012) claims that the final phase of PBL comprises written evaluation of its success rate both from the point of reaching the goals and managing the project work. The former can be done by criteria given ahead in the logical framework and the latter can be assessed by referring to protocols kept throughout the project. The teachers also

evaluate whether pedagogical goals were reached e.g. by an exam and should find ways of assessing individual contributions to the product through peer assessment (Appendix 8) or teacher's observation. Furthermore, they formulate the obstacles or mistakes and subsequently possible improvements for future project work. One should also bear in mind that it is important to preserve the whole project work either for making use of it some day or for public presentation of school work, which may lead to further sharing knowledge among other teachers and schools. This final phase should not be executed immediately after finishing the project phase, though it is recommended to start no later than two weeks' time.

To sum it up, organization of PBL requires more than detailed planning and preparation. It demands mainly working in a certain PBL style which roots from PBL breeding ground principles and then the employment of PBL in the classroom is a matter of unification of these teaching methods, forms and styles that lead to active students in a cooperative school surrounding. However, projects never go 100 % according to a plan, thus, the significant strategy for teachers is to know how students are doing and keep the track of it. Thereafter, adjustments are not threatening and are expected to happen. The following chapter outlines a research methodology used to investigate the areas of challenges English teachers might deal with during the PBL practice.

### III. METHODS

This chapter describes the research methodology which was applied for this theses. First, I outline two common methods that could have been used in connection with the PBL research and name reasons why I considered them insufficient. Second, there is a description of the chosen method along with explaining why this approach was finally selected. And thirdly, in the research methodology part, there is an explanation of how the data for research were collected, what issues I dealt with when choosing this particular study, what was done exactly and why.

In the theory part I tried to summarize the main issues that PBL is connected with. Since I have no direct experience with this method both from student or teacher's point of view, the main aim I had in mind when writing the work was that finally I would be theoretically prepared for such a complex, demanding but valuable teaching method. I tried to define not just the direct PBL procedures but also I wanted to capture all the significant circumstances that teachers should take into an account when planning this method and implementing it in their school context. In terms of the practical part, I had two apparent options how to approach this topic. First, the usual one, I could have attempted to apply PBL in the teaching process myself and retrospectively evaluate it. Or second, to use the quantitative method and create a kind of questionnaire to collect the data, either from students or teachers and then come to some conclusions. The main reason I did not decide for the first choice was that when studying and writing the theory part I fully realized the importance of laying background to the procedure of PBL among anything else and that learning the PBL actual steps alone cannot ensure the success of this method. Originally I wanted to apply PBL during my teaching practice at the secondary school; however, later on, I came to the realization that I would go against all the main PBL principles I stated in the theory part. I would apply it with students I have never seen, know little about, had no rapport created with and consequently the amount of ten available lessons to teach them I did not consider enough for establishing it.

Considering the other option was tempting for me since what I was interested in mainly was the question of real school PBL realization in English lessons, how teachers may approach this issue and what obstacles they may encounter with. I do not think that creating and spreading a questionnaire on a large scale would offer me the answers I would be hoping for. There are more reasons for it: The results obtained by a questionnaire may be distorted by the lack of

teachers' time, interest, experience, willingness or readiness to complete the form or they would not be able to recall the details I would be asking about. I was finding a better way of approaching those teachers who had a direct experience with PBL in ESL classes, were engaged in this topic and were able to provide me with a complex self-reflection of their work.

All in all, after careful consideration of various possibilities, I decided to use the method of document analysis for my research intention. Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher with the aim of creating new hypothesis, theories or getting a better understanding and insight (Olecká, 2010). Olecká states that this method has a process character, which means that its procedure is developed during the data collection, where the information is simultaneously analyzed. Data are studied in details; they show high validity but rather low reliability. This approach offers relatively deep insights into a research area; however, it does not have a standardized procedure and researching plans may change during the survey. Specifically, I decided to apply this specific method to explore bachelor and diploma theses that state to be dealt with by ESL teachers who have PBL as the main theme of their theses and subsequently PBL is used and elaborated in their practical parts. The thing is that I assume those teachers had learnt plenty of information and recommendations about PBL procedure in advance of work, just like me, and I would like to explore their concrete and detailed descriptions of the actual realizations. The document analysis approach allows me to look into the unique individual experiences with various PBL applications thus it can provide me with the insights into the setting of a problem and helps me to explore this phenomena in its natural context. Nevertheless, document analysis has its own limitation and I am aware that its findings cannot be used to make generalizations about the interest since it provides a non-statistical data, but this is not the point of my work. I decided to explore the situations where teachers were very likely to be theoretically well prepared to implement PBL into practice and I would like to read about their experiences. Because of the core of this chosen method I did not want to do any particular assumptions in advance. However, I was prepared to keep noticing one issue altogether and that is what problems or obstacles teachers reported they have encounter with or what issues were not taken into an account when preparing for PBL employment and were causing difficulties. Thus this is my main object of interest and primary motivation for the research theme. I consider it very important to try to look into this issue since there exists neither united PBL methodology nor one general format to follow and each teacher including me

“assembles” the procedure by his or her best knowledge, attitude and style of teaching, experience, expectations or assumptions. Thus, by the method of document analysis I wanted to investigate what other teachers considered challenging and later on see how this could have been prevented from. Nevertheless, I was prepared to deal with other issues of PBL applications as document analysis allows adjust the research theme during the data analysis.

## **Research methodology**

The research created for this thesis was carried on the bases of analyzing the theses that were gathered from the portal [www.theses.cz](http://www.theses.cz) where there is an open access to thousands of diploma and bachelor theses successfully defended at various Czech universities. First of all there were generated those theses that had “project based learning” or simply “project” in their key word set. Out of 920 results to be found I was searching for those with these parameters: first of all, the theses dealing with PBL methodology in their theoretical part. Second, PBL must be explored and intensively described in connection with English language teaching environment. Thirdly, the practical part of theses deal with the cases where teachers carried out projects based on PBL methodology in their ESL classes and were offering the reflection of their work. Out of 920 results to be generated having “project” as one of the key words I eliminated 17 results to fit the first two conditions; however, there were two problematic files. One file could not be open and the other did not fulfill the third condition since the PBL project was only theoretically preplanned in the practical part and actual realization was not provided.

Out of the 15 explored theses were 13 diploma and 2 bachelor ones. The total of 11 theses come from the Masaryk University Brno, 2 are from University of West Bohemia, other 2 are from Palackého University in Olomouc and 1 originates from University of České Budějovice. Ten theses were done by teachers and the rest of five works were carried out by pedagogical students during their teaching practice. The basic characterization of these theses such as their authors, the year of publishing, title and short description of their practical parts is found in Appendix 9.

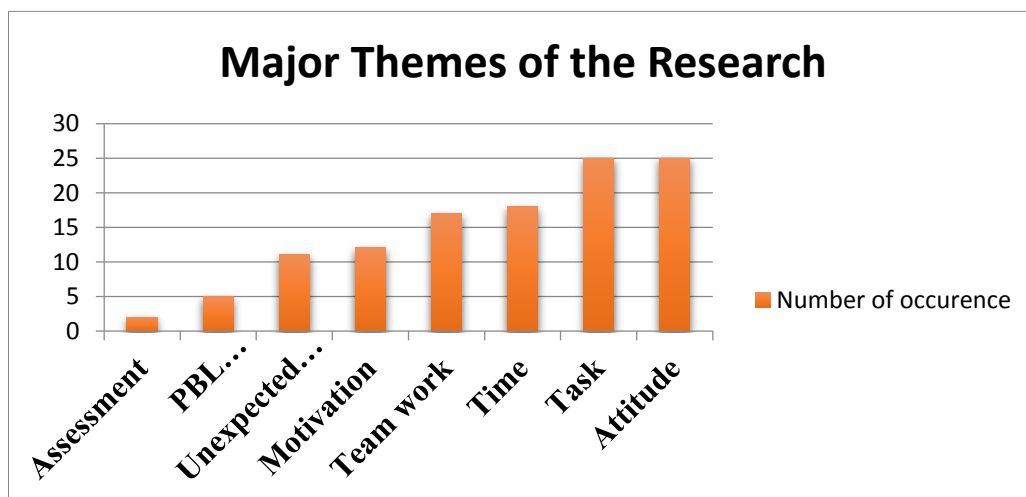
The method of document analysis is based on the collection of data through careful reading of the practical parts of the theses with the simultaneous data analysis. First, there are collected data which are found to be in concord with the intended research question described above. This data is to be gathered with the indication of the origin of the thesis. Thereafter when

all the relevant data is to be collected, the work of data sorting and classification begins so that data is to be labeled with a “code” by a short phrase that suggest connection to my research main objective. When the coding is complete I categorized the codes into a system that would provide the overall scheme with its primer categories and subcategories which summarize the prevalence of codes, describe their main features and consequences. This scheme was to be compared with the information provided in theoretical section and ends with the research conclusion, teaching consequences, limitations and suggestion for future research.

## IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

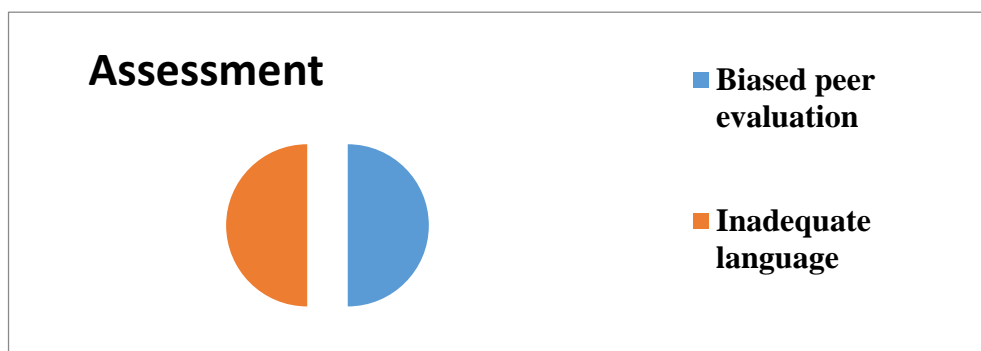
In this part of the thesis the results of the document analyses are presented. First, I present eight themes schematically in one graph, and next each theme is followed by analysis that specifies the dealing issues, describe problematic situations teachers encountered with, and finally, problems are discussed and put into connection with project management principles that are stated in the theory part.

The research deals with eight basic themes that were recognized during the document analysis. The themes are arranged into a graph that by the given number indicates the total number of occurrence found in the documents, yet, sometimes the numbers indicate repetitive occurrence within one work with different circumstances, thus each sub-theme is back up with the indication of the total number of teachers dealing with the issue. Themes are presented in the ascending order.



*Graph 1 Major Themes of the Research*

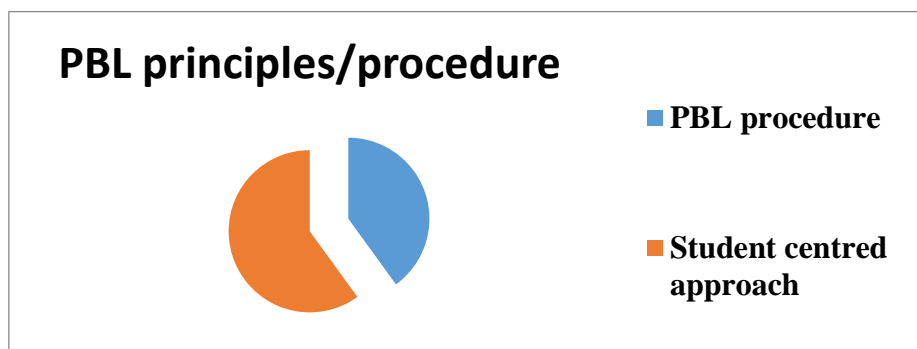




*Graph 2 The subthemes of the theme Assessment*

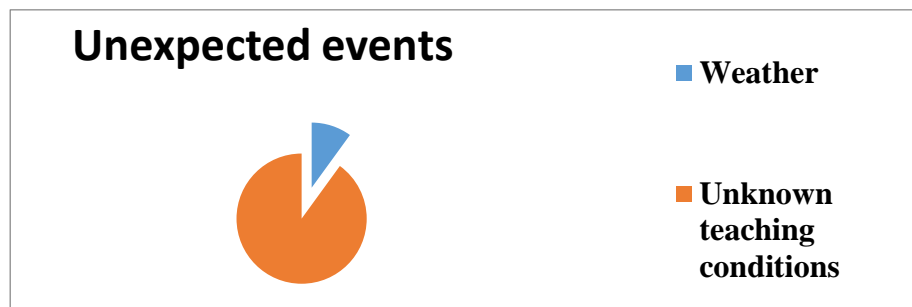
Theme # 1: Assessment – In terms of assessment, teachers found minimum problematic issues; however, two teachers identified two basic problems. In the evaluation stage, one teacher realized that students were unable to evaluate objectively one another. The other problem was concerning the language of students' evaluation. Since they assessed in repetitively very simple language that did not give much evidence, the teacher regretted not having provided enough useful phrases or adjectives for more accurate evaluation.

The problem with peer rating was that they gave only positive evaluation to their classmates so that they would not offend them. This students' stance is understandable but they must learn what consequences this behavior yield. Teachers should explain what an effective device peer rating is, that it actually improves team performance and team work skills. Each team after a while runs into problems and students are to be learnt that peer assessment is one way they can deal with less responsible teammates who do not pull their weight on work teams equally. For this case it was recommended in the background part to use a peer rating system to assess the performance of individual team members and to adjust team grades to take the ratings into account. It is advised to introduce the policy of informing students in advance about some of the mistakes new teams commonly make and suggest best avoidances of them. And moreover, it was pointed out that rather than academic abilities students should assess "team citizenship" of each member such as how they cooperated with the team, the level of fulfilling responsibilities, helping other when possible etc. Finally, at the beginning of project work students should be familiarized with these criteria used in assigning ratings and when they are used repeatedly in the lessons they get used to the hobbit of (self) assessments and I believe they will not have problems to deal with the right language too.



*Graph 3 The subthemes of the theme PBL principles/procedure*

Theme # 2: PBL principles/procedure: First, the explanation of PBL principles and procedures was introduced in the theory section as one of the PBL breeding ground principles. Detailed familiarization with the PBL procedure, its stages, and documents is necessary both for the students and for the teacher. One teacher was confiding with the initial feelings of disorganization and confusion and considered this moment as one of the worst during the PBL work. Another teacher found problematic the transitions between tasks due to unprepared clear sequencing of the activities in the PBL schedule. To prevent these feelings there was a logical framework introduced in this work, in which both the teacher and students specify individual project stages and milestones including the time and organizational schedule so that they would obtain the basic structured overview of planned activities which would guide them through project work. Second, three teachers admitted difficulties when dealing with the different role of the teacher and students during project work. One of them claimed: “It was hard for me to realize that my role in the classroom has changed and I was supposed to stay only in the “background” (Přikrylová, 2012). Another teacher realized the indispensability of introducing bridging (or lead-in) activities before introducing PBL work in order to get students and the teacher used to working in less structured, formal environment. Students had difficulties to get used to a different way of learning, unlike ordinary classes where they usually listen to the teacher and do what they were supposed to do, now, according this teacher, they were expected to work independently of the teacher and for both students and the teacher it was described as a hard time.

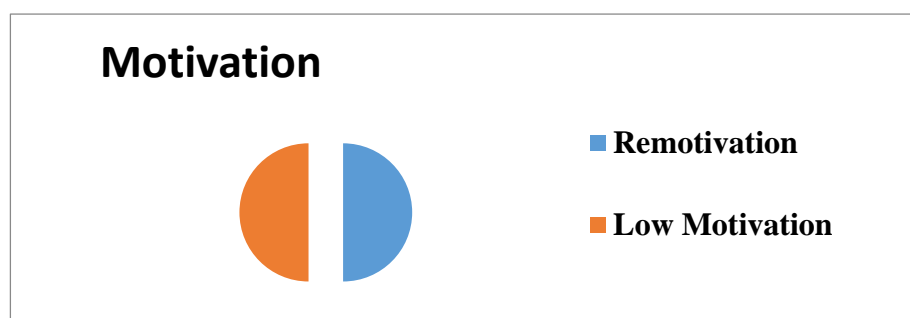


*Graph 4 The subthemes of the theme Unexpected events*

Theme # 3: Unexpected events: In this category I gathered the problems that have risen from unexpected circumstances and teachers were primarily taken aback; they were surprised by the situations and some of them had to improvise. If I ignore problems caused by teachers ‘oversleeping one morning during the exterior project days, other difficulties originated from bad weather conditions and teachers had to deal with students moving around the forest on a the rainy day when fulfilling the project tasks. More problematic situations happened when teachers – during their teaching practice – were not familiar with school teaching conditions and met with sudden several obstacles like teaching in a classroom which was much smaller than they had expected or which lacked a blackboard and that day it was essential for project assignments. Once there was no chance of copying the worksheets for students before the lesson and on this point, one teacher was judging this as her drawback which could have been prevented. Next, two inexperienced teachers were noting that on a Friday afternoon and a Monday morning it was problematic to work with students due to their tiredness during the lessons. Other troublesome situations were witnessed when the teacher was leading the project work in an unfamiliar class. As a rule, one of the PBL breeding ground principles was the knowledge of students, creation of save and secure environment where they would feel free to collaborate. If this is not respected then teachers may experience uncooperative classroom atmosphere where in return to their answers they would gain only deathlike silence. In that situation, students were shy to communicate with a new teacher, the teacher assumed with more flexible students, the project work itself was not much progressing and students were working without talking, in a silent atmosphere.

All the problems that were mentioned I reckon as avoidable, or predictable, mainly those troubles originating from teaching in unfamiliar conditions and thus breaking the basic principle

of successful PBL implementation mentioned above. Anyway, it is reasonable to keep a flexible project schedule, mainly when it is required suitable weather cooperation and thus teachers should be always able to reinforce subject matter learning when suddenly it is not possible to work on the project for a while.



*Graph 5 The subthemes of the theme Motivation*

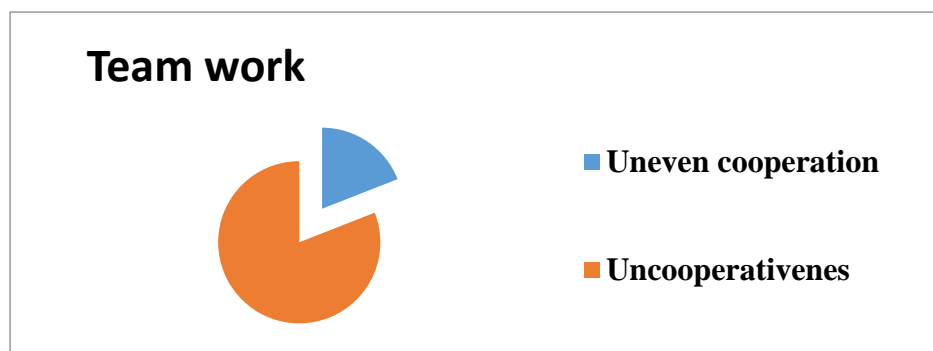
Theme # 4: Motivation: In the area of motivation, teachers dealt with mostly two problematic issues. One of them were disruptive situations that rooted from low students 'motivation and altogether six teachers described the troubles in this connection. Students were lacking enthusiasm when working, they were not actively involved, and there was a lack of dynamic in the classroom and slower working pace. One teacher depicted how frustrating it was to find nothing that would be motivating for some students to work on. The teacher tried various measures; however at the end she was asking: "What to do when some learners were not motivated by the vision of the end product, better final marks, exchanging the magazines with foreign students or by some kind of pressure from side of other learners who wanted to succeed?" (Žlábková, 2009). That is quite a serious question since it can be generally assumed that a certain freedom of choice and working on relevant, meaningful topic would be a solid base for awaking students 'will to work. However, it transpires, that motivation is a complex and sometimes unpredictable phenomenon and therefore this question cannot be answered generally since the grounds of low motivation may have several causes and it is only the teacher who may find the answer after careful individual consideration of each case. There are many variables that influence the successful student's involvement, and the reasons may lay on both sides, either the teacher or the student's one. Yet again, if teachers know their students well, their interests, their social class position, abilities, opinions, and have created the rapport of mutual trust and understanding, then they can much better anticipate such problems, understand them and count

with them when planning project work and think of best individual support for such students. I would like to present the case of one teacher who initially decided not to impose the project work on all students, actually, after the first motivating stage she let the decision on students if they want to participate and the rest of class was continuing learning in the traditional way. Curiously enough, to the small PBL group of the few students at the beginning was gradually joined by others who saw the engagement and wanted to participate too and finally, all the students were working on PBL work. I consider this approach a good example how to introduce PBL to students, the moment of initial optional element accompanied by motivating purpose to work may help to better PBL involvement.

Next, the sub-theme of re-motivation brought first feature that was not dealt with in the theoretical background. In the theory part there was a clear explanation why inner motivation is regarded as one of the essential components of project work. Beyond any doubt, PBL stands on the principle of waking up inner motivation in students, on their emotional, intellectual involvement. PBL principles advise teachers of the best ways of initiating interest in project work in students, their involvement with the right driving question that evokes in students the desire to work hard during the project. Strangely enough, it emerges that to rely on the initial high amount of inner motivation is not sufficient and six teachers actually registered that the high beginning motivation faded quickly by some of the participants. They noted that as the time passed the enthusiasm lost on its importance and greatness. One teacher learned the need of more motivation support but not at the beginning but throughout the project work. Motivation was decreasing during the process and he could not manage to re-motivate the students again. These teachers realized the need of higher stimulation to work again during the work. There can be numerous causes to this decline. One of the teachers attributes it to the fact that students were highly motivated at the beginning; however, during the “searching” part, when it came down to more demanding reading work, teachers (there were more in the classroom) found it very demanding to keep children’s attention for longer time. To cope with such cases, theory part suggests counting with a private meeting with each group to get them started and have a discussion about group’s research questions and their intentions. It is recommended to carry out frequent checkpoints where oral reports would be involved in order to have control of things and learn how to help students think through the project work and to decide what needs teacher’s attention. Teachers

need these regular checkpoints to make sure students are on track, teachers can find out group progress, problems and opportunities.

To sum it up, there are indications that to think about initial motivation is not enough. Students work hard during PBL and encounter various problems that may be demotivating to them and I see establishing regular checkpoints for each group as one way of keeping an eye on students during their independent work and then, accordingly, to be able to respond to their needs.



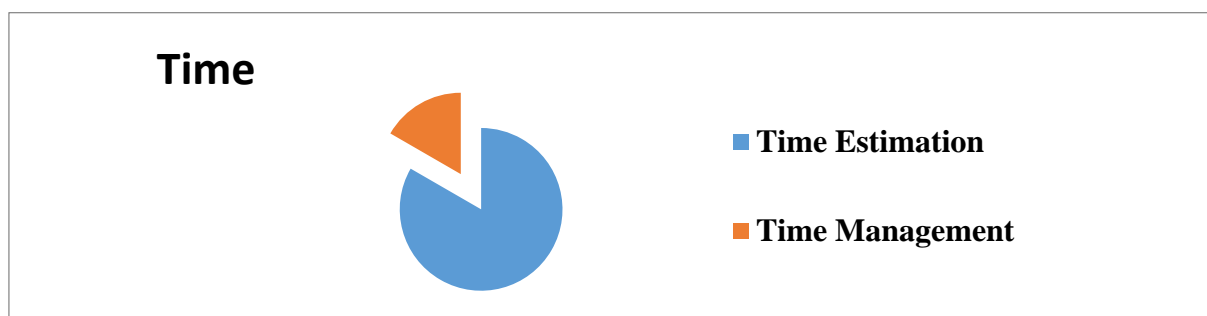
*Graph 6 The subthemes of the theme Team work*

Theme # 5: Team work: PBL is based on developing 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies such as collaboration, creativity or communication. Cooperative learning has repeatedly shown to have strong positive effects on reaching these skills. However, as Oakley et al. (2004) confirm, simply putting students in groups and letting them work on joined assignments is not a sufficient approach and teaching students how to develop into high-performance teams requires several steps, otherwise the group learning experience is expected to be ineffective and may be even disastrous.

Uneven cooperation was the problem of four teachers who registered it either during the PBL work or at the end within students' evaluation. Teachers report unclear work division in teams, the main problem was that only some students were actually working; whereas others ignored the work and were loafing. Different problems rooting from uncooperativeness were described thirteen times by five teachers. Teachers encounter mainly problems during the team formation and team practices. Some students did not want to work with others; some students were refused by groups, and nobody wanted to work with them since they allegedly have nothing to offer. Some students demanded to work independently others were agreeing to work on project work on conditions to work individually or in pairs only. There appeared gender issues; no boys

were willing to accept girls into their teams and vice versa, no matter the benefits (skills) those students would bring into the groups. New, weak, unpopular students did not carry equal roles in teams, they did not fit there. Other concerns arose during group work when some students were working in groups separately and others did not accept the discussion rules which lead to the situation that all of them wanted to talk at the same time. It turned out that students could not put their ideas calmly since students were not used to listening to each other and consequently some students disrupted discussions and even one teacher experienced a boycott from two teams. In the theory part there was mentioned the question who should be forming the group, whether mainly the teacher or it should be self-formed. As these experiences show, it is advisable to get students to be used to instructor-formed teams, for avoidance above forming issues. Oakley et al. (2004) suggest explaining students that when joining a company, they will not be asked whether they prefer to work alone or with others and include this as a class policy. Mergendoller (2015) agrees with this view; however. She suggests matching grouping pattern to the context and need for expertise associated with the task, so that when working on a task that demands a great deal of time out of school, then matching friends is a better grouping strategy.

It is evident that teachers must work on the ways of transforming groups into working supportive teams; they have to deal with the task of team formation, setting team criteria and guidelines to students, teach them strategies and show them common mistakes new teams make and ways of dealing with problem team members. Students are not powerless towards non-participation and it is advisable to incorporate realistic consequences for such a behavior.

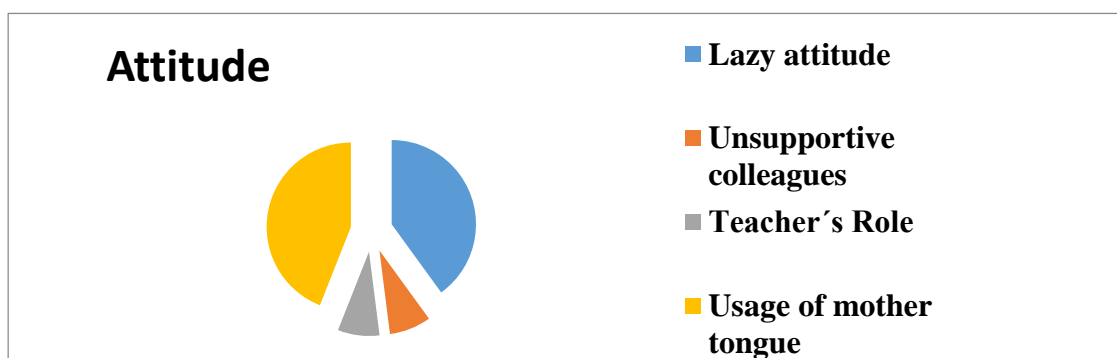


*Graph 7 The subthemes of the theme Time*

Theme # 6: Time: Repeated comments on time delay indicate that time has been an issue. Seven teachers had to pronounce that the tasks students dealt with were more time consuming than they had expected. The impact of time insufficiency was significant. Teachers had to omit or

postpone some activities or ideas, once there was no time for realization of the product; one teacher felt that the whole PBL process was disrupted by the time pressure. Elsewhere the work was done in a hurry and the calm atmosphere was missing. Teachers stated that the main reason of the delay was that students worked more slowly than they had expected and therefore intended activities occupied more time; one inexperienced student-teacher confirmed having the first lesson over dimensioned. It is clear that time underestimation may have unpleasant effect on PBL work and although teachers read in literature that the schedule they lay is never the schedule they follow, time pressure may spoil the working atmosphere. Therefore, at the beginning of project work, Mergendoller (2015) advises setting deadlines with a build in 20 % overrun to be able to hold to timelines.

In addition, there were 3 situations where teachers had to state that students were not prepared for independent work. Students did not manage to organize their time since it was new to them. It was problematic to meet deadlines, and students were not used to planning their tasks. This can be perceived as a problematic issue mainly when students are used to being educated in the traditional transmission model and are not taught how to manage time. Thus, teachers should take an advantage of opportunities to foster students 'time management skills and establish a culture that stresses student self-management so that they would develop adult time management and organization skills.



*Graph 8 The subthemes of the theme Attitude*

Theme # 7: Attitude: There were two teachers who admitted having problem with their new roles during the PBL work when they became more of facilitators and coaches to students and found it hard only to stay in background and monitor student's work. Another two teachers were disappointed by the attitude of several teaching colleagues of theirs who perceived project



work as wasting of time and were unhelpful. Regarding this point Mergendoller (2015) suggests finding ways of sharing the PBL results and experience with other colleagues generally and with PBL dissenters in particular. Showing students work and talking about teaching and learning she recommends as a way of promoting Project Based Learning contrary to traditional instruction learning process.

Furthermore, I called lazy attitude those situations where students were not considering PBL worth working. This stance may be characterized by the teacher's statement that some students consider PBL "a good opportunity for doing nothing and getting good marks" (Hrušková, 2014). Another teacher put it that they behaved as they were on a trip and could do nothing. Some students considered PBL as a way of having free lessons and gaining good marks without learning. The impact of such students was that they underestimated the importance of the activities from the beginning so they were not correcting their mistakes and were negligent during regular consultation. It seemed that students avoided thinking and wanted to have the product in the easiest way, which resulted into copying. Some students did not perform adequately to their age or language level. Some students were ignoring the given tasks and they were not willing to accept any compromises. This negative attitude towards PBL was perceived by four teachers. It can be fine art to work with and motivating an individual and teachers use all PBL tools they have to handle problematic students. In particular, students are to find out that due to set criteria in the beginning of PBL their individual performance during the team work is assessed like with any other instructional method. Next, teachers may use peer pressure and group process techniques to promote their full participation and teach the hardworking students that it is okay to assert their rights and confront non-contributors in their teams. Sloppy and superficial work cannot receive the same grades as the work from more responsible teammates.

Finally, during the document analysis I encountered eleven cases where teachers dealt with the area of using mother tongue in the English lessons. Eventually, after careful reading, I decided to integrate them as an attitude issue due to the way teachers were reacting towards this matter. Altogether eight teachers were not satisfied with the presents of the Czech language during the team work and all but two regard it as a bad aspect, the greatest problem. As a result of it, one teacher decided to punish students by red cards when she heard students speaking not English and she was displaying those teams on a visible place to shame them. Another teacher was afraid of correcting students so that they would not stop being motivated for other work or

there was the decision of forcing students to use English whenever the teacher hears them speaking Czech. I do not think these are the ways teachers should approach this matter. Here, I see a better attitude in those two teachers who were able to see this problem more from the students' side. Those teachers spotted that children would like to speak more English during team work but they could not for their limited language. Students had problems of expressing themselves and had to use Czech during the discussion. Teachers did not insist on strictly English communication, on the contrary, they showed a positive attitude by encouraging and supporting students' efforts of English communication.



*Graph 9 The subthemes of the theme Task*

Theme # 8: Task: In respect of technology, most technical difficulties could have been foreseen by advanced trials in real school conditions. Thus, it should not happen that software brought for final presentation cannot be installed on the school computer. Undoubtedly teachers should prepare students to try out the technology in advance to avoid needless inconveniences. Next, much more unexpected catch may result from the decision to assign students homework so that they would prepare the tasks at home. Five teachers realized that assigning homework to students may become a weak point of PBL. Teachers expected that students would bring the work ready and then could continue working on it, yet, five times some students happen not to do so. They did not work at home, they brought material unchanged or unedited. Once, students even refused to continue working at home. One teacher commented on it this way: “freedom was a bit misleading for them” (Hrušková, 2014). She realized that students were used to doing homework but not creating something at home, looking for information or meeting working partners after school. Setting homework to students then is a question to what extend students were trained being responsible and autonomous individualities. I believe if teachers cannot be

sure whether students are mature enough to work at home independently; it is advisable to keep project tasks to school environment.

The last and most extensive problematic area concerned working with text. It appears that there is one issue that EFL teachers have to be careful about when planning project work since it may lead into difficulties. First, when teachers are deciding what sort of multimodal input to provide, they should count with the possible consequences. There were 2 teachers who decided to let students work with the material written in the Czech language and then students were to translate it into correct English. Yet, at the end students had texts with many syntactical and grammatical mistakes. It turned out that for lower level students it was too demanding a task and some preferred using computer translation for final results. Teachers demanded correction of these texts, since they were to be published into magazines, however, students were unable to correct all the mistakes and it ended up by teachers themselves who were correcting the student's work at home in order to meet the deadlines. This problem is connected to another trouble when four teachers found out that students are either unwilling to work with dictionaries or are not able to use them properly. For translations they used unsuitable words better fitting into different context, and what is more, the language structures after translation work were not structures of the English language but "Czechisms", students were mistaken by wrong word order, unappropriated tenses and vocabulary. With respect to these facts, using authentic materials for the gathering and analyzing stages seems to be a more suitable choice; nevertheless teachers must carefully evaluate the level of the materials, the level of difficulty of the text. Teachers who underestimated this concern refer that because of too complicated text students started to be afraid of working in English and much higher teacher's assistance was needed. In the second place, two teachers encountered the problem of plagiarism. Students did not change or simplify the information from the Internet. Here students must be warned against the consequences of copying the text directly from the Internet, beside, working with the Internet entails teaching students to consider the credibility of sources and thus application of critical thinking is recommended to be covered in the lessons. The last area of problematic tasks concerns presentations. Three teachers felt they should have prepared students for the final presentation stage more directly, since students without much presentation training were not ready to present the work. Some said only a few words, they underestimated the presentation, lacked vocabulary and their speech was unprepared.

In conclusion, the main purpose of the research was to identify the problematic PBL areas English teachers may come across. As a result, there were found eight themes that were next divided into concrete subthemes. It transpires that the subtheme of remotivation was the only one that was not addressed in the theoretical part and became an unexpected finding of this research. The rest problematic subthemes were recognized as not inevitable since all of them fall into the area of either PBL breeding ground principles or are part of proper PBL framework knowledge and so the potential troublesome fields should not escape from teachers' attention during their thorough PBL preparation. With respect to these principles the research noticed that the most problematic issues were recorded within team work and cooperation, then with initial poor time estimation for the whole PBL work. Moreover, teachers struggled with problems specific to teaching in English classrooms such as the obstacles with dealing with English material resources, then with the lack of language preparation for presentation stage or difficulties with students who were using too much of mother tongue during their project work.

Thus, it is quite likely that detailed familiarization with those principles and their gradual introduction to students should lead into the elimination of troublesome PBL issues.

## V. IMPLICATIONS

In this part of the thesis the implications for teaching are discussed. More specifically, the results and findings of the research which are essential for teachers and students are presented. This is followed by a discussion about the limitations of the whole research, and the weak points of the whole process of creating, gathering and analyzing the data. In conclusion, various suggestions for further research of the study are proposed.

### **Implications for Teaching**

Among the implications for teaching I would like to highlight four main directions that teachers should be aware of. First and foremost, the research revealed one fact about motivation. The literature does not emphasize enough that although it is essential to promote inner motivation in students at the beginning of project work, teachers should realize that motivation can decrease during the project work and more stimulation may be needed still later on. Second, detailed knowledge of students was identified as one of the key background principles of PBL and this research confirms that. It is the knowledge of students, actually, that appears to function like a key which opens the door to handling students' inner motivation, efficient work cooperation or safe atmosphere. Thus I suggest that teachers collect the knowledge about students not just from regular observations, but also by gathering data through questionnaires that would find out not just students' interests, but also information that would lead to understanding learners' needs and goals, their classroom participation and cognitive styles. All this information would help to recognize for example group learners from individual learners, social students from isolated students or task-oriented students from dependent ones. This detailed knowledge then would follow into significant decisions about group formation, group and individual assessment or setting group rules and criteria. And also, this knowledge could prevent teachers from time pressure since tasks and procedures may be planned with more realistic insight. Thirdly, there is some evidence that teachers ought to run group sessions during the project work since it not only helps to monitor and control the students' actual work it also helps to maintain students' motivation and discrepancies may be solved in time. Checkpoints as well would help students to develop and maintain time and organization skills. Lastly, EFL teachers must be very careful about the choice of input material, its sources, level and extent

since adequately chosen resources lead to better task's execution and more importantly the four key competencies can be better trained. Hence, in connection with tasks, it is advisable to use up the knowledge of CLIL methodology and put into practice its procedures and ensure that students would be provided with suitable task's scaffolding. Finally, the knowledge of students helps also to create specific assessment criteria at the beginning of project work and thus guarantee that effort and hard work will pay off and uncooperativeness and slack work is connected with clearly stated consequences.

### **Limitations of the Research**

The major limitation of the thesis is that the results cannot be generalized to the wider population and the findings cannot be subjected to statistical analysis. That is because of the core of the used research method. The document analyses itself can only explore topics in more detail and depth but cannot offer high reliability or uncover patterns or correlations. Thus, although the research offers some quantitative data, such as number of teachers experiencing the same problems, these findings can be used more as a base for possible future quantitative research. The next thing is that the gained data, which were closely examined and sorted out into main eight themes, were assessed mainly through the view that was taken by the particular teacher and thereby their origins may be the case of bias and personal subjectivity. Hence, some data could have been allocated to different subthemes since each teacher could have perceived and assessed the same troublesome situation solely from his or her point of view and thus the same situation could have been presented with diverse perspective, which means that the same evident problems may be attributed to different subcategories, depending on the experience or personality of the teachers. Next, there were two ways data could have been presented in the graphs. The first way was to present the number of occurrence of each case in connection with its subtheme. Or the other way could display each subtheme in relation to the number of teachers experiencing the issues. The latter was not chosen because of the orientation the qualitative research entails and that is rather to provide insights rather than generalize results or test hypotheses during the research. Finally, it was stated that it is documentation that belongs among basic PBL features. This thesis offers some PBL templates in the appendixes, yet, not all of them that are recommended on the theory part. The reason is that nowadays all necessary documents for PBL could be easily

downloaded from the Internet and mainly project management itself provides abundance of documentation that can be then adjusted to a particular teaching situation.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

When I have the possibility I would like to launch the PBL with real students so that I would testify myself to what extend all the knowledge from respective literature and experiences I learnt from this research would make the difference and prepare me for successful PBL execution. Next, I think that for the method of project based learning it is hard to be prepared in advanced since the procedure and steps themselves are not too demanding to cover, nevertheless, each project work is absolutely unique because of all the variables that play the role and mainly it is the students who give the content to the work and shape its final results. Yet, there are the necessary competencies that teachers should be both theoretically and practically equipped with studies at pedagogical faculties. It should be researched and defined what teaching skills are necessary to have for each stage of PBL and what ways they can be gained. The results also may direct to the area of future potential quantitative research that would uncover the causes of the problematic decrease of inner motivation during the PBL.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The thesis deals with the topic of Project Based Learning and its application in English classrooms. The Theoretical Background Chapter comprises the theoretical description of project work. It reveals the ways PBL can be characterized first from the general point of view, where the thesis tries to capture basic PBL components and the possibilities of their composing. Next, there is a closer focus how PBL functions in the context of second language learning. The aims are here to depict the theoretical knowledge EFL teachers should be aware of before their first PBL implementation. The focus is laid on the preparation stage, where there is a need to adhere to principles of PBL breeding ground that were summarized into five key areas.

The practical part of the thesis explores fifteen diploma and bachelor theses that were retrieved from a public Internet source and these works are examined by the qualitative method of document analysis. The research procedure consists of identifying the major themes and sub-themes that are connected with the research question. There were found eight main themes which were divided into twenty one corresponding sub-themes and subsequently those sub-themes are discussed with the aim to recognize which problematic areas can be prevented by careful PBL preparation described in the theoretical background chapter.

The main aim of the thesis and its research was thus to locate, describe and summarize all the necessary knowledge that less experienced EFL teachers might need when they would like to try to employ PBL in their English classes. The work first defines the exact procedure, documents and issues EFL teachers generally deal with during PBL realization and afterwards, in the practical part, the research is carried out in order to provide insights into better PBL preparation so that teachers could either avoid potential problematic situations or be equipped with information of their possible solutions. The research confirms that the preparation for PBL lays not only in the proper knowledge of PBL framework and procedures but it should be aimed at five different areas that are stated as PBL breeding ground principles. To sum it up, for PBL successful implementation students need safe and secure teaching environment that enables them to be active and work more autonomously in PBL less structured setting. Then, good knowledge and an explanation of PBL procedure in advance to students ensure that teachers avoid feelings of disorganization and confusion and students find the PBL work comprehensible and meaningful. Next, principles of the student centered and constructivist approach ensure that teachers meet the



PBL requirement of their different role with students and it enables them to gain better knowledge of students and their inner motivation. The last principle covers training and supporting the key competencies such as collaboration during the team work or critical thinking and creativity which, with the help of CLIL methodology and carefully chosen text resources, may prevent some problems specific to teaching PBL in English classrooms.

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## APPENDIX 1

### The Types of Projects

<b>The viewpoint of classification:</b>	<b>The types of projects:</b>
<b>The proposer of projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pupils spontaneous projects</li> <li>• teacher's, artificially prepared</li> <li>• combination of preceding</li> </ul>
<b>The main aim of projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• problem-based</li> <li>• intellectual-based</li> <li>• construction-based</li> <li>• evaluation-based</li> <li>• aesthetic-based</li> </ul>
<b>The source of information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• free (students take care of the materials and information sources)</li> <li>• bounded (information source and material is provided to students)</li> <li>• combination of free and bounded sources</li> </ul>
<b>The duration of the projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• short-term</li> <li>• medium-term</li> <li>• long-term</li> </ul>
<b>The surroundings of projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school</li> <li>• domestic</li> <li>• combination of school and domestic</li> <li>• outside the school</li> </ul>
<b>The number of people involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• individual</li> <li>• collective</li> </ul>
<b>The way of incorporation the project into the curriculum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• concerning one subject</li> <li>• comprising more subjects</li> <li>• cross-curricular subjects</li> <li>• distinctively aiming at key competencies</li> </ul>
<b>The focus of the content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focusing at general educational areas</li> <li>• focusing more at areas of specialized training</li> </ul>

Adapted from Jezberová et al., (2011)

## APPENDIX 2

### Checklist: Questions to ask while planning PBL

**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?

Adapted from Alan and Stoller (2005).



## APPENDIX 3

Final outcomes of projects

### **Final outcomes of projects: some possibilities:**

Brochure

Oral presentation

Class newspaper or wall newspaper

Pin and string display

Bulletin board display

Poster

Debate

Research paper

Graphic display

Scrapbook

Written report

Simulation

Handbook

Survey report

Information packet

Theatrical performance

Letter

Video or film

Marquette

Website

Multimedia presentation

Adapted from Alan and Stoller (2005).

## APPENDIX 4

Milestone Table

<b>MILESTONE TABLE:</b>	<b>NAME OF STUDENT:</b>
<b>NAME OF THE PROJECT :</b>	
<b>START:</b>	<b>FINISH:</b>
<b>GOALS OF THE PROJECT:</b>	
<b>TEAM MEMBERS:</b>	
<b>OUTCOMES:</b>	<b>SMART criteria:</b>
<b>Task description:</b>	
<b>Signatures of team members:</b>	

Adapted from Svobodova et al. (2010)

## APPENDIX 5

Table of Individual Tasks

<b>TABLE OF INDIVIDUAL TASKS</b>			<b>NAME OF THE PROJECT:</b>		
<b>Author:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	<b>Version:</b>		
<b>Task (structure)</b>	<b>Materials:</b>	<b>Place:</b>	<b>Person – doer</b>	<b>Outcome:</b>	
			<b>Deadline:</b>	<b>Notes:</b>	
			<b>of the task:</b>		

Adapted from Svobodova et al. (2010)

Risk Management Plan

<b>Project risk plan</b>		<b>Project name:</b>	
<b>Author:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Team members:</b>			
<b>What can endanger the project:</b>		<b>How we can prevent it:</b>	

Adapted from Svobodova et al. (2010)

## APPENDIX 6

Getting to know you form

### Getting to know you form

(If you feel uncomfortable answering any of these questions, you may leave that area blank.

However, please complete as much as possible.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What you would like to be called:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number:

(Optional) Gender \_\_\_\_\_ (Optional) Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_

What is something about you that is probably not true of other students in the class (for example, an unusual experience, hobby, skill, or interest)

\_\_\_\_\_

Favorite movie: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite music or book: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite hobby or sports Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the most beautiful sight you have ever seen? \_\_\_\_\_

Adapted from a form reprinted in Oakley et al. (2004)

## APPENDIX 7

### Specific Language and Content Supporting Techniques or Methods

<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Websearch</b>	<b>Correspondence (letters, emails)</b>	<b>Video/You tube</b>
Question formation	Establishing a purpose for reading	Establish a purpose	Contrast language in formal letters and emails	Establish a purpose for listening
Pronunciation	Make and later check predictions	Pose guiding questions	Contrast format of formal letters and emails	Pose questions
Gambits to request, repetition	Skim for main ideas	Select key words	Review conventional opening and closing phrases	Review key words&important signal words
Clarification	Scan for particular details	Preview to determine suitability	Brainstorm	Review words that might be misunderstood
Elaboration	Jot down notes in the margins	Skim for main ideas	Draft	Listen for the gist or specific details
Recasts	Fill in an outline	Scan for particular details	Revise: -word choice -gramatital structures -organizations	Decide how to take notes
Listening & Note taking	Read between the lines	Take notes	Peer edit / edit -spelling -punctuation	Notetaking
Language of openings and closings	Use organizational structure for main idea comprehension	Use vocabulary learning strategies		Listen again to fill in missing information
Topic-related vocabulary	Review key vocabulary	Pursue other links to determine suitability and extensions		Review key grammar structures
Key grammatical structure		Review transition words		
		Navigate the Web		

Adapted from a video conference (Stoller, 2013)

## APPENDIX 8

### Team Member Evaluation Form

#### TEAM MEMBER EVALUATION FORM

The following evaluation of your team members is a tool to help improve your experience with group work. Its purpose is to determine those who have been active and cooperative members as well as to identify those who did not participate. Be consistent when evaluating each group member's performance by using the guidelines below.

1 – never      2 – rarely      3 – sometimes      4 – usually      5 – always

Name of student being evaluated: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle your responses.

- Has the student attended team meetings?

1      2      3      4      5

- Has the student made a serious effort at assigned work before the team meetings?

1      2      3      4      5

- Has the student made a serious effort to fulfill his/her team role responsibilities on assignments?

1      2      3      4      5

- Has the student notified a teammate if he/she would not be able to attend a meeting or fulfill a responsibility?

1      2      3      4      5

- Does the student attempt to make contributions in group meetings?

1      2      3      4      5

- Does the student listen to his/her teammates' ideas and opinions respectfully and give them careful consideration?

1      2      3      4      5

- Does the student cooperate with the group effort?

1      2      3      4      5

Based on your responses to these questions, assign an overall rating on the following scale:

\_\_\_\_\_ (Insert one of the given words.)

<b>Excellent</b>	Consistently carried more than his/her fair share of the workload
<b>Very good</b>	Consistently did what he/she was supposed to do, very well prepared and cooperative
<b>Satisfactory</b>	Usually did what he/she was supposed to do, acceptably prepared and cooperative
<b>Ordinary</b>	Often did what he/she was supposed to do, minimally prepared and cooperative
<b>Marginal</b>	Sometimes failed to show up or complete assignments, rarely prepared
<b>Deficient</b>	Often failed to show up or complete assignments, rarely prepared
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Consistently failed to show up or complete assignments, rarely prepared
<b>Superficial</b>	Practically no participation
<b>No show</b>	No participation at all

Adapted from a form reprinted in Oakley et al. (2004)

## APPENDIX 9

The list theses analyzed in the research

Author/University: Věra Hrušková / University of West Bohemia

Title of work: Project-Based Learning of English as a Foreign Language in Primary Schools-from theory to practice

Type of work/Year of publication: Diploma Thesis / 2014

Subject matter of the practical part of the work: Carrying out the real project called *Czech Literature Presented in Comics*.

Author/University: Jaroslava Švehlová / University of West Bohemia

Title of work: Learning Based on Project Work

Type of work/Year of publication: Diploma Thesis / 2011

Subject matter of the practical part of the work: Creation of the project : Supporting positive relationships at school.

Author/University: Petra Přikrylová / Masaryk University

Title of work: Project Based Learning in English lessons at elementary school

Type of work/Year of publication: Bachelor Thesis / 2012

Subject matter of the practical part of the work: . It describes the course and the realization of the project called Australia, which was based on project methods and prepared by pupils of 7th grade at elementary school

Author/University: Vlasta Rousová / Masaryk University

Title of work: Project - based Learning: Halloween Party

Type of work/Year of publication: Diploma thesis / 2008

Subject matter of the practical part of the work: Practical part is designed as a manual consisting of eight teaching units. It is a detailed teachers' guide to the topic of a "Halloween party".

Author/University: Olga Chudíčková / Masaryk University

Title of work: Use of project teaching in English lessons at lower secondary schools

Type of work/Year of publication: Diploma Thesis / 2013

Subject matter of the practical part of the work: The practical part contains the preparation and realization of the particular project and the results of the research, where students of 6th grade of the lower secondary school participated.

Author/University: Pavlína Němcová

Title of work: Starting with project-based method in the EFL classroom

Type of work/Year of publication: Diploma Thesis / 2010

Subject matter of the practical part of the work: In the practical part the original draft of the project work is enclosed. Subsequently questionnaires from participation and non-participating students are added.

Author/University: Alena Mahrová

Title of work: Project work in English classroom: The e-magazine

Type of work/Year of publication: Diploma thesis / 2010

Subject matter of practical part of the work: It is to find out how the project of creating an e-magazine will influence the pupils to learn a foreign language and whether they will improve their communicative skills and studying results in English lessons

Author/University: Hana Kalvodová / Masaryk University

Title of work: Teaching English with Project Work

Type of work/Year of publication: Diploma Thesis / 2006

Subject matter of the practical part of the work: Project work is one of modern teaching methods, students like it, it extends their knowledge in various areas, it supports development of their social, motorical and communicative skills, it teaches them how to use the acquired knowledge in the common life, it shifts the function of a teacher to a role of a partner with the collective work.



Author/University: Terezie Lípová / Palackého University

Title of work: Benefits of Project Work in ELT

Type of work/Year of publication: Diploma Thesis / 2008

Subject matter of the practical part of the work: In the Practical Part an executed project is described and evaluated. This project focuses on the integration of English language and Civics (namely topics from psychology).

Author/University: Lenka Žlábková / Masaryk University

Title of work: Using Projects in English Lessons: Making a Magazine

Type of work/Year of publication: Diploma Thesis / 2009

Subject matter of the practical part of the work: The practical part analyses the real project “Make a Magazine” which was realized by the ninth graders of Primary School of Mr. Choceňský in Choceň. It describes the educational aims, project criteria and the process itself with the evaluation and feedback sessions.

Author/University: Markéta Psotová

Title of work: Support of English Education (Instruction) at Primary School

Type of work/Year of publication: Diploma Thesis / 2010

Subject matter of the practical part of the work: The practical part is devoted to preparation, realisation and evaluation of a pilot project. The thesis also offers a final version of the project which takes into consideration all the information gathered during the pilot project and the necessary changes

Author/University: Eva Janková / Masaryk University Brno

Title of work: Project Teaching of Background to English Speaking Countries

Type of work/Year of publication: Bachelor Theses, 2010

Subject matter of the practical part of the work:

There were carried out three projects: The aim of this project was to introduce to the students some interesting people from ESC. English speaking countries: the main aim of this project was to introduce the term English speaking countries and to extend pupils' knowledge about countries

were English is spoken Christmas Crackers:the main aim was to introduce some traditional Christmas habits in Great Britain.

Author/University: Bc. Blanka Chytilová / Masaryk University Brno

Title of work: Life and Institutions: Projects for Secondary Learners

Type of work/Year of publication: Diploma Theses, 2007

Subject matter of the practical part of the work:

There are five projects included, all focused on teaching culture of the English speaking countries: Visiting Great Britain, Introducing the United States of America, The Titanic Disaster, The President of the U.S.A, New York, London. (only three were actually piloted)

Author/University: Bc. Jan Martinec / Masaryk University Brno

Title of work: Using projects in English lessons: Preparing a powerful presentation

Type of work/Year of publication: Diploma Theses, 2010

Subject matter of the practical part of the work:

Author/University: Martina Chlupáčková / Masaryk University Brno

Title of work: Young Learners Multiple Intelligence Theory in Project Work

Type of work/Year of publication: Bachelor Theses, 20 10

Subject matter of the practical part of the work: The Party Food project

## SUMMARY IN CZECH

Vyučovat anglický jazyk i projektovou metodou přináší nesporně mnoho výhod a nezanedbatelných výsledků. Projektová výuka je založena na rozvíjení i uplatnění těch kompetencí a dovednostech, které jsou stěžejní pro úspěšné uplatnění se jak v profesním, tak i osobním životě každého jedince. Týmová spolupráce, komunikační schopnosti, kritické myšlení a také kreativita – to vše by mělo patřit k výzbroji žáků, opouštějících školní vzdělávací systémy. Především na tyto dovednosti se projektová metoda zaměřuje a ty rozvíjí. Cíl této diplomové práce je jednak nabídnout učitelům anglického jazyka propracovaný teoretický systém projektové práce, zahrnující vše podstatné, co má učitel pro úspěšné zavedení metody znát. Neméně důležité je ale také určení, co ještě dalšího podmiňuje úspěšnost této metody v praxi a tato práce stanovuje pět oblastí, které jsou přímo živnou půdou pro samotnou práci na projektech. Připravenost učitele a studentů pro projektovou práci je tedy klíčová a právě výsledkem zkoumání v praktické části je pojmenování všeho, co může projektovou práci v hodinách angličtiny ztěžovat a činit učitelům problémy a dále určit, do jaké míry se lze těmto problémům v rámci systematické přípravy vyhnout anebo je předejít. Zkoumání je podrobeno patnáct vysokoškolských prací, které mají projektové vyučování za předmět zkoumání a ve kterých jsou projekty učitelů po praktickém vyzkoušení následně popsány. Pomocí kvalitativní metody analýzy dokumentu je stanoveno osm problémových oblastí a jejich podkategorií představující skutečnosti, které učitelé anglického jazyka, navzdory důkladné přípravě, označili za problémové a neočekávané. Tato práce určuje, kterým záporným jevům lze předejít v rámci náležité přípravy popsané v teoretické části a poukazuje na základy, na kterých úspěšné projektové vyučování spočívá.