

ILLC 2019  
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# PBL and EFL: A perfect alliance to foster employability

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### ***Multilingualism report 2016*** (EUROSTAT, 2019):

- Highest rank: Luxembourg (50%), Finland (45%), Slovenia (38%)
- Lowest rank: **Spain's 46% do not speak a foreign language**

## ***Factors:***

- Lack of innovation in teaching methodologies
- No critical thinking
- Use of mother tongue in the classroom
- Scarce use of teamwork
- Non-qualified teachers (primary & secondary education)
- Focus on achieving international language certificates

### ***Job offers in Spain, 2018 (Infoempleo & Adecco report)***

- At least 1 foreign language: 34.7%
  - ✓ *English*: 92.3%
  - ✓ *German*: 7.4%
- Type of job:
  - ✓ *Office work*: 23.3%
  - ✓ *Senior managers*: 54.4%

**Close collaboration and soft skills development**

### *Youth unemployment rates, 2018 (EUROSTAT, 2019)*

- European Union: 6.3%
- **Spain: 11.3%**

**Project-Based Learning (PBL) as an invaluable tool**

- Focus on actual issues
- Learning autonomy
- High level of motivation
- Stimulus to communication
- High level of critical thinking
- Use of the foreign language (English) to learn

- Teachers' reluctance
- Learners' reluctance
- Learners' attitudes towards the use of English

### **English as the necessary tool to develop a project**

- ✓ A change in attitudes
- ✓ A boost in self-confidence and self-esteem

- No long-term monitoring (20/30 years)
- Mainly used in secondary education
- Undergraduate programmes satisfactory results:
  - ✓ Positive contribution towards learning English
  - ✓ Personal growth fostering



- *Learning by doing* methodology to foster employability

## **Interdisciplinary PBL as a logical outcome**

- Start: 2010-2011
- ✓ All undergraduate programmes involved
- ✓ All modules involved (25% assessment)
- ✓ All students involved (teamwork)

→ ***1st-year Mechanical Engineering & Industrial Electronic Engineering & Automation students***

- Objectives:
  - ✓ General : a robotic arm & prototype design
  - ✓ Specific (Technical English): company creation and presentation simulation in an international fair

**Course level fluctuations: Teamwork essential**

- Teacher as a facilitator:
  - ✓ How to design a non-academic PPT presentation
  - ✓ How to make an oral presentation (right structure and key phrases & expressions)

# PBL training characteristics

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- Oral presentation:
  - ✓ An academic panel (Spanish)
  - ✓ A business panel (English)
- Students must be able to:
  - ✓ communicate effectively
  - ✓ anticipate questions/comments

- **Students' satisfaction:**
  - ✓ highly motivated and pleased with their work
  - ✓ actively involved
  - ✓ innovative and creative
  - ✓ unnoticed acquisition of the foreign language
  - ✓ achievement of invaluable skills
  - ✓ soft skills development
  - ✓ awareness of the importance of effective communication

- **Companies' satisfaction:** Internships
  - Data from 2014-2015 to 2017-2018: first PBL graduates
  - Double check:
    - ✓ Students: skills acquisition
    - ✓ Institution: PBL as a ground for employment

## ***General issues on developing the professional task:***

Tasks accomplishment	4.7
Proactivity	4.7
Motivation	4.8

# Outcomes

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## *Students' capacities:*

Teamwork	4
Initiative, innovation and creativity	4.3
Effective communication	4
Problem-solving	4.1
Foreign language communication	4.3
Working under pressure	4.3
Implementing presentations, reports, etc.	4.4



## *Final remarks:*

Students' autonomy	4.3
Overall assessment	4.6

- Close collaboration between scientific/technological training and EFL through PBL
- Undeniable benefits for students:
  - ✓ Independent thinkers and proactive learners
  - ✓ Target language learning by use
  - ✓ High levels of motivation
  - ✓ Active involvement

# Conclusions

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- ✓ English skills improvement
- ✓ Self-confidence
- ✓ Effective discourse
- ✓ Soft skills development
- ✓ Labour market competitive access

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**Thank you**

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