

- *By Andrea Camacho Duhne*

How project-based learning has differed from projects in my other courses

In my experience, it is very different from typical high school courses.

In project-based learning there cannot be an exact plan for a semester. The plan changes and evolves according to what the class wants to achieve for each inquiry and theme.

It is more engaging than usual courses, because it is not a set of assignments with due dates to meet just for marks, but assignments that students are personally interested in that the teacher has built to complement what is being discussed in class.

I also believe that project-based learning is more challenging in some ways since students work closer with their teacher than in a typical course. The teacher has higher expectations and because the whole course focuses on the projects, students must help shape the projects with the teacher and do well on each of them.

In project-based learning students learn about topics in depth, and don't examine them like chapters in another course, which can be finished in a few weeks. Topics are studied for months, but the depth of study is incredibly interesting.

This course did not involve tests although we took notes for our projects and when we had guest speakers. We didn't sit in front of a board listening to our teacher giving a lecture but read and discussed things together. The smaller class made the relationship with the teacher more personal, and she began to understand how we learned better, and tried try to teach us individually.

How project-based learning has challenged me as a student

A lot of project-based learning is writing, and since English is not my first language, it has been hard to write in a more formal writing style.

Project-based learning required time and effort; it was not an easy course, although it may have seemed as if it is to some students. If students choose to be in a project-based learning course, they have to be committed, patient, and learn to enjoy challenges.

Our project-based learning course will be something big. It has a purpose because our work will not only remain in our classroom. Sometimes it is overwhelming to think that I am part of something this big, but even if it may be exasperating at times it is worth it, and because of this, I have enjoyed it more than other courses.

How project-based learning has benefited me as a student

As English is not my first language, this course has helped me so much with the grammar and my writing style. I improved my vocabulary in ways that I did not expect.

I have learned so many things about war, things that I wouldn't have learned had I not been in this course, especially the local history and personal histories of the soldiers and the effects of the war upon Vic High. If I had taken only Socials 11, I would not have learned this aspect of World War I.

For me it was really significant to be part of this project; before I would have never thought of studying something that related to war and human rights, and now I am considering studying something like this.

This project-based course made me interested in an important part of the world's history, and even if before I knew about the Great War, I was not completely interested in it, but now I am.

Overall statement about my learning experience

Project-based learning is not easy. I do not believe that teachers can plan all parts of the course ahead of time because it evolves throughout the semester; if the class becomes more interested in a specific subject then the course can go in that direction.

Project-based learning will make both the educator and the student get more interested in a subject, and try to understand it in depth.

You will learn from each other; everyone contributes to the course. Day by day the students and the teacher create the course together.