



Project-Based Learning in ESL and ABE

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Kristi Reyes, MiraCosta College Noncredit ESL, OTAN Subject Matter Expert,
kreyes@otan.us

Why Projects?

Incorporate Higher-Order Thinking Skills

[Bloom's Taxonomy](#)

Standards Alignment

[College and Career Readiness Standards](#) (2013) and [The English Language Proficiency Standards](#) (2016)

Alignment with Universal Design for Learning

[Universal Design for Learning](#) at cast.org

Work and Life Skills Prep

[Teaching Skills that Matter in Adult Education](#) - Federal initiative of the Office of Career and Technical Adult Education (OCTAE)

Skills that Matter = “foundational skills needed for an adult learner to function effectively within the workforce and civic and community life” (for specific definitions and examples, see [Defining the Skills that Matter](#))

- Adaptability & willingness to learn
- Communication
- Critical thinking
- Interpersonal skills
- Navigating systems
- Problem solving
- Processing & analyzing information
- Respecting differences & diversity
- Self-awareness

TSTM and PBL

TSTM initiative endorses PBL for developing soft skills in adult students, outlines the [process](#) for project-based teaching and goes beyond foundational skills and outlines five main focus areas.

Free [TSTM Toolkit](#) is available online and has ELPS-aligned lesson plans for projects that can be used in ESL and ABE (many of which correlate and correspond well to [California EL Civics COAAPs](#)), as follows:

- [Civics](#) – Sharing our Expertise with Local Schools – Intermediate Level. Students make collaborate with other parents at their children’s school to solve problems and present solutions in the form of PowerPoint or Google Slideshows, brochures, or flyers.
- [Digital Literacy](#) – Folk Stories - Advanced Level. Students use media to present a folk story from their culture.
 - Example: [Folk Story Lesson](#)
- [Financial Literacy](#) – Eating on Healthy Budget – Intermediate Level. Students use resources to find information about food prices and amounts to calculate the cost of a healthy meal in order to collaborate with a group to finish and share a healthy foods project to an audience.
- [Health Literacy](#) – Field Trip to a Hospital or Health Care Facility - Beginning to Intermediate Levels.
- [Workforce Preparation](#) – Classroom / Workplace Code of Conduct – Intermediate to Advanced Levels. Students work together to identify skills that matter in the creation of a classroom code of conduct and make a poster to present and display it.

Project Ideas

Book Bento Project

*“Book bento boxes (BBBs) are a recent reader response strategy that offers students an alternative visual and creative approach to reflecting on a text. Through the lens of reader response theory this article demonstrates how BBBs provide an outlet for critical and creative thinking, visual arts and the application of technology for responding to texts and presenting ideas” - A Bales, J. & Saint-John, L. (2020). “Book bento boxes: Creative reading response,” *Scan*, 39(3). [Accessed online](#).*

Resources:

Instagram account [@bookbento](#) - numerous examples from [Read It Forward of Penguin Random House](#).

In her *School Library Journal* blog post [Building beautiful book bentos](#), author Joyce Valenza provides steps for creating a book bento box.

Marilyn Yung’s blog post [Book bentos: my first attempt](#) – student examples, tools used for digitizing, with further details in the blog post [Book Bentos: 5 Tips to Make Them Better](#).

Lisa Highfill’s [Book Bento Hyperdoc](#) - instructions on digitizing a book bento box with Thinglink

[Projects with Lesson Plans](#) (my contributions to the revised [OTAN Teaching with Technology Database](#))

- [Ad Analysis Team Project: Persuasive Techniques in Advertising](#)
- [Amazing Places in the USA](#)
- [An Artist or Work of Art](#)

- [Civil Rights Leader](#)
- [Comparison Shopping with Online Department Store Sites](#)
- [Consumerism-Persuasive Techniques in Advertising](#)
- [Conservation Biology](#)
- [Digital Film about a Holiday or Celebration](#)
- [Dream Vacation](#)
- [Environmental Conservation Project](#)
- [Fantastic Places in the Golden State](#)
- [Fast Food Nutrition](#)
- [Inspirational Immigrant](#)
- [International Business Customs and Etiquette](#)
- [Inventors and Inventions](#)
- [My Hometown](#)
- [My Name Project](#)
- [My Personal Seal Project: Paragraph and Presentation](#)
- [National Symbols Project](#)
- [Personal Logo](#)
- [Random Acts of Kindness](#)
- [Relocation Project](#)
- [UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Places Worth Preserving](#)
- [Using FDA's Interactive Nutrition Facts Label](#)
- [Virtual Model Presentation](#)
- [Wonders of the World](#)

Other Projects (with complete lesson plans coming soon)

- [A Phobia](#)
- [About My Culture / Customs](#)
- [California Career Zone – Lifestyle, Budget, and Career Planning](#)
- [Cross-Cultural Shopping Comparisons \(Sample\)](#)
- [Etiquette](#)

Team up with Other Classes for an Authentic Audience

- [Home Remedy](#)
- [My Hero](#)

Differentiate Tech with Choice Boards

Learn more - OTAN article [Choice Boards: Made for Adult Education](#)

Sources for Project Ideas

Boss and Larmer (2018) suggest the following for coming up with project ideas: listen to your students' questions to find out what they care about, teach from the headlines, connect projects to popular culture, build on your own passions, and co-design with students.

Other Resources

- [Adobe Educational Exchange Teaching Resources](#)
- [Atlas ABE Teaching and Learning Advancement System PBL Resources](#)
- [Google for Education Digital Applied Digital Skills Lessons](#)
- [Insights to English: Student Projects](#)
- [My PBLWorks Projects](#) from the Buck Institute for Education
- [OTAN: Teaching with Technology and Web-based Class Activities](#)
- [UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development Goals](#)

For Further Reading

Boss, S., & Larmer, J. (2018). *Project-Based Teaching: How to Create Rigorous and Engaging Learning Experiences*. ASCD: Alexandria, VA.

5 Fantastic Ideas for Collaboration Projects. (2022, August 13). *Cult of Pedagogy*. Retrieved September 9, 2022, from <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/collaboration-projects/>

Graeber, A., & Williams, C. (2022, August 29). *Teacher's View: Project-Based Learning Can Help Educators and Students Succeed*. The 74. Retrieved September 9, 2022, from <https://www.the74million.org/article/teachers-view-project-basedlearning-can-help-educatorsand-students-succeed/>