

DOING PROJECT WORK: MAKING A CLASS NEWSPAPER

(HANDOUT)

GENERAL GUIDELINES

I) **Definition:** “In the context of language learning, projects are multi-skill activities focusing on topics or themes rather than on specific language targets” (Haines, 1995: 1) “A project moves through three stages: beginning in the classroom, moving out into the world, and returning to the classroom.” (Fried-Booth, 1986: 6)

II) Types:

1)

- ❖ Information and research projects e.g.: *The Greece of your grandparents* (interviews)
- ❖ Survey projects e.g.: *Harry Potter: Poll on favourite character*
- ❖ Production projects e.g.: *Create a TV program (news, commercials, talk -shows, a soap opera episode etc)*
- ❖ Performance and organizational projects e.g. *Famous people/characters contest* (Haines, 1995: 1)

2)

- ❖ Individual
- ❖ Pair
- ❖ Group

3)

- ❖ Short term
- ❖ Long term (Fried-Booth, 1986: 38-39)

III) Why do it:

- 1) It's student-centered not syllabus-centered.
- 2) Students of different abilities work cooperatively and not competitively and independently of the teacher.
- 3) Projects are a break from routine.
- 4) Students engage in authentic activities aimed at an end product, which they themselves have created.
- 5) Projects provide a context, which balances the need for both fluency and accuracy.
- 6) Students use a variety of language skills in natural combinations.
- 7) Projects can help build students' confidence.
- 8) Students put into practice what has been learnt through formal teaching.
- 9) Students involve themselves in making choices and decisions something which tends to increase their motivation and interest.

(Adapted from Haines, 1995: 1-3, 7 and Fried-Booth, 1986: 5,7-8,11,12 and Rivers & Temberley, 1978:316)

IV) Where to do it / location

Activity	Ideal Location	Alternatives
<i>Group or class discussions</i>	Classroom	None
<i>Background reading research, etc</i>	Library	Classroom and resources Home/local library in their own time
<i>Writing: individuals</i>	Home	Classroom
<i>Writing: pairs/groups</i>	Classroom	None
<i>Interviews with public</i>	Town/Community	Home/own time
<i>Taking photographs</i>	Outside	Home/owntime/ find ready-made photos
<i>Studying places</i>	Outside	Home/own time/use maps
<i>Reporting back/displays</i>	Classroom	None

V) Role of the teacher:

The teacher:

- 1) should function as an assistant, coordinator and facilitator.
- 2) should connect the project to the real world
- 3) should evaluate and monitor the language being used by the students.
- 4) should appear passive and stay in the background providing support of all kinds without being noticed. (But should have made sure that the students will not feel cheated, overburdened, confused or leaderless)
- 5) should constantly participate even though he/she may not be in charge of anything specific
- 6) should NOT overcorrect the students' errors or impose his/her ideas of how an activity/project should be done. (Correction of accuracy should occur only in the end product language).
- 7) should be sensitive to the group's relationships with each other and the teacher him/herself and act as a referee helping to resolve arguments or disagreements.
- 8) should be committed to the project and be willing to adopt a new teaching style
- 9) should act as a reference source alongside dictionaries and grammar books.
- 10) should act as a chairperson when the groups report their activities to the whole class.

(Adapted from Haines, 1995: 4 and Fried-Booth, 1986: 5-7,38,39,44-45 Rivers & Temberley, 1978:317,198)

VI) Materials:

(NOTE: materials should include all kinds of "englishes". The materials may need adaptation or editing according to students' needs and interest and should be easily accessible to them both in terms of location and in terms of their linguistic abilities.)

- printed (newspapers, magazines, brochures, maps etc)
- recorded (radio programs, songs, recorded interviews, video recordings, films etc.)
- reference materials (dictionaries, grammar books, encyclopaedias etc)
- other (letters, questionnaires, quizzes, opinion surveys etc)

(Adapted from Haines, 1995: 11, Fried-Booth, 1986: 29-30 and Rivers & Temberley, 1978: 202,216,239)

VII) Problems :

- 1) students lack interest, motivation or commitment.
- 2) a few students disrupt otherwise successful project work.

- 3) students speak in their own language instead of using English.
- 4) students make a lot of language mistakes.
- 5) Students do not regard projects as 'real' work.
- 6) students cannot do project work outside the classroom.
- 7) groups work at different speed.
- 8) Students experience disappointments and fears about being unable to cope with the project.

(For the teacher in particular)

- 9) projects require an additional commitment
- 10) creating successful monitoring strategies.

(Adapted from Haines, 1995: 7-8 and Fried-Booth, 1986: 10-12,45)

VIII) Evaluation:

- ✦ During the project (discreet monitoring, recording progress)
- ✦ After the project (student feedback by questionnaire or discussion)

(Adapted from Haines, 1995: 8-10)

Example of feedback questionnaire									
○ How interested were the students in the topic?									
Very			Quite				Not at all		
○ How many of the nine groups worked well together?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
○ How much time was wasted?									
A lot			a little				none		
○ Did students accept this as a valid way of learning?									
Yes			No						
○ Are you satisfied with your role in the project?									
Yes			No						
○ How could the project have been improved?									

IX) Examples of projects:

- ✦ Harry Potter: Book review and composition on the student's favourite character (including explanations on why it is his/her favourite)
- ✦ FUTURECITY: create a city on the moon (make a brochure to advertise it and convince people to buy houses. Describe the city, the houses, the lifestyle and the means of transportation within the city and from and to the Earth)
- ✦ Dolphins vs Dogs: Man's best friend (research, poll and presentation)
- ✦ English words in Greek.
- ✦ Scavenger hunt (Rivers & Temberley, 1978: 260)
- ✦ Create a whole new planet (Create the planet from scratch: fauna, flora, atmosphere, inhabitants, gravity force, minerals, fuel, weather, where inhabitants live, what the planet is made of etc)
- ✦ The Never-ending tale (students must create a story, each student providing a sentence in turn. The students can make people outside the classroom participate as well)
- ✦ Plan a trip/journey/ voyage to the destination of your choice (pack, draw the route, virtually book tickets or make preparation of such kind, create timetables and find maps of the area you will visit etc) (Adapted from Rivers & Temberley, 1978:271-272)
- ✦ PIRATES BOOTY: The class is divided into two rival pirate gangs. One gang's mission is to "find" an island to hide their treasure and then draw a map of its location. They should

add traps and misleading information so that their rivals cannot easily find the treasure (but they have to give some true clues as after all they will also have to use the same map to find it later). Group two has managed to steal the map and goes in search of the treasure. If they manage to find it they have to share it with the teacher.

X) Examples of other class newspaper projects:

- ◆ *Class newspaper* (Haines, 1995: ?4)
- ◆ *News about your country* (Haines, 1995: 45)
- ◆ *Newspaper front page* (Fried-Booth, 1986: 25-27)
- ◆ *Workshop newspaper* (Schratz & Puchta, 1993: 131)

GREENPEAS NEWS <http://www.geocities.com/greenpeasnews>

1. **Level:** pre-intermediate
2. **Age:** 13-14
3. **Class:** 2nd grade of gymnasium (junior high)
4. **School:** Leonteios Secondary School (private)
Teacher: Ms. Evie Benetou
5. **Class organization:** pair-work and group work (towards a collective aim)
6. **Description:**

This project is a class e-newspaper, a variation of the traditional class newspaper, posted in the Internet. The idea behind this project was using new technology and in particular the Internet as a huge 'book' that for the students to use, if properly guided, as a source of knowledge. In our project, attention was paid on the authenticity and on the level of the language of the sites used as a resource and therefore our material came from sites especially designed for teenagers such as BBC, WWF or GREENPEACE.

Students were divided into groups and were asked to cooperate in order to produce a collection of articles, leaflets, announcements, games, crosswords, acrostics, letters, crafts, descriptions and posters about the environment and various ecological matters, through activities especially designed to guide them through a step-by-step process. The topic of this newspaper along with its title was agreed beforehand by a hand-raise vote. The newspaper website was finally designed and posted on the Internet by us due to time restrictions and to the fact that the students did not know how to build an Internet website.

7. End Product:

- **Format:** The first issue of a class newspaper posted on the Internet.
- **Contents:** The environment and ecology.

8. Material:

- Internet sites:

http://www.wwf-uk.org/News/n_0000000290.asp
<http://www.longman.com/dictionaries/webdictionary.html>
<http://archive.greenpeace.org/kidsforforests/map.html>
http://www.wwf-uk.org/News/n_0000000290.asp
<http://kid-at-art.com/htdoc/lesson17.html>

<http://kid-at-art.com/htdoc/precraf.html>

<http://archive.greenpeace.org/kidsforforests/map.html>

<http://www.twindolphinsdiving.com/pics/largewebpics/Coral%20ecosystem.jpg>

<http://privat.bluezone.no/janerik/images/spaceart/space%20scene.jpg>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/asguru/generalstudies/sciencetechnology/19energy/energy08.shtml>

http://www.epa.gov/acidrain/site_students

<http://www.oikoperiigitis.gr/gr/indexgr.htm>

<http://www.wcc.govt.nz/services/rubbish/recycle/howto.html>

<http://www.wcc.govt.nz/services/rubbish/recycle/what.html>

<http://data1.recycle->

more.co.uk/recycle3/nav/buildpage.asp?SectionID=563&color=lpurple&TopSectionID=507

9. Teaching / Learning objectives:

- To achieve social communication and collaboration.
- To read for both gist and detail and understand authentic articles without knowing all the vocabulary.
- To function as mediators, by using information in their native language (L1) to produce a text in the foreign one (L2).
- To learn how to use the Internet as a resource.
- To be able to cope with many “englishes”.
- To become interested in the world around them and care about the environment.
- To express themselves through various means and for different registers.
- To practice their knowledge on article, leaflet and letter writing.
- To practice their note-taking.
- To channel the artistic inclinations of the students into using the English language as a basis for illustrating and designing a poster and a leaflet.
- To help students realise that the process of learning can be interesting and enjoyable.
- To learn how to debate and use valid arguments to support their opinions.
- To jog their imagination and to lead them to communicate their thoughts in the target language.
- To practice polite ways of complaining.
- To promote social interaction and sharing of material.
- To illustrate to the students that they could make their own decisions, take the initiative and that they should validate their actions.
- To learn to strive together to reach a common goal.
- To learn to do what is asked of them.
- To learn how to consult and share ideas with their partners.
- To learn how to select correct elements from the midst of irrelevant ones.
- To learn how to effectively follow instructions both written and oral.

10. Stage-by-stage development:

1. (In the Classroom). Introduction of the topic; students exposed to ‘newspaper vocabulary’; general discussion on the project (scope, organisation; students noted down in a list their names and the name of the partner they would like to work with. (45 min)

2. (In the computer lab). Allocation of the activities to the students; students take notes. (35-40 min)
3. (In the computer lab). Students continue and finish the collection of the necessary information from the Internet. (35-40 min)
4. (In the library). Students sat in a pre-arranged way and used their notes to produce the first draft of their end product. (35-40 min)
5. (In the Library). Students continued working on their activities; proofreading; discussion on corrections and improvements; final form of end product. (40-45 min)
6. (In the Classroom). Evaluation of the project; how it seemed to have helped the students; suggestions; certificate of contribution and a small present to reward their efforts and participation. (30-35 min)

11. Problems: (except from those stated in the general guidelines)

- Some students instantly disagreed while others were very excited with the whole idea of the project. And yet the former ones worked in a very productive way and actually enjoyed it very much whereas the latter made a minimum effort, producing an inferior result.
- The fact that students had to leave their regular classroom and move to the computer lab, a process leading to the loss of valuable time, caused us to be under a little time pressure.
- Although most students had a 'friend' to work with there was a student with which the rest of the class was not willing to cooperate.

12. Evaluation

REFERENCES:

Haines, S. (1995). *Projects for the EFL Classroom-Resource material for teachers*. Longman: Essex

Rivers, M.W. & Temperley, M.S. (1978). *A practical guide to the teaching of English as a second language*. New York: Oxford UP.

Fried-Booth, D.L (1986). *Project Work*. Oxford: Oxford UP

Internet sites:

http://www.wwf-uk.org/News/n_0000000290.asp <http://www.longman.com/dictionaries/webdictionary.html>

<http://archive.greenpeace.org/kidsforforests/map.html>

http://www.wwf-uk.org/News/n_0000000290.asp

<http://kid-at-art.com/htdoc/lesson17.html>

<http://kid-at-art.com/htdoc/precraf.html>

<http://archive.greenpeace.org/kidsforforests/map.html>

<http://www.twindolphinsdiving.com/pics/largewebpics/Coral%20ecosystem.jpg>

<http://privat.bluezone.no/janerik/images/spaceart/space%20scene.jpg>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/asguru/generalstudies/sciencetechnology/19energy/energy08.shtml>

http://www.epa.gov/acidrain/site_students

<http://www.oikoperiigitis.gr/gr/indexgr.htm>

<http://www.wcc.govt.nz/services/rubbish/recycle/howto.html>

<http://www.wcc.govt.nz/services/rubbish/recycle/what.html>

<http://data1.recycle-more.co.uk/recycle3/nav/buildpage.asp?SectionID=563&color=lpurple&TopSectionID=507>

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT: (The activities used)

ACTIVITY 1: MAKING A CROSSWORD AND AN ACROSTIC

Visit the following website http://www.wwf-uk.org/News/n_000000290.asp <Click on the “GO WILD” link at the bottom of the page and then on the “threatened planet” link> and write **20** different words on **environment**. Now write their definitions in **English**. You may use the following e-dictionary to help you. (<http://www.longman.com/dictionaries/webdictionary.html>). *Student 1:* take words 1 to 10 and their English definitions and make a crossword. *Student 2:* take words 10 to 20 and their English definitions and make an acrostic.

ACTIVITY 2: WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?

You are Mr. Papadopoulos, the famous TV presenter of “Who wants to be a millionaire?” show. This morning, your boss asked you to visit the following site: <http://archive.greenpeace.org/kidsforforests/map.html>. You should read about the **Brown Bear**, the **Wolf Hunter**, the **Orangutan** and the **Jaguar** of the Amazon forest and note down **4 facts for each one (total 16)**.

Student 1: you are again, Mr. Papadopoulos, the famous TV presenter of “Who wants to be a millionaire?” show. This morning, your boss asked you to **use facts 1 – 8** you have noted down the other day about the **Brown Bear** and the **Wolf Hunter** and create: **8 questions** that the famous *Monster* will ask on tonight’s show, and **four possible answers (a. b. c. d.)** for each.

Student 2: you are again, Mr. Papadopoulos, the famous TV presenter of “Who wants to be a millionaire?” show. This morning, your boss asked you to **use facts 8 – 16** you have noted down the other day about the **Orangutan** and the **Jaguar** of the Amazon forest and create: **8 questions** that the famous *Monster* will ask on tonight’s show, and **four possible answers (a. b. c. d.)** for each.

ACTIVITY 3: WRITING A LETTER TO THE OWNER OF “GOODTYRE” FACTORY.

You are a member of GREENPEACE and you live near the “GOODTYRE” factory that produces tires for cars and other vehicles. One day, as you were walking by the lake nearby the factory, you notice dead fish floating on the surface of the water and the colour of the water having turned into a black-green jelly liquid. You are extremely worried not only about the life of the animals in this lake but also about your life and the life of those leaving in the area, so you decide to write a **letter** to the factory owner, Mrs. Brown, including the following:

- **Inform** her about the **water pollution** the factory causes to the area, and the **consequences** this pollution will have on the **lives** of both the inhabitants and the animals and plants of the area,
- **Complain** in a **polite** way about the situation,
- Make a few **suggestions** about what **everybody** could do to **help**.

Mrs. Brown hates long letters, so your letter must be between **100 – 200 words**.

You can visit this address, if you wish, to help you: http://www.wwf-uk.org/News/n_000000290.asp <Click on the “GO WILD” link at the bottom of the page, then on the “threatened planet” link and finally on the “sea pollution” link>

ACTIVITY 4: WHO SAID RECYCLING IS BORING?

Your friend, Maria, and you had an argument yesterday. She said that you could never create something new and useful from old stuff, and that you should immediately throw away all the old things that you found in the storage room as you were cleaning it. You tell her that she is wrong and that the following day you will prove to her that she is wrong. When you return home, you open your PC and surf in the Internet to find a site to help you. In the end you find these sites: <http://kid-at-art.com/htdoc/lesson17.html> & <http://kid-at-art.com/htdoc/precraft.html>.

Go through them carefully, and choose 2 crafts that you find the most interesting. Take notes on: how to make them (material and process of construction) and What they can be used for and create ‘*recipes*’ Maria should follow, in order to be convinced that **recycling** is not only **possible** but that it is really **fun!!!** *If you want to, you can make them yourselves!*

ACTIVITY 5: THE SURVIVOR!

A plane crash. One parachute. Only ONE can survive. Defend it and save it for in the end There CAN be ONLY ONE... Visit the following address to find more about the **Brown Bear of Europe** and the **Siberian Tiger** and decide which of the two endangered species should be saved: <http://archive.greenpeace.org/kidsforforests/map.html> <click on **Europe and Asia** and then on “**Learn more about ancient forests**”>. Defend the animal that must be saved by expressing your opinion in two articles of 50-100 words. *Student 1:* defend the Brown Bear by expressing your opinion in an article of 50 - 100 words. Do not forget: your article will need a **headline...** *Student 2:* defend the Siberian Tiger by expressing your opinion in an article of 50 - 100 words. Do not forget: your article will need a **headline...**

ACTIVITY 6: THE BEST-ADAPTED CREATURE!

You are an explorer and you were just sent two pictures of the places your colleagues visited on their last expedition. They are planning to go back, this time with better equipment, in search of rare life forms. As you are an expert on rare animals, they've asked you to guess how the best-adapted creature of this ecosystem will look like, so that they know what to expect. Visit the following websites

<http://www.twindolphinsdiving.com/pics/largewebpics/Coral%20ecosystem.jpg>

<http://privat.bluezone.no/janerik/images/spaceart/space%20scene.jpg>

to see the images the other explorers have sent you. Choose one of the **ecosystems** and create the creature, which you think would have the best chances to survive in this ecosystem. There is no right or wrong answer! Just let your imagination go wild! You should **describe** it in a text of **100-200 words** and draw it if you like!

ACTIVITY 7: THE NEADERTHAL VIRUS

There is a threat of a new computer virus, the so-called **NEADERTHAL VIRUS**, which 'feeds on' electrical power. This virus doesn't allow people to use electricity as a source of energy. You are a member of an organization on protecting the environment and you decide to make a **poster** in order to inform people about the **alternative sources of energy** people could **use** in the case that the virus will be set free. This poster will appear on the notice boards of all the schools in Greece. Visit the following website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/asguru/generalstudies/sciencetechnology/19energy/energy08.shtml>

Use the material included in the folder to help you!

ACTIVITY 8: ACID RAIN or A HOLE IN MY UMBRELLA!

You are an umbrella salesman. You make a lot of money from this job but these days a terrible thing is happening: when it rains, the rain is so acid that immediately ruins the umbrellas and creates a large hole on them. As a result, nobody wants to buy an umbrella from you because they think that it's of low quality! You try to persuade your customers that it's not your fault, but that it's acid rain that ruins them. Write an **announcement** of **100 – 200 words** to be published in the local newspaper in order to inform them about:

- What is acid rain?
- Why is acid rain harmful (except from destroying your umbrellas)?
- What people can do to stop it?

so that they will finally believe that it's not your fault. You can visit the following site to help you: www.epa.gov/acidrain/site_students

ACTIVITY 9: ECO-HOLIDAYS IN SERRES!

The Headmaster has suggested that you choose the place for this year's end excursion. You have heard of a nice place in Serres, where you can have fun and at the same time learn a lot of things about nature and in particular the flora and fauna of Lake Kerkini. You tell your idea to the Headmaster, but unfortunately he wants **details** before deciding. After hours and hours of searching in the Internet you finally find the site you have been looking for: <http://www.oikoperiigitis.gr/gr/indexgr.htm> Use the information of this site and your notes on the information your Headmaster has asked you for to create a **leaflet** of **maximum 2 pages A4 long**. This leaflet will be **distributed** to your fellow students and your Headmaster that will **convince** both of them that this is THE place to go to.

*Where is it? * How to go there? * What can you do there, if you are a student? * Can the programmes be adapted to your needs? * Where can we get more information (or who should we contact)? * How much does it cost?*

ACTIVITY 10: RECYCLING AT SCHOOL

There is a school contest among the schools of Attica of the most *eco-conscious school*. The prize is a cruise to the Galapagos Islands. You really want to win because your parents can't take you on holidays this summer. At the end of the year, Mr. Recycle, the Inspector, is going to visit your school to make sure that it protects the environment by recycling. Write down a list of **10 DOs and DON'Ts of recycling** in order to keep your school in the first place! You can visit these sites below

<http://www.wcc.govt.nz/services/rubbish/recycle/howto.html>

<http://www.wcc.govt.nz/services/rubbish/recycle/what.html>

<http://data1.recycle-more.co.uk/recycle3/nav/buildpage.asp?SectionID=563&color=lpurple&TopSectionID=507>