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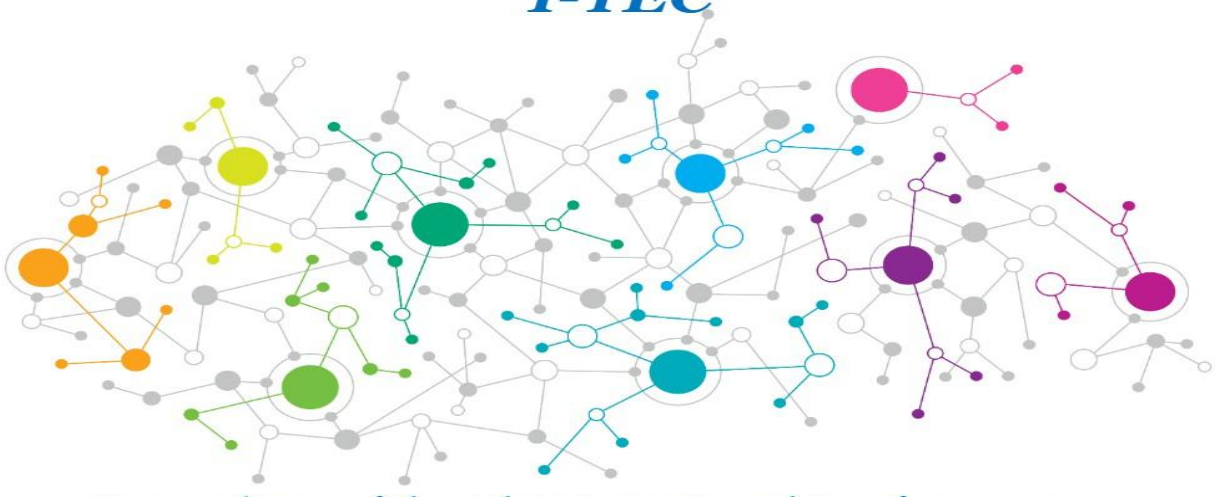

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English Language Professors' Perceptions of Students' Collaborative Work in Project-Based Learning: the case of the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences Ben M'Sik, Casablanca

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Abstract

The Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach is important in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) because it enables 21st century students to learn job market skills that can grant them access to competitive employment opportunities. This article investigates how students' collaborative work is perceived by EFL professors at Ben M'sik Faculty through the implementation of PBL. It also explores the challenges they face during its implementation. This quantitative study employed survey questionnaires to collect data from randomly selected university professors of English at Faculty of Letters and Humanities Ben M'sik, Hassan II University, Casablanca, Morocco, resulting in 9 responses. It utilized descriptive statistics to analyze the data and extract key findings. The latter reveal that professors hold positive perceptions towards PBL as it helps students foster collaboration skills, reinforce their motivation and engagement, develop their critical problem-solving skills and encourage their creativity. However, the study identified significant challenges such as lack of resources, students' resistance to collaborative work, Professors' lack of formal training and traditional assessment techniques, which can hinder the full realization of PBL's potential impact. The

study findings hold significant implications for professors, faculty as an institution, students and policy makers to adopt best practices for PBL implementation.

Keywords: Project-based learning, collaborative work, higher education, Constructionism, Morocco

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

For many years now, English language learning has been mediated by many teaching approaches and methods, not least of which is Project Based Learning. PBL teaching method has been conceived to empower students and equip them with the skills that will not only facilitate their learning, but that will also grant them a smooth transition to the world of work and contribute to their community development (Rostom, 2019). These skills include collaborative work skills, communication skills, critical thinking skills, creativity skills, problem-solving skills, self-confidence, among others (Kavlu, 2020). More importantly, while previous studies contend that the application of standard project-based learning can yield long-term benefits for the participating students, this current study advances the view that PBL, when coupled with online digital learning platforms such as Moodle ® or mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), can generate even greater learning results.

1.2. Problem Statement

The integration of PBL in EFL settings has yielded positive outcomes for learners worldwide, depicted in its ability to hone and boost their language learning skills (Moussaoui& Erguig, 2024). However, this study suggests that, despite being widely implemented on the global perspective, PBL in Morocco has not been much used in teaching practices by Moroccan EFL practitioners to substitute predominant traditional teaching practices (Khoudri et al., 2023).

Although PBL is acknowledged as a holistic approach to education, its incorporation in Moroccan university, especially to foster students' collaborative work skills, remains limited and usually based on misconceptions related to its implementation (Moussaoui& Erguig, 2024). Additionally, PBL, albeit being recognized for its capacity to develop students' collaboration skills, there is a variety of challenges that hamper its implementation (EL Moudden & Lamkhanter, 2024). Such challenges include professors' lack of resources, students' resistance

to collaborative work, professors' lack of formal training and the prevalence of traditional assessment techniques.

1.3. The Purpose, Significance, and Scope of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how students' collaborative work is perceived and applied by Moroccan university professors of English at Ben M'sik Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Hassan II University, through the potential leveraging of PBL teaching method. Another aim was to identify the common challenges professors encountered during the potential implementation of this teaching method to foster students' collaboration skills. This research's significance stems from its capacity to offer practical insights to EFL professors to adopt PBL to forge students' collaborative work skills in the Moroccan educational landscape. Eventually, this study provides recommendations and implications for university students, professors, faculty members as well as policy makers to enhance students' collaborative skills in the Moroccan educational landscape. In this regard, this study's scope is limited to Project-Based Learning for students' collaborative work at Ben M'sik Faculty of Letters and Humanities in Casablanca.

1.4. The Research Questions and Hypotheses

This research study raised the following research questions:

1.To what extent do EFL professors at Ben M'sik Faculty of Letters perceive the potential implementation of PBL as effective for enhancing students' collaborative work skills?

2.What challenges do EFL professors at Ben M'sik Faculty of Letters perceive regarding the potential implementation of PBL to foster students' collaborative work skills?

These research questions emanated from the following hypotheses:

H_1. EFL professors at Ben M'sik Faculty of Letters perceive the potential implementation of project-based learning (PBL) as effective for enhancing students' collaborative work skills.

H_2. EFL professors at Ben M'sik Faculty of Letters perceive significant challenges in the potential implementation of PBL to foster students' collaborative work skills.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

In recent years, there has been a growing demand for learners who possess not only critical thinking skills, creativity, and communication, but also collaboration skills that will enable them to gain a foothold in the job market. Among the teaching methods that foster these

competencies, PBL emerges as a promising approach, garnering global attention. This section examines the stages of PBL implementation, its benefits, and its challenges. It also highlights PBL's relationship between PBL, collaborative work, and engagement. Finally, the theoretical framework underlying this PBL research study is explicated.

2.1. Definition of Project-based Learning

The PBL educational approach has been defined differently in the literature, although most researchers agree on the centrality of the learner in the learning process and on the learners' ownership of their learning. By way of illustration, Bell (2010) defines PBL as, "… a student-driven, teacher-facilitated approach to learning. Learners pursue knowledge by asking questions that have piqued their natural curiosity." (p. 39). Based on this definition, Bell establishes that the learner is at the core of the PBL learning process where they play a major role in building knowledge and where the teacher's role is reduced to a facilitator, not a conveyor of knowledge. This is a stark departure from conventional teaching methods which are centred on the teacher. Building on this idea, Boss's (2011) definition aligns with Bell's, both emphasizing the importance of learner autonomy in the educational process. For instance, Boss defines PBL as a teaching method whereby students autonomously gain content knowledge and real-life skills by working on a project for an extended period of time. It helps students solve a real-world problem or answer a complex question. During this attempt, students are believed to develop real-life skills such as critical thinking, communication skills, creativity and collaboration to be able to solve these real-world problems. For effective learning to occur in PBL, the implementation stages should be properly followed, as the ensuing section explains in details.

2.2. Stages of PBL implementation

It is crucial to highlight that PBL goes through a set of stages in its implementation. For instance, Sumarni (2015) clarifies that PBL follows a rigorous syntax, comprising three main phases, namely Planning, Creating and Processing. During the Planning phase, students pose a driving question such as "How can we improve recycling on our campus?" derived from their immediate environment, and design an action plan to execute it, such as surveying their peers and recommending solutions. In the Creation phase, the teachers create a timeline for the realisation of the project while monitoring the students and tracing their progress. A case in point is a three-week timeline including surveying peers, drafting solutions, and presenting them. Regarding the Processing phase, the teachers assess their students' learning outcomes

using formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment takes place during the PBL execution stage where teachers use rubrics to grade their students against certain standards for effective feedback. Conversely, summative assessment takes place towards the end of the PBL experience to assess the overall level of students after the implementation of PBL. In the same phase, the teachers and their students evaluate the whole PBL learning experience to provide best practices for future instructional strategies. The proper application of such steps can undoubtedly lead to benefits.

2.3. PBL Benefits

PBL teaching method, when implemented properly, can lead to significant benefits for students. It effectively enhances their critical thinking skills by immersing them in activities that entail applying diverse higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information in authentic, real-life situations (Astaifi, 2024). Moreover, PBL enhances students' motivation levels as it involves them in hands-on activities which boost their autonomous, high quality work (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). Equally important, PBL elevates students' ability to communicate; For example, through its varied activities, students learn to articulate their thoughts clearly, enabling them to explain their ideas and convince people to accept them (Yalçin et al., 2009). Moreover, PBL maximizes teamwork and collaboration among students by engaging them with learners from various perspectives, expertise and backgrounds to solve real-life complex problems (Morais et al., 2021). Furthermore, PBL accelerates students' research skills by helping them manage their learning resources conveniently. This includes offering them the chance to leverage diverse sources such as field trips, observation, library, and online platforms from which students can obtain relevant information. Hence, using PBL in the classroom can offer unprecedented benefits especially when coupled with digital learning platforms.

2.4. PBL in Foreign Language Mobile Learning Platforms

When PBL is combined with technology, it leads to greater learning outcomes. For instance, Taiebine et al. (2024) investigated the application of PBL in face-to-face mode in addition to asynchronous meetings via Moodle® in undergraduate nursing and health sciences programs. The researchers leveraged a post-questionnaire to assess students' learning outcomes and found that the PBL teaching method developed diverse skills such as students' soft, self-, and life skills including teamwork, communication and critical thinking skills which future healthcare professionals require in their jobs. Nonetheless, whilst this study offers valuable insights, it fails

to assess students' actual levels before and after the PBL course through the use of measurement tools such as a pre-posttest, interviews with professors and focus group discussions with their students to gain deeper insights into the effectiveness of this PBL course.

An alternative perspective is encountered in Benlaghrissi and Ouahidi's (2024) study investigating the impact of combining MALL (mobile-assisted language learning) and PBL on developing Moroccan EFL students' speaking skills. Unlike Taiebine et al. who used only a post-questionnaire, Benlaghrissi and Ouahidi employed a speaking pre- and post-test to assess the three groups' oral proficiency (two control groups and one experimental group) and a 5-Likert scale post-questionnaire to gauge the experimental group participants' experience and attitudes towards the implementation of MALL. The results revealed that mobile-assisted project-based learning was remarkably more effective than standard PBL and conventional teaching in improving learners' overall speaking performance and sub-skills such as pronunciation, lexical resource, grammatical range, accuracy as well as fluency, and coherence. Consequently, the findings corroborate the pedagogical role of combining MALL with PBL as a seminal mode of instruction that can enhance EFL learners' speaking performance. Yet, PBL has certain challenges that impede its implementation, a thing which the following section will delve into.

2.5. Challenges of PBL Implementation

In contrast to previous studies which highlight only the positive side to PBL implementation, this research study underscores significant challenges to PBL implementation in higher education, such as lack of resources, students' resistance to collaborative work, professors' lack of formal PBL training and traditional assessment techniques. To start with, resources constraints can include technology, materials and external expertise. For instance, Cintang et al. (2018) state that such lack of resources can affect the full realization of the PBL projects as well as the quality and depth of student learning experiences. As for resistance to collaboration, Westwood (2008) states that when students are assigned roles, they may not feel comfortable working with their classmates to accomplish certain tasks or assignments. What is more, they may feel demotivated because of uncooperative teammates who are not willing to contribute appropriately to group work. Additionally, Faculty members may lack formal training, mentorship, communities of practice, incentives as well as recognition and encouragement for their best practices (Bovill et al., 2016).

In this regard, to foster a culture of innovation and provide a collaborative environment for faculty, institutional support is essential. Only by creating a supportive institutional culture that promotes and values innovative teaching approaches and invests in training workshops can faculty members become motivated to overcome their resistance and embrace PBL as a valuable instructional approach. Besides, traditional assessment may not capture appropriately the multifaceted nature of PBL as the latter stresses the use of group work, problem-solving and application of knowledge. In this respect, Levstik & Barton (2001) suggest portfolios and rubrics as two options which can be used for PBL assessment. According to them, portfolios can be employed for extended period of times to show progress to learners themselves, to their parents as well as to their teachers. On the contrary, Zvacek (1999) considers portfolios to be rather subjective and time consuming to grade. For him, rubrics, the second option, are more objective and reliable as they enable teachers to communicate their expectations of their students prior to the project. This allows students to be aware of how their work will be assessed as Pickett & Dodge (2001) maintain.

2.5. PBL, Collaborative Work and Engagement

Project-based learning is a teaching and learning method that involves learners in varied learning situations to achieve a certain objective collaboratively over an extended period of time (Thomas, 2000). It emphasizes self-directed learning, enhances critical thinking and problem- solving skills and encourages collaboration (Chen & Yang, 2019). Collaboration, for example, requires students to have social skills to implement activities in groups. The PBL collaborative approach has the capability to provide learning conditions that develop the skills and knowledge required for the 21st century, and the features of the learning environment have an important role to play in achieving this (Wolff, 2003). The PBL approach improves the students' learning environment by ensuring that they can manage their studies efficaciously. The interaction that exists in the PBL approach is necessary to accomplish academic goals and maintain the relation between students and teachers, which in turn engages students in learning. Students are also engaged in real-life works and activities deeply and actively by finding original solutions that use more resources more broadly in addition to collaboration and knowledge sharing (Lampert et al., 2013). Also, through this teaching method, learners have the opportunity to create their own learning needs and eventually become independent and engaged learners who can solve problems autonomously (Bilbao et al., 2018). Hence, the PBL approach offers students a sense of connection to their peers as well as to the course material.

2.6. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two foundational theories, namely Constructionism and Social Constructivism. Constructionism, according to Harel & Papert (1991) and Kafai & Resnick (1996), posits that individuals— much like in PBL — learn best when they are constructing an artifact that can be shared with others and reflected upon, such as posters, brochures, presentations, videos, among others. Another important characteristic of constructionism is that the artifacts must be meaningful to students whereby the latter become personally fully engaged in learning. PBL is also grounded in Social Constructivism Theory (Vygotsky, 1978). The latter proposes that learning occurs by interacting with people and through engaging within society. Put differently, learners require a mediation by the more knowledgeable other (teacher, parents, more competent peer) who provide them with a supportive framework until new knowledge is appropriated, and the mediation can be removed. This is what Vygotsky (1978) refers to as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Consider the case of PBL, where students construct new knowledge through guidance from their teacher and through collaboration and interaction with their peers, thus moving from a zone of not knowing to one of achieving full understanding.

3. **Method**

3.1. Sample / Participants

The present study aimed to look into Moroccan EFL professors' perceptions towards PBL for students' collaborative work and the challenges they face during the implementation of this teaching method to foster students' collaboration skill. Specifically, the informants of this study are Moroccan university professors of English from Ben M'sik faculty, Department of English at Hassan II University. Table 1 below shows the percentage of the participating professors. All of them belong to the same faculty with 100 % of belonging.

Table 1
Institution of Participating Professors

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines	9	100.0	100.0	100.0

The selection of professors was based on a random selection so that each member of the population has an equal chance of being represented (Creswell, 2021). Regarding the years of teaching experience, table 2 below demonstrates that out of 9 professors, only two professors (22.2 %) have a teaching experience amounting to 37 years whereas the rest of the participating professors have different numbers of teaching years, ranging from 2 years to 38 years of teaching experience.

Table 2
Professors' Teaching Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	1	11.1	12.5	12.5
	7	1	11.1	12.5	25.0
	10	1	11.1	12.5	37.5
	29	1	11.1	12.5	50.0
	36	1	11.1	12.5	62.5
	37	2	22.2	25.0	87.5
	38	1	11.1	12.5	100.0
	Total	8	88.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	11.1		
Total		9	100.0		

3.2. Data Collection Procedures and *Quantitative Instrument(s)*

The data has been collected physically through paper-based questionnaire in a face-to-face encounter. The rationale behind using a questionnaire is that it is an efficient means of data collection. It allows for practicality in terms of gathering data from a range of participants (Creswell, 2021). Additionally, the questionnaire format allows for standardized data collection whereby all participants are presented with the same set of questions and answer options. This standardization allows for meaningful conclusions about the reliability of the gathered data. The professors' questionnaire consists of 5 sections. The first section is related

to demographics, designed to collect basic information about the participants, their institution name, the school subjects they have taught and the number of teaching years. The second section relates to the professors' experience with PBL. It consists of 2 questions. They revolve around the professors' potential incorporation of PBL in their teaching experience. This section will help answer the first research question. The third section is related to PBL perceived benefits. It consists of 7 items whose aim is to collect data about the potential benefits perceived as a result of teaching through the PBL approach. Among the benefits is PBL's capacity to promote collaboration and teamwork among students. A 5-point Likert scale was used ranging from 1) strongly disagree to 5) strongly Agree. The fourth section is focused on answering the second research question by collecting data related to professors' perception of the challenges raised by PBL during their teaching process. This section is composed of 7 questions which are all centred on capturing PBL's perceived challenges. A 5-point Likert scale was used ranging from 1) strongly disagree to 5) Strongly Agree. The fifth section is centered on the professors' professional development and support to see whether they have received any training related to PBL, whether they are interested in participating in professional development workshops which encourage the use of technology in PBL and whether PBL fits within the teaching curriculum. This section contains 9 questions. (See appendix)

3.3. Data analysis

The statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) 25 was used to code the questionnaire's data. The software was used to conduct descriptive statistics that allowed for a quantification, calculation and summarization of the data. This includes measures like frequency, percentage, valid percent and cumulative percent that provide an overview of the data gathered and can help identify patterns and trends.

4. Results and Discussion

The first research question which this research study sought to answer was:

1. To what extent do EFL professors at Ben M'sik Faculty of Letters perceive the potential implementation of PBL as effective for enhancing students' collaborative work skills?

The hypothesis was:

H_1. EFL professors at Ben M'sik Faculty of Letters perceive the potential implementation of project-based learning (PBL) as effective for enhancing students' collaborative work skills.

Table 3 below shows the percentage of professors' experience with PBL. Only 11.1% of the professors consistently use PBL, while 55.6% use it occasionally, and 33.3% do not use it at

all. This suggests a moderate level of incorporation, with most professors being somewhat familiar with incorporating PBL in some capacity, but consistent and widespread use is limited. This implies that while there is some engagement with PBL, it is not yet fully integrated into the standard teaching practices of most professors. This can be explained by the fact that the surveyed English professors do not adopt PBL fully into the curriculum and they do not align it with learning objectives, either (Juandi et al., 2021). This can also be ascribed to their lack of adequate PBL resources, time, motivation, mentorship and recognition for their best practices (Bovill et al., 2016). When it comes to the professors' perception of PBL's benefits, the data from table 4 below shows that EFL professors at this school hold positive perceptions toward the impact of Project-Based Learning (PBL) on enhancing students' collaboration skills. Specifically, 55.6% of professors strongly agree and 33.3% agree that PBL significantly enhances students' abilities to collaborate and work in teams. This indicates that a substantial majority of the professors recognizes and values the benefits of PBL in fostering collaborative skills among their students. Based on the literature, Kapp (2010) justifies this by stating that professors who incorporate PBL in their daily practices can provide an opportunity to students to indulge in interdisciplinary collaboration by exposing them to collaborative projects. The latter may develop students' interpersonal and communication skills required for job market demands.

Table 3

Percentage of Professors' Experience with PBL

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	3	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Occasionally	5	55.6	55.6	88.9
	Yes	1	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

Table 4

PBL and Students' Collaboration and Teamwork

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	1	11.1	11.1	11.1
	Agree	3	33.3	33.3	44.4
	Strongly Agree	5	55.6	55.6	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 below shows PBL's role in making learning more engaging and relevant. On the basis of this, more than two fifths (44.4%) strongly agree to that, whereas more than two fifths

(44.4%) agree on it and a small minority of professors (11.1%) is neutral to this statement. These figures reflect the belief that PBL makes learning more interactive and engaging, thereby motivating students to participate actively in their learning process. This confirms what Lampert et al. (2013) found out in their study. They concluded that PBL encouraged students to engage in real-life works and activities deeply and actively by finding original solutions which leveraged resources appropriately through collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Table 5

PBL and Students' Engagement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	1	11.1	11.1	11.1
	Agree	4	44.4	44.4	55.6
	Strongly Agree	4	44.4	44.4	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

In addition to collaboration and engagement, professors rated PBL positively across several other educational aspects. For instance, professors believe PBL enhances students' problem-solving abilities. To illustrate, just over half of the professors (55.6%) agrees that PBL enhances students' problem-solving skills while more than two fifths (44.4%) strongly agree that it does so. Table 6 below demonstrates this clearly. This high score suggests that professors perceive PBL as a powerful tool for helping students develop critical problem-solving skills by engaging them in real-world tasks that require innovative solutions.

Table 6

PBL and Students' Problem Solving skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	5	55.6	55.6	55.6
	Strongly Agree	4	44.4	44.4	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

This finding can be supported by the findings of Sabry et al. (2018) who immersed students in problem-solving activities. The latter allowed them to gain insights into the practical implications of the subject matter by connecting theoretical concepts with real-world situations, using problem-solving skills.

Insofar as PBL's role in fostering students' creativity and innovation, table 7 below shows that just over a fifth of the professors (22.2%) strongly agrees on this statement and just over half

(55.6 %) agrees that PBL does foster their creativity and innovation. Also, just over a fifth of the professors (22.2%) is neutral towards PBL's ability to foster students' creativity and innovation.

Table 7
PBL and Students' Creativity and Innovation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	2	22.2	22.2	22.2
	Agree	5	55.6	55.6	77.8
	Strongly Agree	2	22.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

The figures, above, indicate that professors agree that PBL encourages students to think creatively and come up with innovative ideas, which are essential skills in today's rapidly changing world. This is in line with what Wilson (2012) calls for regarding the creative thinking skills which are much needed in the 21st century working life. He stresses that these skills enable students to develop their attitudes and encourage exploration and discovery to reinforce their cognitive development. All in all, it can be inferred from the results stated above that the hypothesis for research question 1 above is confirmed. EFL professors at Ben M'sik Faculty hold positive perceptions towards PBL's capacity to enhance students' collaborative work skills.

As for research question 2, "What challenges do EFL professors at Ben M'sik Faculty of Letters perceive regarding the potential implementation of PBL to foster students' collaborative work skills? ", the hypothesis was that EFL professors at Ben M'sik Faculty of Letters perceive significant challenges in the potential implementation of PBL to foster students' collaborative work skills.The first challenge is the need for additional resources, which complicates the adoption of PBL. Table 8 below demonstrates that just over half (55.6 %) agree that the implementation of PBL requires more resources than traditional teaching methods. This includes not only materials and tools but also the time and effort needed to plan and execute these projects effectively. This finding parallels the findings of Cintang et al. (2018) who state that lack of resources, such as technology, materials and external expertise can affect the full realization of the PBL projects as well as the quality and depth of student learning experiences.

Table 8
PBL Requiring More Resources

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	1	11.1	11.1	11.1
	Neutral	1	11.1	11.1	22.2
	Agree	5	55.6	55.6	77.8
	Strongly Agree	2	22.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

The second challenge is related to students' resistance to collaborative work. Table 9 below indicates that more than half of the professors (55.6 %) agree that students' resistance to working in teams can hinder the effectiveness of PBL. This resistance can stem from various factors, such as past negative experiences with group work, personal preferences for working alone, or difficulties in coordinating with peers. This finding aligns with what Westwood (2008) found. He realized that when students are assigned roles, they may not feel comfortable working with their classmates to accomplish certain tasks or assignments.

Table 9
Students' resistance to Collaborative Work

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	3	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Agree	5	55.6	55.6	88.9
	Strongly Agree	1	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

The third challenge is related to lack of formal training. Table 10 below shows that only 22.2% of professors reported having received formal training and support in PBL, highlighting a substantial gap in professional development. This lack of training suggests that many professors may not be fully equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement PBL effectively. Consequently, there is a clear need for more comprehensive and accessible training programs to better prepare educators for utilizing this teaching method. This goes hand in hand with Bovill et al. (2016)'s findings. In the end of their study, they recommend creating a supportive institutional culture that promotes and values innovative teaching approaches and

invests in training workshops to help faculty members become motivated to overcome their resistance and embrace PBL as a valuable instructional approach.

Table 10
PBL and Professors' lack of Training and Support

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	7	77.8	77.8	77.8
	Yes	2	22.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

Moreover, assessment methods still impede the effective implementation of PBL. Traditional assessment techniques (tests or quizzes) may not adequately capture the learning outcomes associated with PBL, such as collaborative work, problem solving, and real-world application skills. This is because, based on table 11 below, the vast majority of professors (88.8%) either agree or strongly agree on the time-consuming nature of PBL. Therefore, there is a need for developing new assessment strategies that align better with the goals of PBL. For this reason, Levstik & Barton (2001) suggest portfolios and rubrics as two options which can be used for PBL assessment. Yet, while they consider portfolios to be rather subjective and time consuming to grade, Zvacek (1999) and Pickett & Dodge (2001) suggest rubrics as being more objective and reliable. They enable teachers to communicate their expectations of their students prior to the project. This allows students to be aware of how their work will be assessed.

Table 11
PBL Assessment and Grading

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	11.1	11.1	11.1
	Agree	4	44.4	44.4	55.6
	Strongly Agree	4	44.4	44.4	100.0
	Total	9	100.0	100.0	

Thus, these findings confirm the second hypothesis that that EFL professors at Ben M'sik Faculty of Letters perceive significant challenges in the potential implementation of PBL to foster students' collaborative work skills.

To summarize, the data clearly shows that the Ben M'sik Faculty EFL professors generally hold positive perceptions toward PBL and its multifaceted educational benefits. Nevertheless, despite the positive perceptions towards Project-Based Learning (PBL), the data reveals significant challenges and areas that require improvement.

6. Implications, Recommendations and Conclusions

The findings of this study are manifold, ranging from the professors' positive perceptions towards PBL to the challenges they encounter while implementing it. To illustrate, while professors' answers show a moderate level of potential PBL incorporation, they still reveal professors' recognition and value of PBL benefits in fostering collaborative work skills among their students. Nonetheless, the study identified challenges including lack of additional resources, students' resistance to collaborative work, professors' lack of training and traditional assessment techniques. The study findings hold significant implications and recommendations for professors, faculty as an institution, students and policy makers. First, professors need more training programs such as workshops, seminars and conferences to help prepare them for employing this teaching method. Second, faculty members could implement strategies aimed at maintaining and boosting motivation and confidence across the student and the professor bodies by furnishing professors with adequate resources and structured guidance that encourage the use of PBL. Third, students need to develop their own framework of collaboration by planning and coordinating their activities and managing their resources. Fourth, policy makers are required to establish a whole infrastructure that incorporates PBL as an effective teaching approach to foster not only students' collaboration skills, but also to enable them to integrate the job market with the requisite 21st century skills. By addressing these challenges, professors can become more engaged in fostering collaborative work skills among their students.

7. Limitations & Directions for Future Research

Similar to other research endeavours, the study at hand has certain limitations; For one thing, the sample size was too small and the survey response rate was too low, which can curtail the generalizability of the findings; for another, the findings are based only on quantitative results, which entails qualitative instruments that can back up these findings. Future research can include the students' perspectives and the triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions.

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Appendix: Questionnaire Dedicated to Professors

English Language Professors' Perceptions of Students' Collaborative Work in Project-Based Learning at Ben M'sik Faculty of Letters, Hassan II University

Questionnaire Dedicated to Professors

As a doctoral student in Language, Society and Culture Studies Lab (LSCS-Lab) at Ben M'sik Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Hassan II University, Casablanca, I am investigating professors' attitudes towards Project-Based Learning and practices of implementing it to enhance collaborative work skills. Rest assured that all the data collected will be kept confidential and anonymous. Your responses will be used solely for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost respect and privacy.
Thank you for taking the time to participate in my study. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

I- Demographics

Institution ……
Subject(s) taught ……
Years of teaching experience ……

II- Experience with project-based learning

1- Have you ever incorporated Project-Based Learning in your teaching practices?
□ No □ Occasionally □ Yes

2- If yes, please describe a recent Project-Based Learning experience you have facilitated.

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……

III- Perceived benefits

Please rate the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
1- PBL enhances students' problem-solving skills.	□	□	□	□	□

2- PBL fosters students' creativity and innovation.	□	□	□	□	□
3- PBL promotes collaboration and teamwork among students.	□	□	□	□	□
4- PBL makes learning more engaging and relevant.	□	□	□	□	□
5- PBL helps students develop critical thinking skills.	□	□	□	□	□
6- PBL prepares students for real-world challenges.	□	□	□	□	□
7- PBL leads to deeper understanding of the course content.	□	□	□	□	□

IV- Challenges

Please rate the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
1- It can be challenging to manage Project-Based Learning projects effectively	□	□	□	□	□
2- Assessing and grading Project-Based Learning work can be time-consuming.	□	□	□	□	□
3- Project-based learning may require more resources.	□	□	□	□	□
4- Project-Based Learning can be difficult to implement within the curriculum.	□	□	□	□	□
5- Project-Based Learning is difficult to implement because of students' resistance to collaborative work.	□	□	□	□	□
6- It can be difficult to design effective Project-Based Learning projects that promote collaboration.	□	□	□	□	□
7- It is challenging to manage diverse students' groups within Project-Based Learning teams.	□	□	□	□	□

V- Professional development and support

1- Have you received any professional development or training related to Project-Based Learning?

□ No □ Yes

2- How satisfied are you with the support and resources provided (if any) by your institution for implementing Project-Based Leaning in your teaching?

□ Very dissatisfied □ Dissatisfied □ Neutral □ Satisfied □ Very satisfied

3- How confident do you feel in your ability to effectively implement Project-Based Learning to enhance students' collaboration skills?

□ Not confident at all □ Somewhat confident □ Moderately confident □ Very confident □ Extremely confident

4- Would you be interested in participating in professional development workshops or training sessions focused on Project-Based Learning implementation?

□ No □ Neutral □ Yes

5- To what extent are students engaged during Project-Based Learning activities?

□ Not engaged at all □ Moderately engaged □ Very engaged □ Extremely engaged

6- How do you assess Project-Based Learning activities?

□ Rubrics and assessment criteria □ Observations and reflections □ Students' feedback and self-assessment

□ Peer evaluation □ Performance-based assessment □ Formative assessment

7- To what extent do you integrate technology in Project-Based Learning?

□ Not at all □ Rarely □ Occasionally □ Frequently □ Extensively

8- How is technology implemented in Project-Based Learning?

□ Blogs □ Vlogs □ Presentations □ Digital collaboration tools

9- How does Project-Based Learning fit within the curriculum?

□ Integrated into core subjects □ Cross-curricular approach □ Stand-alone courses □ Extracurricular or enrichment programs

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Author Biodata

Jalil Abdelilah is an enthusiastic high school English language teacher with experience spanning more than twenty-two years in ELT. He has attended, coordinated and participated in many national conferences organized by MATE and other public and private institutions. His participation in training programs axed on ICT integration in the English language classroom has fueled his interest in technology-enhanced teaching approaches. At Hassan II University, he is currently registered as a doctoral student, fully immersed in Applied Linguistics where he is further researching the Project-Based Learning teaching method as an extension to his master's degree.