



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Active Learning through Project-Based Education

A poster at the end of a unit is not project-based learning. PBLWorks names seven elements a project needs before it counts — and this week you design one against all seven, then score it on the rubric they publish.

DURATION 5 days · 25 hours	LANGUAGE English (B1+)	GROUP SIZE Max 20 participants
DAILY SCHEDULE 09:30–14:30 Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch	AUDIENCE All school levels No specific prerequisites — open to all teachers and school staff.	CERTIFICATE Attendance + Europass Mobility
COURSE CENTRES Antalya · İstanbul · İzmir · Mersin · Budapest · Bremen · Rome Dates and cities of the scheduled sessions are listed on the course page.		

01 Overview

A project can look hands-on and still be missing much of what makes project-based learning work. This week you design one real project for your own class and check it, part by part, against a published standard before any pupil sees it.

- **Monday** — you name what the project must teach, then turn a curriculum topic into a driving question worth weeks of work.
- **Tuesday** — you map the inquiry week by week and decide what makes the project authentic, including the honest version when no outside partner is available.
- **Wednesday** — you decide which choices belong to pupils and which stay with you, and write reflection checkpoints into the timetable.
- **Thursday** — you practise critique that actually changes the work, design the assessment, and score your own draft against the published rubric.
- **Friday** — you exhibit your project, have it challenged by colleagues, and revise it before taking it home.

You go home with one project ready for a real class: a driving question, an inquiry map with dates, a choice-and-reflection timetable, an assessment plan, and a rubric score showing which parts were weakest and what you changed. No prior experience of project-based learning is needed, and if you arrive without a topic in mind, you can choose one on Monday.

02 Course description

A poster at the end of a unit, a diorama, a slideshow with a title page — plenty of classrooms already call this project-based learning, and the work behind it is often real. What is missing is not effort. It is a definition strict enough to tell you what your project is short of before you run it with thirty pupils.

PBLWorks — the Buck Institute for Education — published one. Gold Standard PBL sets out seven essential project design elements: a challenging problem or question, sustained inquiry, authenticity, student voice and choice, reflection, critique and revision, and a public product. At the centre of the model sit the learning goals themselves: the key knowledge, understanding and success skills the project is supposed to teach. That centre is the part a good-looking project can lose most easily. Larmer, Mergendoller and Boss set the model out in full in 2015, and PBLWorks publishes a Project Design Rubric that scores a project against those same seven elements.

The week is built element by element, from the driving question on Monday to critique and assessment on Thursday, and on Friday the projects are exhibited to the group, which is the seventh element applied to the week itself.

One project goes home, designed against a public standard rather than a personal sense that a lesson felt hands-on.

03 Learning outcomes

- 01 Turn a curriculum topic into a driving question that meets the Gold Standard's first element, with the content standards the project must teach named before the question is written.
- 02 Design a sustained inquiry that runs over weeks, and decide what makes the project authentic — real context, real tools, real audience, or an honest substitute your school can actually reach.
- 03 Write the pupils' choice points and the reflection checkpoints into a project timetable, and set out how individual learning will be assessed inside a group product.
- 04 Score your own project with PBLWorks' Project Design Rubric, element by element, and revise the two elements that score weakest.

04 Methodology

Measured Against the Gold Standard Model

Every participant works on one real project for their own class, and at each stage it is measured against a named element of the model rather than against how it feels.

The Week Runs the Way a Project Runs

Critique and revision on Thursday, a public product on Friday — participants go through the last two elements themselves rather than hearing them described, which is also a fast way to notice why pupils sometimes resist both.

Tools Where the Work Needs Them

Digital tools appear at the points in a project where they do real work — finding and judging sources during the inquiry — rather than as a separate topic with its own day. Team collaboration and making the product are pedagogical decisions worked through directly (Wednesday, Thursday); naming a specific tool for either is optional and left to your own school's platform.

Day 1

Learning Goals and the Challenging Question

- **Warm-up:** each participant introduces themselves through the last project they set a class — or one they remember from their own school days — and names in one sentence the question that project actually answered — the room then sorts them into real questions and announced topics
 - What the Gold Standard model asks that a poster, a diorama or an end-of-unit slideshow does not answer
 - **The model itself:** seven essential project design elements arranged around a centre of learning goals — key knowledge, understanding and success skills
 - **Element 1, A Challenging Problem or Question:** turning a curriculum topic into a driving question pitched at the right level of difficulty
 - **Working session:** each participant names the content standards their project must teach, drafts the driving question, and tests it against the group
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Day 2

Sustained Inquiry and Authenticity: Building the Middle

- **Warm-up in new pairs:** each pair takes a driving question from yesterday that could be answered in a single lesson and tries to rebuild it into one that cannot — regrouping the room before the inquiry work starts
 - **Element 2, Sustained Inquiry:** designing the question-research-application cycle so the project survives past the first lesson instead of being answered in it
 - **Element 3, Authenticity:** real context, real tools, a real audience — and the honest alternative for a school that cannot bring in an outside partner
 - **Working session:** mapping your own project's inquiry arc week by week, with what pupils produce at each stage
 - **Finding and judging sources:** the research tools pupils will actually use, and how to teach them to tell a usable source from a convincing one
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Day 3

Student Voice and Choice, and Reflection

- **In fours:** one decision you have never let a class make, and one you always do — the lists are compared before the day works out where choice actually belongs
- **Element 4, Student Voice & Choice:** deciding in advance what pupils choose — question, method, team, product — and what stays with the teacher, and why unlimited choice fails
- **Element 5, Reflection:** putting reflection into the timeline rather than at the end, and what a mid-project reflection prompt has to ask to be worth the lesson time
- **Working session:** writing the choice points and reflection checkpoints into your own project timetable
- **Team roles and division of labour:** designing who does what so individual learning is visible inside a shared product

Day 4

Critique, Revision and Assessment

- **Element 6, Critique & Revision:** running structured critique protocols with pupils so that feedback actually changes the work
- **Assessment design:** separate rubrics for the content standards and for the success skills, and what is fair to grade when the product is collaborative
- **Working session:** each participant scores their own draft project with PBLWorks' Project Design Rubric, element by element
- **Revision time:** rebuilding whichever elements scored weakest on your own rubric
- **Preparing the public product:** who the audience is, when they are invited, and what they are asked to do rather than just watch

Day 5

Public Product: Exhibition and Design Critique

- **Element 7, Public Product:** the projects are exhibited, run the way an exhibition is run with pupils — designs on the wall, participants moving between them rather than sitting through twenty presentations
- **Critique round in small panels:** each project is challenged by three colleagues who name the point at which it would fail in a real school — timetable, resources, colleagues, assessment. Two projects are then taken to the whole room in full
- **Revision time:** participants amend their own project plans in response before they take them home
- General course evaluation and feedback survey
- Discussion of future projects, collaborations and partnerships
- Certificate ceremony

PLEASE NOTE

Sessions run from 09:30 to 14:30, Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch. Timings can shift a little to suit the venue and the group.

Course activities and content may vary depending on participants' needs and the trainer leading the session; any changes are at the trainer's discretion. If there is a specific topic you would like included, please let us know — content-related requests must reach us at least 3 weeks before the course start date so we can confirm them in time.

06 Materials

- PBLWorks' Gold Standard PBL model — the seven essential project design elements, worked with from Day 1 onwards (published free of charge by PBLWorks)
- PBLWorks' Project Design Rubric — the same seven elements used as scoring criteria; used to score your own project on Day 4, and to shape what the audience is asked to do on Day 5
- Larmer, Mergendoller and Boss, Setting the Standard for Project Based Learning (ASCD, 2015) — the book the model is set out in, referenced during the week
- A driving question, an inquiry map with dates, a choice-and-reflection timetable and an assessment plan for your own project, all written during the week and taken home
- A completed rubric score for your own project, with the weakest elements identified and revised

07 How to prepare

- It helps to have a curriculum topic in mind, with the syllabus or standards it should cover, since the week designs one project for one real class; if you arrive without one, you can choose one during Day 1.
- Bring the practical constraints too — how many lessons you actually have, what the timetable allows, what equipment your pupils can reach. Naming them early makes the project easier to finish.
- No prior experience of project-based learning is needed. The model is introduced on Day 1 and used as a working checklist from then on.

08 After the course

- Participants will receive their Certificate of Attendance and the co-signed Europass Mobility document.
- Participants will complete a general course evaluation and event survey.
- Participants will receive course materials, videos, photos, and PDF documents in both digital and print formats.
- Follow-up support: self-evaluation materials are provided. Depending on the group, an email group may be set up so that participants can keep exchanging ideas.

09 Why this is Erasmus+ eligible

Under the heading “Increasing the quality of teaching and learning in school education”, the Erasmus+ Programme Guide lists among the objectives of Key Action 1 mobility “supporting professional development of teachers, school leaders and other school staff” and promoting “innovative teaching methods” (Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2026, Part B – Key Action 1, Mobility for pupils and staff in school education, Objectives of the action, p. 103). This week is professional development in one teaching method — project-based learning — worked against a published standard, PBLWorks' Gold Standard model and its Project Design Rubric, rather than against a general sense that a lesson felt hands-on. The Guide also asks that the content of staff courses be “relevant for professional skills of the participating staff and the objectives of the project or accreditation” (same section, Staff mobility – Courses and training, p. 107): each participant designs one project for their own class and curriculum and takes it home with a driving question, an inquiry plan with dates, pupils' choice points and reflection checkpoints, an assessment plan, and a rubric score for each of the seven design elements showing what was revised.

10 What the course fee covers

INCLUDED IN THE COURSE FEE

- 25 hours of training and course materials
- Certificate of Attendance + Europass support
- On-site local support throughout the week

ARRANGED SEPARATELY BY THE PARTICIPANT

- Travel to the host city — invitation letter on request
- Accommodation — we share recommended options
- Travel & health insurance

ISSUED BY

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COURSE PAGE

erasmusmobilityacademy.com/courses/active-learning-through-project-based-education

ABOUT ERASMUS MOBILITY ACADEMY

Erasmus Mobility Academy (OID: E10304561) is an Erasmus+ training provider offering professional development courses for educators, school staff and youth workers across Europe. Our courses are designed for international mobility — open to participants travelling from a country other than the host country — and support schools in building lasting institutional capacity. We provide structured learning, logistical guidance and certification with Europass.