

Using Project-Based Learning to improve critical thinking and cooperative learning skills in
Form 4 Information Technology students at a rural secondary school in Trinidad

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Abstract

This study sought to determine the impact of Project Based Learning (PBL) strategy on critical thinking and cooperative skills in a unit of Spreadsheet. PBL is a student centered approach to learning that focuses on real-world applications and working in small groups.

This strategy was chosen since students did not see the relevance of Information Technology (I.T.) to real-world applications and there was a lack of critical thinking and cooperation during the delivery of lessons and among the students in this class. The teacher's method of delivery was very 'teacher centered' rather than 'student centered' contributing to the problem identified.

To assess effectiveness of PBL, a quasi-experiment that utilized a mixed-methods approach was applied. The research instruments used were critical thinking skills rubric, cooperative skills rubric, journals and photographs. Scores and responses were gathered, graphically represented and analysed, which were supported by visual data.

The results showed that the intervention increased students' critical thinking and cooperative skills. It is recommended that adequate time be allocated to execute such a study in future and Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) I.T. syllabus should reflect use of PBL strategy in order to encourage its practice.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning, Critical Thinking Skills, Cooperative Skills

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