

GREEN LEADERS AT JORGE ELIÉCER GAITÁN (JEG) SCHOOL: INTEGRATING 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SKILLS IN  
EFL LEARNING THROUGH PBL

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UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA BOLIVARIANA

ESCUELA DE EDUCACIÓN Y PEDAGOGÍA

FORMACIÓN AVANZADA

MAESTRÍA EN PROCESOS DE ENSEÑANZA Y APRENDIZAJE DE SEGUNDAS LENGUAS (ML2)

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Trabajo de grado para optar al título de Magister en Procesos de Enseñanza y Aprendizaje de  
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**27 de Junio de 2024**

**Sherlly Montenegro Quintero**

“Declaro que este trabajo de grado no ha sido presentado con anterioridad para optar a un título, ya sea en igual forma o con variaciones, en ésta o en cualquiera otra universidad”. Art. 92, párrafo, Régimen Estudiantil de Formación Avanzada.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sherlly', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Firma del autor

*To my almighty God, and my beloved parents and son.*

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### **Abstract**

This project focuses on integrating 21st-century skills into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning at Jorge Eliécer Gaitán (JEG) School through Project-Based Language Learning (PBLL). Over a span of seven weeks, students engage in activities that enhance their language skills while addressing environmental challenges. The project is structured into three units: Understanding Environmental Challenges, Making a Difference in Our Community, and Leading the Change. Through a combination of classroom activities, discussions, and presentations, students develop their language proficiency and critical thinking abilities. Evaluation methods include formative assessments through continuous monitoring and summative assessments through final presentations. The project aims to not only improve English language skills but also foster a sense of responsibility, leadership, and environmental awareness among students.

**Keywords:** Project-Based Language Learning (PBLL), Motivation, 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills, English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

## Resumen

Este proyecto se centra en la integración de habilidades del siglo XXI en el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera en la I.E. Jorge Eliécer Gaitán a través del Aprendizaje de Lenguas Basado en Proyectos. Durante un período de siete semanas, los estudiantes participan en actividades que mejoran sus habilidades lingüísticas mientras abordan desafíos ambientales. El proyecto se estructura en tres unidades: Comprender los Desafíos Ambientales, Hacer la Diferencia en Nuestra Comunidad y Liderar el Cambio. A través de una combinación de actividades en el aula, discusiones y presentaciones, los estudiantes desarrollan su competencia lingüística y habilidades de pensamiento crítico. Los métodos de evaluación incluyen evaluaciones formativas a través de monitoreo continuo y evaluaciones sumativas a través de presentaciones finales. El proyecto tiene como objetivo no solo mejorar las habilidades del idioma inglés, sino también fomentar un sentido de responsabilidad, liderazgo y conciencia ambiental entre los estudiantes.

**Palabras Clave:** Aprendizaje de Lenguas Basado en Proyectos, Motivación, Habilidades del siglo XXI, Inglés como Lengua Extranjera



## Introduction

In Florencia, Caquetá, Colombia, at Jorge Eliecer Gaitan (JEG) School, eleventh graders with an environmental emphasis face a critical challenge: disengagement from English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Despite its pivotal role in global communication and opportunities, traditional approaches have struggled to resonate with these students, leading to apathy and limited academic engagement. Recognizing the disconnect between academic content and student interests, this proposal, “Green Leaders at JEG School”, emerges as an initiative aimed at revitalizing EFL education through Project-Based Language Learning (PBL).

This project is designed to enhance language proficiency and to cultivate 21st-century skills essential for future success. By integrating environmental themes into the EFL curriculum, “Green Leaders at JEG” seeks to align classroom learning with real-world challenges, fostering a deeper connection between language skills and practical applications. Through structured units focused on understanding environmental challenges, community engagement, and leadership, students will embark on a journey that not only improves their English language abilities but also empowers them as informed leaders in environmental themes.

Moreover, this proposal represents a commitment to inclusive and effective educational practices, aiming to uplift students from socio-economic backgrounds and equip them with skills vital for global citizenship. By embracing PBL, this project endeavors to redefine the educational landscape, promoting engagement, relevance, and sustainability in EFL education. Finally, it seeks to inspire a new generation of motivated, empowered learners who are prepared to tackle local and global challenges with linguistic proficiency, critical thinking, and environmental responsibility.

The integration of PBL within this project not only addresses the immediate issue of disengagement but also aligns with broader educational goals. This methodology emphasizes student-centered learning, where students actively participate in their education through hands-on projects and collaborative activities. This approach is designed to increase student motivation and involvement by connecting academic content to real-world scenarios and practical applications. The focus on environmental themes ensures that students are not only learning English but also understanding its relevance in addressing global environmental issues, thus making their learning experience more meaningful and impactful.

Furthermore, the project acknowledges the unique challenges faced by students from underprivileged backgrounds. By providing tailored teaching methods and innovative learning experiences, “Green Leaders at JEG School” aims to break the cycle of limited opportunities often associated with low socio-economic status. This initiative strives to create an equitable educational environment where all students have access to quality education and the tools necessary for academic and personal success. The project’s emphasis on environmental sustainability also encourages students to become proactive, informed citizens who are capable of making positive contributions to their communities and the world at large.

The proposed project also highlights the importance of teacher involvement and professional development. Teachers at JEG School will be encouraged to adopt PBL and integrate environmental themes into their teaching practices, thereby enhancing their pedagogical skills and contributing to a more dynamic and engaging classroom environment. This professional growth will not only benefit the teachers but also have a lasting impact on the students, as educators become more adept at creating meaningful learning experiences. The collaborative nature of PBL also fosters a sense of community within the classroom, where students and teachers work together towards common goals.

In conclusion, the “Green Leaders at JEG School” project aims to transform the EFL learning experience for eleventh graders with an environmental emphasis. By making language learning relevant, engaging, and practical, the project seeks to reignite students’ interest in English and equip them with the skills needed for future success. The integration of environmental themes serves as a powerful tool for connecting academic content to real-world issues, fostering a sense of responsibility and leadership among students. Through this innovative approach, the project aspires to create a more inclusive and effective educational environment that prepares students to navigate and address the challenges of the 21st century.

### **Justification**

Eleventh graders at JEG School in Florencia, Caquetá have expressed a desire for greater engagement and relevance in their EFL learning experiences. The disconnect between the academic content and their interests, coupled with limited opportunities for practical application, has contributed to a growing disinterest in EFL learning. This project addresses these issues and is important for several reasons. Firstly, this project seeks to align EFL learning with the students' interests, making the content more engaging and relevant. Incorporating PBL connects language skills to real-world scenarios, thus increasing student motivation and involvement. Secondly, this project tackles the growing apathy towards EFL learning by bridging the gap between academic content and practical application. It aims to make language learning more appealing by showing its practical value and relevance to the students' lives. Thirdly, the project considers the unique needs of students from underprivileged backgrounds. By illuminating innovative teaching methods tailored to these needs, it aims to enhance academic performance and break the cycle of limited opportunities associated with low socio-economic status.

Moreover, this project has the potential to guide the EFL education community toward more inclusive and effective teaching practices. By fostering a more equitable educational landscape, it ensures that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to quality education. Furthermore, this project can contribute to implementing a more student-centered and contextually relevant EFL curriculum. It encourages teachers to tailor their teaching approaches to align with the interests and needs of the students, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of EFL teaching. Lastly, by incorporating an environmental emphasis, the project not only enhances educational experiences but also inspires students to engage in sustainable practices. This dual focus on language learning and environmental stewardship prepares students to become proactive, informed citizens.

Additionally, by integrating PBL with environmental themes, this initiative encourages students to see the interconnectedness of global issues and language learning. This holistic approach ensures that students not only improve their English proficiency but also become more aware of and engaged with critical global challenges such as climate change and sustainability. The emphasis on real-world application of language skills helps students to understand the practical

importance of English in addressing these challenges, thus fostering a more profound and meaningful connection to their EFL studies.

Furthermore, the project aims to cultivate essential 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and leadership. These competencies are crucial for students' future success in both academic and professional settings. By participating in group projects, debates, and community initiatives, students will enhance their ability to work collaboratively, think critically about complex problems, and take on leadership roles. These experiences not only enrich their EFL learning but also prepare them to be effective and responsible members of their communities and the broader global society.

All in all, the project's focus on environmental education aligns with broader educational goals of fostering global citizenship and sustainability. By integrating environmental issues into the EFL curriculum, the project encourages students to develop a deeper understanding of and commitment to environmental stewardship. This approach not only enhances their language learning experience but also empowers them to contribute to their communities in meaningful ways, promoting a sense of agency and responsibility towards global environmental challenges.

## Context

The focus of this project lies in the heart of Florencia, Caquetá, Colombia, where Jorge Eliécer Gaitán (JEG) school serves as a public institution dedicated to educating learners from socio-economic strata 1 and 2, operating on a single shift. At the Media level, the school offers four emphases, one of which is environmental. The main challenge within this group of students is the apparent apathy towards EFL learning. Those students have also gained a negative stereotype among the institution due to their low academic performance which leads to a lack of motivation and autonomy among those learners. Furthermore, there is a need to incorporate thematic that fulfill their field of study and interests.

Therefore, the project aims to positively impact the group of students with environmental Emphasis. By aligning EFL education with their environmental interests, the project seeks to boost their enthusiasm for learning English. This alignment is expected to improve their academic performance and language proficiency. Additionally, addressing the negative stereotype associated with their low academic performance, the project aims to foster a sense of accomplishment and self-worth, motivating them to take greater ownership of their learning process. Besides, integrating environmental themes into EFL learning provides practical applications for their language skills, making the learning process more relevant and engaging.

Additionally, the project seeks to address the broader socio-economic challenges faced by students at JEG School. Given that these learners come from lower socio-economic strata, they often have limited access to resources and opportunities that facilitate language learning and academic success. By providing a tailored, interest-driven EFL curriculum, the project not only aims to improve EFL skills but also to equip students with the tools and confidence needed to overcome socio-economic barriers. This holistic approach will help to create a more equitable learning environment, where every student has the chance to succeed and thrive.

Moreover, this initiative recognizes the importance of community involvement and support in enhancing educational outcomes. By engaging students in local environmental projects and campaigns, the project will foster a sense of community pride and responsibility. This involvement will not only improve students' EFL proficiency but also strengthen their ties to their community, encouraging them to become active participants in local development. The

collaboration with community members and local organizations will provide students with real-world experiences and networking opportunities, further enriching their learning experience.

Furthermore, the project's focus on environmental themes aligns with global educational trends that emphasize sustainability and environmental stewardship. By integrating these themes into the EFL curriculum, the project prepares students to be informed and proactive global citizens. This forward-thinking approach ensures that students are not only learning a new language but also developing an understanding of critical global issues and the skills needed to address them. The project's emphasis on environmental education reflects a commitment to preparing students for the challenges of the 21st century, fostering a generation of leaders who are both linguistically proficient and environmentally conscious.

Lastly, the project aims to significantly impact eleventh graders with an environmental emphasis students at JEG School by enhancing their motivation, performance, and self-perception in EFL learning. It will also benefit teachers, school staff, the local educational community, and the broader EFL education community by demonstrating the value of integrating thematic relevance into language learning and teaching.

### **Objective**

This proposal aims to integrate 21st-century skills in EFL learning through Project-Based Language Learning (PBL) with an environmental emphasis for eleventh graders at JEG School in Florencia, Caquetá.

### Contextual Framework

For years, the English subject in secondary and media education institutions has been strengthened by incorporating teachers with appropriate profiles to meet the demands of the Ministry of National Education (MEN) in Colombia. The globalization phenomenon positions English as an essential means of communication for cultural, social, political, and economic exchange. Knowledge learned in the classroom must be applied in different environments to fully develop and socialize the skills learned. Therefore, it is necessary to promote English language learning through extracurricular activities within the institution (Acevedo, Aguilar, Dávila, Montenegro, Santana, 2021).

JEG School's curriculum is viewed as a cultural construction, a method of organizing knowledge and structuring educational practices based on constructivist principles to achieve the Educational Project's objectives. This curriculum integrates axiological, epistemological, pedagogical, anthropological, ontological, and sociocultural principles, aiming to articulate syllabuses, methodologies, didactics, and assessment procedures that enhance the teaching and learning process. The Institutional Educational Project (IEP) adheres to the Curricular Guidelines established by the MEN, my institution's curriculum has been designed to cater to the needs of the different areas of knowledge, the particular needs of the students, and the vision of region and nation to contribute to human and integral formation (Barrionuevo, 2023).

The basic areas of the IEP are ruled by the Curricular Guidelines established by the MEN. In alignment with the MEN guidelines, the English area at JEG School follows the Suggested Curriculum Structure, Basic Learning Rights, and Pedagogical Principles and Guidelines developed to improve students' communication skills in English. Mastery of this language will allow Colombian students and teachers to access scholarships in other countries, enjoy greater mobility, and secure better job opportunities both domestically and internationally (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2016).

The "Green Leaders at JEG school" project aligns with these national and institutional guidelines by aiming to enhance students' motivation, collaboration, and communication skills through PBLL. This project integrates EFL education with environmental themes, making language learning relevant and engaging. It seeks to apply classroom knowledge in practical, real-world



contexts, promoting linguistic and environmental awareness. This project supports the institution's goal of human and integral formation by addressing the specific needs of students and aligning with the broader vision for local development.

Additionally, this project emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary learning by connecting the English curriculum with environmental subjects, thus providing students with a more comprehensive educational experience. The integration of environmental themes into EFL learning not only enhances language acquisition but also deepens students' understanding of critical ecological issues. This interdisciplinary approach reflects the broader educational objectives of JEG School, which aim to foster holistic development by combining academic knowledge with practical, real-world applications.

Furthermore, by adopting PBL, the project promotes active learning and student autonomy, encouraging students to take charge of their educational journeys. PBL requires students to engage in complex tasks that demand critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving, skills that are essential for success in the 21st century. This method contrasts with traditional rote learning techniques, offering a dynamic and interactive classroom environment where students can thrive. It also aligns with contemporary educational theories that advocate for student-centered learning and the development of higher-order thinking skills.

Finally, the "Green Leaders at JEG School" project aims to transform the educational landscape by making learning more meaningful and relevant to students' lives. By aligning with the MEN's curricular guidelines and the institution's educational goals, the project not only enhances English language proficiency but also prepares students to become informed, responsible, and active citizens. This holistic approach ensures that students are well-equipped to face the challenges of the future, both academically and personally, and contributes to the broader goal of sustainable development in the region.

### Conceptual Framework

This proposal involves a series of activities ending in a final product using English. Therefore, the conceptual framework is grounded in several key principles and supported by research and authors.

On the one hand, Project-Based Language Learning (PBLL) is recognized for its effectiveness in language acquisition and learning. Unlike conventional methods, PBLL places students at the heart of the learning process by engaging them in projects that culminate in tangible outcomes. These projects, which range from presentations and reports to performances, offer authentic contexts for language use, making learning both practical and relevant (Beckett & Slater, 2019; Ly, 2019).

PBLL projects are designed to simulate real-world scenarios where language use is essential for achieving tangible outcomes, such as solving a community problem, creating a multimedia presentation, or conducting a research-based inquiry. This approach not only motivates students by providing clear purposes for language learning but also enhances their ability to apply language skills in practical, meaningful ways (Buck Institute for Education, 2021).

Moreover, PBLL is aligned with frameworks emphasizing intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 2020), underscoring its role in fostering broader skills beyond language proficiency (Ghosheh Wahbeh et al., 2021). Research highlights its adaptation in diverse educational contexts, including Colombia, where it is integrated into bilingual education policies aimed at inclusive and sustainable frameworks (Mora et al., 2019). Similarly, international perspectives reveal PBLL's integration into curriculum structures and pedagogical guidelines to enhance English language education (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016).

Furthermore, PBLL's implementation is studied across various global settings, such as Indonesia and China, providing insights into its efficacy and adaptations in different cultural and educational landscapes (Ngadiso et al., 2021; Wang, 2020). These studies emphasize PBLL's versatility and effectiveness in enhancing language acquisition and fostering essential skills for today's interconnected world (Yimwilai, 2020).

All in all, the integration of PBL into language education not only enriches language acquisition but also cultivates critical life skills necessary for students to thrive in a globalized society. By emphasizing authentic, project-based approaches, educators can effectively engage students in meaningful learning experiences that transcend traditional language instruction.

On the other hand, motivation in the context of language learning is a multifaceted construct that serves as the driving force influencing individuals to engage in language-related activities. It is a crucial factor that impacts the depth and sustainability of language acquisition efforts. Motivation can manifest in various forms, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, with its dynamics shaped by factors such as interest, relevance, and perceived competence (Ghosheh Wahbeh et al., 2021; Yimwilai, 2020).

Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal desire and pleasure derived from engaging in an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for external rewards (Ghosheh Wahbeh et al., 2021). Within the context of language learning, intrinsic motivation plays a pivotal role in fostering a genuine interest in the language itself (Yimwilai, 2020). PBL, with its emphasis on real-world applicability and student autonomy, provides a rich ground for the fostering of intrinsic motivation (Ghosheh Wahbeh et al., 2021).

As learners embark on projects with real-life relevance and autonomy in decision-making, they are likely to experience a sense of ownership and personal connection to the language learning process. This aligns with research that suggests intrinsic motivation is positively correlated with learner engagement and persistence (Ghosheh Wahbeh et al., 2021).

Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, involves engaging in activities for external rewards or to avoid punishment. In the EFL context, extrinsic motivation may be driven by factors such as grades, approval from teachers or peers, or the anticipation of future benefits (Yimwilai, 2020). PBL, with its focus on collaborative projects and real-world outcomes, has the potential to integrate extrinsic motivators into the learning process.

For instance, the material outcomes of PBL projects, such as presentations or reports, can serve as external rewards, providing learners with a sense of accomplishment and recognition. The collaborative nature of PBL also introduces social elements that can contribute to extrinsic

motivation, as learners receive feedback and validation from their peers and instructors (Ghosheh Wahbeh et al., 2021).

Motivation is also influenced by a myriad of factors, and PBL creates a unique context where these factors interplay. The relevance of projects to learners' interests, the perceived competence in handling language tasks, and the collaborative nature of PBL contribute to motivational dynamics (Yimwilai, 2020).

All in all, motivation, a cornerstone of effective language learning, is deeply integrated into PBL. The framework acknowledges both intrinsic motivation, arising from personal interest and satisfaction in learning, and extrinsic motivation, driven by external rewards or recognition (Ghosheh Wahbeh et al., 2021; Yimwilai, 2020; Byram, 2020). PBL enhances intrinsic motivation by offering students opportunities to explore topics of personal interest and relevance within their projects, fostering a sense of ownership and autonomy in their learning process. Extrinsic motivation is also bolstered through the recognition students receive for their project achievements, both from peers and teachers, which further encourages engagement and effort (Beckett & Slater, 2019).

Collaboration is another fundamental component of PBL. Projects are typically structured to require students to work collaboratively in teams, where they engage in negotiation, shared decision-making, and joint problem-solving (Mora et al., 2019). This collaborative environment mirrors real-world interactions and prepares students for future professional and social contexts where effective teamwork and communication are essential (Dressler et al., 2019).

Critical thinking skills are naturally developed within PBL as students navigate the complexities of their projects. They are challenged to analyze information, evaluate options, and make informed decisions throughout the project lifecycle (Wang, 2020; Rico-Troncoso, 2018). This process not only enhances their problem-solving abilities but also encourages them to think critically about language use, structure, and meaning in different contexts, thereby deepening their understanding and application of linguistic concepts.

Leadership opportunities abound in PBL as well. Students are encouraged to take on leadership roles within their project teams, where they may delegate tasks, facilitate discussions, and coordinate project progress (Mora et al., 2019). This experience fosters skills such as initiative,

effective communication, and adaptability—qualities that are invaluable in both academic and professional settings.

Communication skills, arguably the central focus of language learning, are thoroughly developed within PBL. Students engage in authentic language use as they collaborate with peers, present their findings, and communicate their ideas effectively (Ngadiso et al., 2021; Rico-Troncoso, 2018). This active engagement in meaningful communication tasks not only improves their language fluency and accuracy but also prepares them to interact confidently and competently in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

In conclusion, PBL represents a comprehensive and effective approach to language education that integrates motivation, collaboration, critical thinking, leadership, and communication skills. By grounding learning in authentic tasks and real-world applications, PBL ensures that language acquisition is not just theoretical but practical and relevant to students' lives (Buck Institute for Education, 2021; Ly, 2019; Byram, 2020).

This framework is supported by a growing body of research demonstrating its positive impact on language learners' motivation, proficiency, and overall educational outcomes. As educational landscapes continue to evolve, PBL stands as a beacon of innovation in language education, offering a transformative approach that prepares students to thrive in an interconnected global society.

Finally, PBL integrates motivation, collaboration, critical thinking, leadership, and communication skills into a cohesive approach to language learning. By emphasizing authentic contexts, social interaction, and meaningful outcomes, PBL provides a holistic and effective framework for language education (Buck Institute for Education, 2021; Ly, 2019; Byram, 2020).

## **Class Project**

### **Definition**

“Green Leaders at JEG School” is a project-based learning proposal tailored for eleventh graders within the EFL curriculum. Rooted in environmental themes, this program aims to enrich learning experiences by integrating essential 21st-century skills. The project enhances language proficiency and instills sustainable practices and global citizenship among students by focusing on environmental challenges and community engagement.

Throughout the seven-week proposal, students engage in structured activities designed to develop critical language skills while addressing real-world environmental issues. Unit 1, “Understanding Environmental Challenges”, empowers students to articulate opinions, describe problems, and propose solutions using present tenses. This foundational unit lays the groundwork for effective communication and comprehension of environmental concepts.

In Unit 2, “Making a Difference in Our Community”, students apply their language skills to practical scenarios, such as organizing environmental campaigns and writing instructional guides. This unit emphasizes the use of past tenses and encourages students to take proactive roles in community initiatives, fostering a sense of responsibility and leadership.

Unit 3, “Leading the Change”, challenges students to research global environmental policies, engage in formal debates, and present findings using future tenses. By hypothesizing about future scenarios and advocating for sustainable development, students develop critical thinking skills and prepare to be informed leaders in environmental stewardship.

The end of the project involves students showcasing their learning through presentations, demonstrating proficiency in expressing opinions, reporting events, giving instructions, persuading, presenting information, debating, and hypothesizing. “Green Leaders at JEG School” thus stands as an initiative that integrates language learning with environmental awareness, equipping students with the tools and knowledge to lead impactful change in their community and beyond.

### **Components**

This project focuses on three dynamic units aimed at empowering students through language and environmental awareness. Firstly, students explore practical language skills such as expressing opinions, describing issues like pollution and deforestation, and discussing solutions. They enhance their grammar and vocabulary, mastering present simple and continuous tenses while expanding their environmental vocabulary. Secondly, students learn practical language functions such as reporting events, giving instructions, and persuading others to take action. They refine their past simple and continuous tenses and explore vocabulary related to community actions and environmental campaigns. Finally, students develop skills in presenting information, debating complex topics, and hypothesizing about future scenarios. They practice future tenses and acquire vocabulary essential for understanding global environmental policies and leadership. Through interactive activities and projects, students strengthen their language abilities and emerge as informed advocates capable of catalyzing positive change locally and globally.

### ***Unit 1: Understanding Environmental Challenges***

**Language Functions.** Students will explore the practical uses of language in everyday communication, learning how to effectively perform tasks.

**Expressing opinions.** Students will learn how to articulate their views on various environmental issues, using phrases like “I believe that...”, “In my opinion...”, and “It seems to me that...” to engage in meaningful discussions.

**Describing problems.** Students will practice describing environmental problems, emphasis will be placed on practicing descriptive language to articulate environmental challenges such as pollution and deforestation, using descriptive language and specific details.

**Discussing solutions.** Students will engage in conversations about potential solutions to environmental issues, employing phrases like “One solution could be...”, “We might consider...”, and “A possible answer is...” to explore actionable ideas.

**Grammar and Vocabulary.** Students will deepen their understanding of grammar and vocabulary, enhancing their ability to construct accurate sentences and expanding their lexicon for more effective communication in English.

**Present simple and continuous.** Emphasis on using present simple for general truths and present continuous for ongoing actions. For example, “Pollution affects many cities” (present simple) vs. “People are recycling more these days” (present continuous).

**Environmental vocabulary.** Students will expand their vocabulary with terms such as pollution, deforestation, litter, recycling, sustainability, climate change, and renewable energy, enhancing their ability to discuss environmental topics effectively.

**Activities.** Students will engage in a variety of interactive activities designed to enhance their language skills.

**Discussion groups.** Small groups discussing various environmental challenges, sharing personal experiences, and expressing opinions using newly learned vocabulary.

**Vocabulary building.** Students will participate in exercises and games designed to expand their vocabulary related to the environment, such as matching terms with definitions and creating word maps.

**Problem-solution brainstorming.** Students will identify environmental problems and propose viable solutions, using learned language functions and grammar to articulate their ideas clearly.

## **Unit 2: Making a Difference in Our Community**

**Language Functions.** Students will learn how to use language practically in everyday situations, gaining skills to perform tasks effectively.

**Reporting events.** Students will narrate past events accurately, using appropriate sequencing and details. Phrases like “Last week, we organized...”, “The event took place...”, and “It was a success because...”.

**Giving instructions.** Students will learn how to give clear and concise instructions, useful for organizing community actions. Phrases such as “First, you need to...”, “Next, make sure to...”, and “Finally, don't forget to...”.

**Persuading.** Students will develop persuasive language skills to encourage others to take action, using phrases like “I urge you to...”, “It's important to...”, and “You should consider...”.



**Grammar and Vocabulary.** Students will enhance their grasp of grammar and vocabulary, improving their ability to form precise sentences and broadening their vocabulary for more effective communication in English.

**Past simple and past continuous.** Students will use the past simple for completed actions and past continuous for ongoing actions in the past. For example, “We cleaned the park” (past simple) vs. “While we were cleaning the park, we found...” (past continuous).

**Vocabulary related to community actions and environmental campaigns.** Words and phrases such as volunteering, campaign, supporter, community service, awareness, and impact.

**Activities.** Students will participate in a couple of interactive activities aimed at improving their language skills.

**Environmental Campaign.** Students will create materials such as brochures, posters, and murals to raise awareness about local environmental issues and encourage community involvement. This activity will involve planning the campaign, designing the materials, and distributing them in the community.

**Role-playing.** Students will act out scenarios related to community actions, such as organizing a cleanup or starting a recycling program, to practice giving instructions and persuading others. Instructional writing, writing step-by-step guides or instructions for community initiatives, focusing on clarity and use of imperative verbs.

### **Unit 3: Leading the Change**

**Language Functions.** Students will explore how language is applied in everyday communication, acquiring skills to proficiently carry out various tasks.

**Presenting information.** Students will present researched information, using clear structure and engaging language. Phrases like “According to the data...”, “Experts show that...”, and “It's evident that...”.

**Debating.** Students will learn the skills of formal debate, including constructing arguments, counterarguments, and using evidence to support points. Phrases such as “I strongly believe that...”, “On the other hand...”, and “In conclusion...”.

**Hypothesizing.** Students will practice hypothesizing about future scenarios and the potential impact of various actions. Phrases like “If we continue to...”, “It's possible that...”, and “We might see...”.

**Grammar and Vocabulary.** Students will broaden their grasp of grammar and vocabulary, improving their sentence construction accuracy and enlarging their word bank for more effective communication in English.

**Future tenses (will, going to).** Students will use future simple for predictions and decisions made at the moment, and “going to” for planned actions. For example, “We will reduce emissions” (future simple) vs. “We are going to start a new initiative” (going to).

**Vocabulary related to global environmental policies and leadership.** Terms such as policy, regulation, sustainable development, carbon footprint, renewable resources, and global cooperation.

**Activities.** Students will participate in different interactive activities aimed at improving their language skills.

**Search information.** Students will search for information on global environmental policies, leaders in environmental activism, and innovative solutions online, compiling their findings into reports.

**Debates.** Students will participate in structured debates on topics such as renewable energy vs. fossil fuels, the effectiveness of international agreements, and the role of government vs. individual action in addressing environmental issues.

**Presentations.** Students will create and deliver online presentations on chosen environmental topics, proposing solutions using visual aids, data, and persuasive language to inform and convince their audience.

Towards the end, students will have embraced the intersection of language learning and environmental awareness, developing crucial skills in communication, critical thinking, and advocacy. From articulating opinions on environmental challenges to organizing community initiatives and debating global policies, each student has expanded their vocabulary, mastered diverse grammatical structures, and honed their ability to express ideas with clarity and conviction

in English. As they continue to apply these skills beyond the classroom, we are confident that they will play an integral role in shaping a more sustainable and interconnected world.

### **Methodology**

The project will span seven weeks and be divided into three units, each lasting about two weeks, with the final week dedicated to project presentations and evaluations. In the initial two weeks, Unit 1 focuses on “Understanding Environmental Challenges”. Students will enhance their ability to express opinions, describe problems, and discuss solutions related to environmental issues. Through activities like discussion groups, vocabulary-building exercises, and problem-solution brainstormings, they will practice using present simple and continuous tenses. This unit emphasizes expanding vocabulary with terms like pollution, deforestation, and sustainability, laying a strong foundation for environmental discourse.

Moving into weeks 3 and 4, Unit 2, “Making a Difference in Our Community”, shifts focus to reporting past events, giving instructions, and developing persuasive skills. Students will engage in creating environmental campaigns, role-playing scenarios, and instructional writing. These activities will help them practice past simple and past continuous tenses while expanding their vocabulary related to community actions and environmental campaigns. By involving students in practical tasks like organizing cleanups and writing step-by-step guides, this unit aims to foster a sense of community involvement and responsibility.

The final segment, Unit 3, “Leading the Change”, spans weeks 5 and 6, where students will learn to present researched information, debate formally, and hypothesize about future scenarios. Activities include searching for information on global environmental policies, engaging in structured debates, and delivering presentations on environmental topics. This unit focuses on using future tenses for predictions and planned actions, with vocabulary covering global policies, sustainable development, and leadership. The culmination of the project in week 7 includes review sessions and final project presentations, where students consolidate their learning and showcase their comprehensive understanding of environmental issues, demonstrating improved language skills through well-structured and engaging presentations.

By the end of the 7-week project, students will have developed 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills while significantly improving their English language skills in expressing opinions, reporting events, giving instructions, persuading, presenting information, debating, and hypothesizing.

### **Evaluation**

The evaluation framework for this project draws on principles of PBL as outlined by various educational scholars. PBL integrates formative and summative assessments to comprehensively gauge student progress and achievement (Beckett & Slater, 2019; Buck Institute for Education, 2021). Formative assessment methods include continuous monitoring of student participation and progress during classroom activities, enabling ongoing feedback to guide and enhance learning outcomes (Yimwilai, 2020). This approach aligns with the PBL strategy of using ongoing feedback to support student learning (Ngadiso et al., 2021).

Observations will play a crucial role in assessing students' engagement and providing personalized feedback to improve their skills (Ly, 2019). Additionally, peer reviews will foster a collaborative environment where constructive feedback enhances learning (Ghosheh Wahbeh et al., 2021). This reflects PBL emphasis on collaborative learning and feedback mechanisms (Wang, 2020).

Summative assessment will primarily occur through final presentations where students showcase their environmental solutions (Dressler et al., 2019). These presentations will evaluate content accuracy, language use, and presentation delivery, assessing students' knowledge and communication skills in English (Byram, 2020). Written assignments such as brainstorming, brochures, posters, and murals will be graded using detailed rubrics that specify criteria for content, creativity, and adherence to guidelines (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016).

Moreover, participation and engagement throughout the project will be evaluated, emphasizing students' involvement in discussions, role-playing activities, and debates (Rico-Troncoso, 2018). This approach ensures holistic assessment, aligning with the PBL approach goal of cultivating 21st-century skills like collaboration and critical thinking (Mora et al., 2019).

To ensure fairness and clarity in assessment, detailed rubrics and checklists will be employed, guiding the evaluation of all project components and ensuring students stay on task

and meet deadlines (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016). Additionally, self-assessment forms will be used to encourage students to reflect on their learning experiences, identify strengths, areas for improvement, and develop self-awareness (Beckett & Slater, 2019).

This holistic approach to evaluation not only aims to enhance students' EFL skills but also to foster broader competencies such as environmental responsibility, aligning with global educational goals (Ghosheh Wahbeh et al., 2021). By incorporating diverse assessment strategies rooted in PBL principles, this project seeks to prepare students for future academic and personal success (Yimwilai, 2020).

All in all, the evaluation strategies outlined integrate insights from various sources on PBLL, ensuring a robust and effective assessment framework that supports student learning and development in an EFL context (Ngadiso et al., 2021; Wang, 2020). This approach not only aligns with educational best practices but also contributes to the cultivation of key competencies needed in today's globalized world (Rico-Troncoso, 2018).

## **Contributions**

Upon successful implementation of the project “Green Leaders at JEG School”, eleventh graders with an environmental emphasis are expected to achieve several significant outcomes.

### **Enhanced English Proficiency**

The implementation of Project-Based Language Learning (PBLL) with a focus on environmental issues aims to enhance the English proficiency of eleventh graders at JEG School (Beckett & Slater, 2019; Wang, 2020). PBLL engages students in authentic language use by integrating language learning with meaningful projects. Research indicates that such approaches not only improve grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills but also deepen understanding and retention (Ly, 2019; Yimwilai, 2020). By applying language skills to real-world environmental challenges, students are likely to demonstrate more advanced language proficiency across all language domains.

### **Increased Student Engagement and Motivation**

Aligning the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum with students’ interests, particularly through environmental themes, has been shown to significantly increase student engagement and motivation (Ghosheh Wahbeh et al., 2021). This approach taps into students’ intrinsic motivation when they see the relevance of their studies to pressing global issues like sustainability (Rico-Troncoso, 2018). Studies suggest that project-based approaches foster deeper learning and higher levels of student involvement compared to traditional classroom methods (Buck Institute for Education, 2021). Moreover, sustained engagement in meaningful projects cultivates a sense of ownership and responsibility among students towards their learning outcomes (Rico-Troncoso, 2018).

### **Development of 21st-Century Skills**

The project will also promote the development of essential 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and leadership (Dressler et al., 2019; Ngadiso et al., 2021). These skills are vital for students to navigate complex challenges in both their academic and future professional lives. Project-based learning environments encourage students to take initiative, work autonomously, and develop innovative solutions to real-world problems (Dressler

et al., 2019). By engaging in collaborative activities that require decision-making and negotiation, students not only strengthen their academic competencies but also enhance their readiness for the dynamic demands of the modern workforce (Ngadiso et al., 2021).

### **Greater Awareness and Commitment to Environmental Sustainability**

An important goal of the project is to cultivate a sense of environmental responsibility among students (Beckett & Slater, 2019). Through hands-on exploration of environmental issues and solutions, students develop a deeper understanding of sustainability challenges facing their communities and the world (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016). This awareness fosters a commitment to adopting and promoting sustainable practices both locally and globally. Research suggests that experiential learning opportunities like those provided by PBL are effective in fostering pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors among students (Wang, 2020).

### **Strengthened Community and Global Connections**

The project includes activities designed to connect students not only within their local community but also globally (Yimwilai, 2020). By participating in collaborative projects and exchanges with peers from different cultural backgrounds, students broaden their perspectives and deepen their understanding of global issues (Ngadiso et al., 2021). These interactions promote cultural sensitivity and empathy, essential qualities for effective global citizenship in today's interconnected world (Byram, 2020). Moreover, engaging in joint projects with international counterparts enhances students' communication skills in multicultural settings, preparing them to navigate diverse professional environments in the future (Yimwilai, 2020).

### **Positive Impact on the School's Educational Landscape**

Successful implementation of this project will contribute to creating a more equitable and inclusive educational environment at JEG School (Beckett & Slater, 2019). By offering personalized learning experiences that resonate with students' interests and needs, the project supports the school's commitment to student-centered education (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016). This approach not only enhances academic outcomes but also fosters a sense of belonging and community among students, promoting their holistic development as responsible and engaged citizens (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016).

## Conclusion

The project “Green Leaders at JEG School” embodies a transformative approach to education by integrating language learning with environmental awareness, aimed at eleventh graders within an EFL curriculum. Over seven weeks, students engage deeply with environmental challenges, enhancing their language proficiency while developing essential 21st-century skills (Beckett & Slater, 2019; Buck Institute for Education, 2021). Through structured units focused on understanding environmental issues, making community impacts, and leading change, students not only refine their language abilities but also cultivate a profound sense of environmental responsibility and global citizenship (Ghosheh Wahbeh et al., 2021).

The project’s methodology, rooted in Project-Based Language Learning (PBL), ensures students apply language skills authentically in activities such as community campaigns and global policy debates (Dressler et al., 2019; Ly, 2019). The comprehensive evaluation framework supports ongoing student development, balancing formative assessments with summative evaluations that highlight growth in language proficiency and critical thinking (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016).

By aligning educational objectives with students’ interests in sustainability, “Green Leaders at JEG School” not only enhances academic outcomes but also fosters a lasting commitment to environmental stewardship and community engagement (Ngadiso et al., 2021). As students continue to apply their skills beyond the classroom, they are prepared to become informed leaders capable of catalyzing positive change locally (Byram, 2020; Wang, 2020).

Moreover, this project exemplifies a forward-thinking educational approach that prepares students to navigate complex global challenges with empathy, creativity, and resilience, contributing to a more sustainable and interconnected world (Rico-Troncoso, 2018; Yimwilai, 2020). By empowering students as “Green Leaders”, the project not only enhances their language proficiency but also nurtures critical life skills essential for their future success and community impact.

All in all, this project will provide a holistic learning experience that not only improves students’ English language skills but also introduces a deep sense of environmental responsibility and a commitment to sustainable practices. The integration of formative and summative



assessments will ensure continuous feedback and a comprehensive evaluation of students' progress, leading to meaningful and lasting educational outcomes (Ghosheh Wahbeh et al., 2021).

Furthermore, students will emerge as motivated, collaborative, critical thinkers and leaders, ready to tackle environmental challenges both within their school community and beyond. Finally, this proposal expects to transform the EFL learning experience for environmental-emphasis eleventh graders at JEG School, making it more engaging, relevant, and aligned with 21st-century educational goals (Beckett & Slater, 2019; Wang, 2020).

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