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New Skills with Project-Based Learning

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"Through PBL, students engage in learning that is deep, long-lasting, and relevant to the challenges of their lives and the world they will inherit." – PBLworks.org

Teaching Tina needs to train new hires on her team, and heard about a technique called **Project-Based Learning**. However, she isn't sure what it means or how to try it with her team.

What is Project-Based Learning (PBL)?

Remember the first time you wanted to use a spreadsheet for anything other than making a list? Functions and formulas and pivot tables... Oh my! **Some people can learn by reading the Help page, but others can't, and it's never a "fun" way to learn anyway.** But what if you could improve your spreadsheet skills by [creating a budget for your family](#) or [managing a project](#) at work?

In traditional teaching methods, teachers lecture on a topic and learners memorize facts.

With PBL, you learn by completing real-world, engaging projects that are meaningful to you.

E.g., organizing sales data to learn how to write spreadsheet formulas. Not only will you **apply what you've learned right away**, but you're more likely to remember the required steps since you've followed them in a real use case.

Who is PBL for? Not just for learning in formal classrooms or a local conference room!

Teams, local or remote, can use it on real-world distributed projects, which will also **improve soft skills like collaboration, communication, and critical thinking.**

How do I get started?

1. **Assess prior knowledge.** Tina's team **doesn't need to be well versed** in spreadsheets to get started with PBL, **but they might need foundational skills**, like knowing how to write formulas, before moving on to [pivot tables](#).
2. **Choose a skill that meets the needs.** It's more motivating for people to work on projects they care about. Create projects that are **personally or professionally meaningful to learners.**
3. **Encourage regular feedback.** In the classroom, teachers act as **facilitators**; online, there might be **discussion boards or office hours** for learners to ask questions of each other or to seek evaluations on their work. Pursue **natural feedback**, too: if learners are building a game to learn a programming language, they should run it at frequent intervals to check for errors in their code. Any feedback can be used for project improvements.



What are some examples of lessons using PBL?

Glad you asked! Get started right away with these lessons for improving proficiency at work:

[Plan effective meetings](#)

[Brainstorm ideas in a group](#)

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