The Enactment of Radio Drama Project-Based Learning in an Online Practicum Class: A Reflective Practice

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Abstract. Studies on Project based learning (PjBL) has been widely conducted worldwide. It has also been theoretically and practically well-documented in a myriad of publications. However, little discussed the reflective practice done by a lecturer on PjBL done during online teaching. This paper reports a reflective practice of a 10-week practicum teaching experience through PjBL in English practicum class. Serving a role as facilitator, the authors aided students to improve students' language skills into a PjBL activity in the form of radio drama project. This on ongoing PjBL activity has been done for two years consecutively at the time online learning was stipulated by the government. This activity was implemented in one credit practicum class conducted separately from the main class focusing on improving students' language skills while helping them enacting their creativity through radio drama project as their PBL task in the face of pandemic situation. Strengthened by related theories and research back-ups, the authors made use of reflective field notes to have a closer look on the practice done. This technique is worth considering as of possible alternatives of providing online creative and engaging activity during pandemic. Further, this reflective practice can be useful for English lecturers as example on how to do self-reflection in teaching for evaluating their own teaching.

Keywords: reflective practice; PBL; radio drama; online teaching and learning; language skills practicum.

1 Introduction

It is not a novel idea to employ technology in the classroom, and in these time of pandemics, it is especially helpful for teachers. However, in the case of pandemic situation like now when all teaching and learning are suddenly force to move from face-to-face teaching to online teaching, it unavoidably raised challenges for students, teacher educators, and professional development providers, as well as policymakers [1]. For some teachers for example this changes tremendously create a shock for they have not been familiar with full online teaching

previously. To deal with this situation, various types of information technology are used and they are proven to be very useful for teachers enabling them to quickly learn and adapt their teaching and learning management to cope with this unprecedented situation [2].

This pandemic should not hinder the teaching and learning activities for teachers can make use of the technology to keep students learning in a distance. This is because teachers as agents of change are demanded to cope with all of the teaching problems by inquiring and applying appropriate instructional strategies to maintain and guarantee teaching quality [3]. The belief underlying this is that a qualified teacher should be more than a technician who can achieve a list of standardized competencies [4]. Furthermore, teachers were obliged to swiftly acquire and change their teaching and learning management strategies in order to deal with this unexpected scenario [2]. As a result of the move from traditional face-to-face classrooms to fully online classrooms, teachers are forced to include technology or ICT aspects into their classrooms in order for technology to assist them in enhancing student engagement [5].

In response to the implementation of full online teaching during pandemic, a number of studies have been reported. Most of the previous studies concern on challenges during pandemic and how educators respond to it [6]; [7]; [8]; [9] and how to run on effective instruction model of online learning in the time of COVID-19 [10]; [11]; [12]. So far, the authors have concerned, studies exploring how teachers reflect their teaching particularly teaching and learning during pandemic situation remain underexplored. Despite the fact that reflective practice has become a prominent paradigm and has been acknowledged in language teacher education research (c), there is not any report regarding empirical evidence showcasing how EFL teachers reflect their online teaching and learning in the pandemic situation.

The reflective study concerning online teaching is considered very much of importance considering the fact that critical reflection made by teachers during their reflective practice may enhance their awareness of teaching, allow for a greater understanding of teaching variables, and prompt constructive changes in their practice. Reflective teaching could function as an assessment tool for teachers in finding out what is happening, why it happens, and what should be done next time in order to promote learning [13]. Positive feedback and experiences gotten during reflective practice are expected to be able to be a resourceful knowledge as well as one of the best practices which other teachers can go with to improve their teaching practice and improve their students' English competence. Reflection is essential in converting traditional teacher education into exploratory teacher learning. Furthermore, student teachers' comments are jam-packed with information about their experiences as they learn to teach. This information will be useful in the future when planning and producing better training courses.

In English Department of Universitas Brawijaya, a practicum session is the addition session adhered to the main 2-credits regular meeting of all English language skills subject covering Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. The practicum has come to be recognized as one of the important elements in English language learning aiming at giving students sort of reinforcement on the subject they have during the main session. During the pandemic, the practicum session is aimed at engaging students in more creative activities which can improve their language skills. A drama radio project is decided to be a classroom project to be performed at ECUTION (English Cultural Exhibition), organized by the English Student

Association (ESA) of English Department of Universitas Brawijaya. This event aims to introduce both local and Target language (TL) cultural content through English drama performances. This is one of the annual activities help by Study Program of English Literature (SPEL) Faculty of Cultural Studies (FCS) Universitas Brawijaya (UB) through a Student Orientation program every year called the English Cultural Exhibition (ECUTION). This program is one of the ways of introducing both local and target language culture to the freshman entering English department. This program requires freshmen of English department to perform live drama performance each year on stage. Drama is chosen other than other types of cultural activities because drama is considered as activities which aims at strengthening students' speaking skill and it is deemed true that learners will learn better if they are in a group [14]. This activity can help students to overcome their shyness, fears and anxiety. Furthermore, through drama performance, learners can listen and practice phrases that are used in speech acts [14]. Considering Covid-19 pandemic where teaching and learning are conducted online, the intention of performing live drama is impossible. However, with the help of technology, the live drama can be changed into radio drama which can be seen together via zoom platform. The rationale of choosing radio drama as one of the ways to introduce both local and target language culture concerns with the fact that drama is an important tool to help the teacher in addressing the target language in an involved, communicative and contextualized manner. Drama is usually performed on a stage and having audiences see it in the form of performance.

This present study aims to fill in the gap by showcasing a reflective practice of the first authors' 10-week teaching experience in English language skills practicum class. The reflection concerns on the benefits of PjBL of radio drama and how students perceive the practice. This teaching model is expected to give a good model to other teachers on how to implement radio drama project as one of the forms of PBL activity chosen during COVID-19 pandemic to enact students' competence in four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

2 Literature Review

2.1 The Importance of Reflective Practice for Language Teachers

Given that the purpose of this study is to examine reflective practice in relation to an English language practicum conducted by an EFL instructor, we felt it was necessary to present some theoretical frameworks to contextualize this study. The term reflection, and hence reflective practice, is used throughout the literature to describe practices ranging from assessing a particular aspect of a lesson to considering the ethical, social, and political consequences of teaching practice [15]. Reflection, according to Richards and Lockhart [16], "entails examining educational experiences as a basis for evaluation and decision making, as well as a source of change" (p. 4). These ideas led the researchers realize the importance of reflection for teachers who implement various educational techniques in the classroom. The development of a reflective practice discourse owes much to the work of Dewey and Schon, who both advocated for the integration of experience with reflection and theory with practice [17].

Reflective practice is widely recognized as an important component of the teaching and learning process [18]. Reflective practice is becoming one of the ways for enhancing teachers' professional standards since it helps them cultivate the discipline of systematic reflection on their work. According to Cole and Knowles, the purpose of reflective practice is to think critically about oneself, one's assumptions, and one's teaching decisions and behaviours [19]. While not all teachers will become critically reflective educators, it is a worthwhile goal to strive for throughout one's professional career.

2.2 The Role of Project Based Learning (PjBL) in Online Learning

Project-based learning (PjBL) is one educational method to promote students' critical thinking that emphasizes on improving students' ability to analyze, think critically, and communicate their arguments or ideas [20]. PjBL prioritizes a student-driven learning model; encouraging the students to encounter the central concept and principles of a discipline [21]. PjBL also encourages students to widen their horizons by encouraging real-world learning, inspiring them, and assisting them in improving their problem-solving and argumentation skills [22]. Students will do 4R, or reading, writing, arithmetic, and reasoning, as they finish their projects. Students' language skills can be improved by these activities because they must first acquire their knowledge by reading materials before they can create a project. When students work together to create a project, they can solve problems by reasoning, compute results or data using arithmetic, and finally write a report that supports their current and future talents [23].

When PjBL model is integrated into online learning, it can motivate learners to collaborate and discuss their concept and project for it is focused on student-centered providing discussion of existing problems in the real world that require given solutions on a project. Here PjBL in the form of radio drama can be considered as one of the strategies teachers use to give more individual attention to students during online interaction which it can be conceived of as scaffolding which is, from a sociocultural standpoint, seen as essential for promoting language learning among learners in the online environment [24]. As online learning is lack of engagement for physical interaction is limited, PjBL can be one of the solutions to get the students engage in learning [25].

3 Methodology

This reflective practice is the first authors' reflection on repeated self-observation of the online teaching practicum; consequently, it is rather subjective in nature. In the English class practicum, the first author collected the data and began to write her own reflective journal based on her 10 weeks teaching practicum. This practicum provides authentic task under the idea of project-based learning is prepared to encourage students to use their diverse backgrounds and capital for active and creative students. The activities students underwent during ten-week practicum are (1) learning target culture while learning foreign language, (2) learning the art of script drafts writing, (3) joining radio drama scripts writing workshop, (4) writing radio drama script, (5) editing drama radio scripts, (6) having seminar on script reading, (7) practicing reading scripts according to mood and tone, (8) having a rehearsal on radio drama (9) recording, and editing assistance on radio drama product. At the end of practicum, the author reflects her teaching by asking them randomly on what they formerly do

not know and what they finally know after joining the session through unstructured interview and questionnaire to reveal their perception on the activities they have conducted. Reflective field notes were made to ensure whether students have shown improvements on the four language skills. As this reflective study is deemed to be a subjective evaluation, peer debriefing activity with colleagues were made up to avoid possible bias she has made along the narrative writing. Feedbacks were given to the authors of the present study to enhance the trustworthiness of the report.

3.1 Participants and Setting

The participants are twenty undergraduate students belonging to 2022 cohort. A class of 20 members were assigned to produce a radio drama project in practicum class. The radio drama group has 1 (one) director, 9 (nine) actors, 5 (five) editors, and 5 (five) script writers. The members were working together to make the project comes to reality. The radio drama project was chosen as a media to enact students' competence on those four language skills during pandemic era when having face to face or live performance is impossible. One practicum class is handled by an English lecturer and two teaching assistants who help the teacher throughout the practicum session.

Each student was responsible to make their best in accordance to the role they were assigned. The roles students have enabled the students to improve their four language skills in English as they were all involved in the activity of listening to the drama script, speaking the drama script, reading the drama script, and writing the drama script. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, all the activities in the practicum sessions were done online through Zoom video conference platform and WhatsApp group.

4 Results

The reflection deals with the benefits on the implementation of PjBL radio drama and the students' perception regarding the practice in the English online practicum. The results will be chronologically presented as follows:

4.1 The Benefits on the Enactment of PjBL Radio Drama

There are several advantages the students get from the practice. Reflecting on reflective field notes made by both lecturer and students along with the students' questionnaire result the lecturers started to make basis of analysis. When joining the online English practicum class facilitated with project-based learning radio drama activity, students were found to have several benefits.

Improved Four Language Skills. Students' four language skills improved during the practice. This is in line with the primary aims of this program namely improving students' four language skills. Several excerpts of students' and lecturer's reflective field notes clarify this.

Excerpt 1: *"I really enjoy this online drama making project. Although I prefer real drama on stage, I am grateful that technology can still keep us connected. Practice with*

friends makes my English skills improve, especially speaking. Practicing English in a real-life context like in drama is very much necessary for English department students like us. This project is very enlightening for it provides us chances to learn about ICT and apply our knowledge of English at the same time."

Excerpt 2: *"In my opinion, this radio drama is an innovation in responding to the pandemic. From here I learned a lot about how to write a good drama script, a valuable knowledge of course. So learning is not monotonous about the grammar book, but you can learn grammar from mistakes when writing drama scripts too."*

Excerpt 3: *"I see students benefit a lot from this program. They learn to write with good grammar and learn how to pronounce some words that are sometimes wrong and are justified by other members. The creativity they show is marvellous even beyond what I have imagined so far. It's a fun and not monotonous work collaboration and team work is very much needed here, which of course can support their language skills getting better."*

The above excerpts showed that this online radio drama project really helps students' improvement on their language skill for in reality, however, studying English does not necessarily focus on syntactic accuracy or competency in grammar usage. Instead, giving opportunities to students to use as much English as they can in real life contexts should be critically considered [26] especially for Indonesian EFL students who have limited chances not only to be exposed to native English speakers, but also the opportunity to use English in their real life settings. To deal with this challenge, online radio drama which is combined into PjBL is considered as an appropriate English teaching and learning method in the time of pandemic which can encourage students to use language with an emphasis on communicative purposes in real world settings, while also pay attention to the accuracy of the language they use. In PjBL Students have opportunities to use several skills (e.g., creativity, teamwork, as well as language) at different work stages, so the work and language skills are developed [27]. Moreover, when they carried out the project, the students considered it was appropriate for the course since they could apply both their knowledge of Information technology and the English abilities they obtained in English class. They discovered that the initiative can assist them in becoming more conscious of their own English abilities and in improving their English skills in real-life situations.

In addition, the result of students' questionnaire showed that students got lots of advantages from the radio drama play throughout the practicum session. They (61%) stated that their speaking skill is tremendously improve for they had been involved in a number of online practices to prepare for the radio drama performance. The speaking skills here also entails aspects like gaining better pronunciation, accents, fluency, and word stress. They stated that having a radio drama project enabled them to get more opportunity to practice though it is via online but still it is just like a real social life situation. In students are required to actively participate in a group or individual project (PjBL). This method is beneficial for students who want to improve their speaking confidence as well as their sense of responsibility and autonomy. PjBL, as one of the student-centered techniques, attempts to improve students' language skills, particularly speaking, by providing a pleasant environment. Other language skills are also improving like reading (24%), Writing (12%) and listening (3%). Making a drama script required them to browse and read some available drama scripts as references for their upcoming drama project they would like to have. Other than that, writing skill for drama

writing is very much needed for they frequently deal with mistakes on grammar, choosing the right diction and sentence construction. The depiction of the four language skill improvement can be viewed from the following chart.
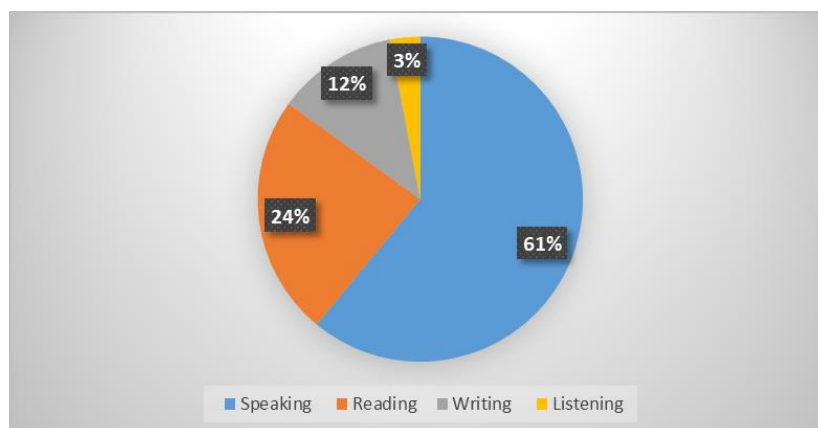

Fig. 1. The improvement on 4 language skills.

Improved Autonomy and Collaborative Skills. Through this PjBL students are required to actively participate in a group work and this method is surely beneficial for students as it can enhance their self-confidence as well as their sense of responsibility and autonomy. PjBL, as one of the student-centered techniques is evidenced to be able to improve students' language skills, particularly speaking in such a pleasant environment. In an online learning situation, PjBL is really meaningful because it can be supported by a digital environment which provides numerous resources and promotes collaborative learning activity. The success of PjBL in online practicum class is needed to be reflected to shed a light on alternatives ways on how to keep students active.

Through this project, students developed skills as both collaborators and leaders. PjBL brings forth the opportunity for authentic communication with a shared goal. The lecturer described how students embraced this opportunity.

Excerpt 4: *"I see the students are becoming more and more independent in carrying out this project. Their togetherness in the team and the cooperation they show indicate that online is not an obstacle for them to be able to work well in teams. In addition to collaboration, this project also teaches them to be independent in learning on their own about content knowledge about radio drama, which not all of them can get in class."*

Excerpt 5: *"This project increases my curiosity because this task makes me just browse a lot of sources about drama, how to present a good drama show, especially since it's online so I have to read a lot."*

Excerpt 6: *"Even though we are online, we can work together and collaborate well in completing tasks even though we don't meet face to face. I'm very grateful for the technology that makes this possible during a pandemic when meeting up in class isn't possible. The process we went through was not easy, mainly because everything had to be communicated indirectly, but we enjoyed the process."*

Improved Engagement. Referring to Reeve and Tseng's [28] four-aspect conceptualization of student engagement, students show all those four engagement types covering behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic. Their behavioural engagement can be seen from their active participation in class by listening to the instruction given and their hard work in doing the project given. Meanwhile, their agentic engagement can be seen from their effort in letting the teacher know the efforts they have done with regard to the assignments given and their very concern on having intensive consultation during project enactment. Next, their cognitive engagement is manifested into their effort in connecting what they have already know as their previous background knowledge and their actual practice when doing the project. This can be clearly seen when they were involved in workshops with the invited experts. Their participation into series of synchronous and asynchronous discussion exerted their own concern on the particular tasks given. Last, students' emotional engagement were seen from their interest and enthusiasm in joining the practicum. The following results of questionnaire clarified the result.
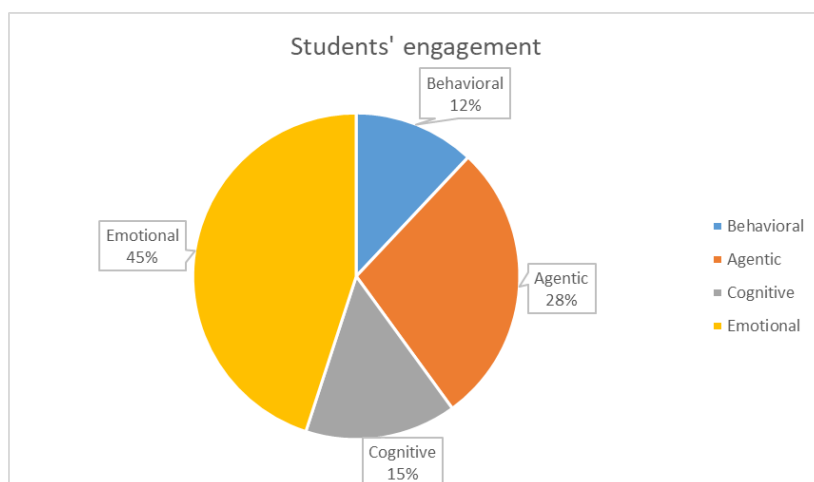

Fig. 2. The students' engagement.

5 Discussion

5.1 Technology and Pandemic: Dealing with Real Life Issues

This radio drama is one method used by teachers and students to overcome learning difficulties caused by physical barrier in teaching and learning process. Drama radio was chosen as a project-based learning activity because it allows live instructions in one location to be updated online without losing their essence. Watching radio drama with the assistance of supporting audio and visualization to depict every scene in the radio drama scene will replace

the portraits that the audience will receive when watching the play live. This radio drama demonstrates that challenges will arise throughout the teaching and learning process, one of which is when faced with a pandemic scenario, a teacher must find a means to carry out reinforcement activities in the practicum with the same value whether done offline or face to face.

Offline drama can be shifted into radio drama. With the help of technology, this radio drama does not require its players to gather in a certain place and have a direct communication. Instead, players can just record their voice as suggested on the script and it will be combined by other player's voice using application like Filmora, audacity. Students brought both local and target language (TL) culture into the radio drama they have made. In the age of the Covid-19 pandemic like what we are now experiencing, radio drama can be viewed as one of the solutions to the adoption of the target community of English. With the progression of technology, this radio drama can be created by the accompaniment of the visual portion transmitted by zoom (synchronous platform. This radio drama introduces dialog, music and sound effects to help the listener visualize the characters and the plot. It is auditory in the physical sense, but equally strong in the psychological dimension as a visual force.

The findings of the study, in terms of improving students' language skills, are congruent with those of Srikrai [29] and Simpson [30], who found that project-based activities improved students' language skills. Because students employed these skills on their radio drama project. Students' reflective notes and questionnaire show that students felt that their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills had improved. This shows that students is proven to be able to complete task given therefore their content knowledge and language skills improve which makes their learning more advantageous [31].

5.2 Radio Drama Project: Boosting Students' Autonomy and Collaboration

Students negotiate meaning from their self-created radio play at the end of the semester, as portrayed in the PjBL simulation, and traverse common understanding with peers. Furthermore, it can significantly boost pupils' self-reliance, active learning, and self-esteem. This reflective practice encourages teacher educators to use PjBL in their online classes since it allows students to participate in real-world challenges, avoid learning anxiety, exercise multimodal competence, and engage in shared knowledge negotiation with peers. Thus, the practice of writing reflections can help to build teachers who are knowledgeable about teaching and capable of applying what they have learned in the classrooms. Students were generally pleased and pleased with the items they had completed. This good energy has increased their enthusiasm to learn and pushed them to meet their learning objectives. The questionnaire result showcased that students felt that they become more autonomous in learning in their online practicum class and this project also boost their learning autonomy for being involved in a drama though it is online drama without any physical acts, still it really helps them to professionally position themselves as actors or actresses and collaborate with others as a team to gain a shared goal [32]; [33].

5.3 Gaining More Engagement Through PjBL

Markham et al. [34] stated PBL is "a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks" (p. 4). This PBL is chosen for one of the weaknesses appearing in the online practicum class is the inability for students to well engaged with their friends due to distance factor. Meanwhile, physical attendance in class is one of the measurements teachers use to measure students' engagement [35]. Therefore, this English practicum is situated in Project Based Learning framework as it is believed to be able to enhance learners' engagement [36] in addition to ICT requirement as previously mentioned. Through this PjBL students are able to collaboratively share insights, knowledge, perceptions, and opinions regarding the assigned topics. In addition, online learning during pandemic for example will not be the reason for not getting much information or less engagement students perform as long as it is conducted ideally.

6 Conclusion

The practicum session that is attached to the main course may appear to be trivial, therefore it is sometimes overlooked because some may regard this one credit course as complimentary. This reflective practice, on the other hand, demonstrates that the practicum executed using PBL and having radio drama as its project provides a more balanced conclusion than typical face-to-face classroom. This practicum session provides the teacher with a wealth of useful information about the intricacies of teaching and learning. One idea that consistently emerges from the various definitions of reflective practice is the notion that teachers have to be aware of and able to monitor their own thinking, understanding and knowledge about teaching in order to be a reflective practitioner. Reflective practitioners are able to identify a problem in their practice, the term 'problem' here meaning a situation/issue where there is some doubt about how to proceed.

Through this practicum, students are not actively participating in project work, but rather share views and begin to discover that in the event of a pandemic, technology can be utilized to mitigate the impact of decreased engagement owing to physical attendance constraints. Furthermore, online learning during a pandemic, for example, will not be the reason for students not receiving as much knowledge or performing with less engagement as long as it is done properly. This instructional strategy is not regarded as the most effective pedagogical approach to facilitating students' online learning engagement during a pandemic, nor does it give adequate proof of its efficacy. However, instructors may benefit to some extent from the authors' situated class and idea-making because teachers all over the world are currently dealing with complications in their online teaching. In terms of pedagogy, this reflective practice is worth considering as lecturers' self-reflection to improve teaching and learning quality, which is commonly overlooked due to busy teaching schedules.

Reflection is vital in growing our competency in understanding our job and looking for new methods to learn to teach from the perspective of a teacher educator. We believe it will provide student teachers with the space they need to experiment and gain confidence. Furthermore, it is an excellent opportunity for student instructors to practice questioning themselves and discovering new teaching opportunities. Integrating and implementing

reflective practice into curriculum has always been difficult because the focus of most teacher education programs has been primarily on the input or transfer of knowledge from the lecturer to the students. Besides, conducting a reflection on the teaching is very much challenging for lecturers due to their busy teaching schedules and administrative stuffs. Our investigation of the experience of learning to teach through reflective practice or writing practice would enrich the existing teacher education curriculum. This will prepare instructors to be self-sufficient and accountable for their own learning.

The research has two significant educational implications. To begin with, it is permissible to include an online Radio drama project in an English lesson, particularly in EFL environments where possibilities to use English are restricted, compounded by the inability to meet face to face owing to the pandemic scenario. Second, using the project as part of the grading system in practicum class appears fair because PBL can motivate learners to employ language skills obtained in English class and support learners' confidence in using English. This research, on the other hand, is a reflection on the use of radio drama project-based learning in an online English practicum class. As a result, the study's generalizability is limited. Future research will focus on the classroom implementation of a range of project-based activities.

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