

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and Languages:

What is it? and What are the possibilities?

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The EPQ is not a new qualification but discussing it with Nick Brown <http://twitter.com/NicktheOnion> , Head of Languages at Lincoln Castle Academy, I started to understand its real potential to promote languages...

At my previous school, as in many schools I think, EPQ was used as a way to enrich the curriculum in the VIth. Form. It is a way to get learners to get a Level 3 qualification as well as develop their research skills and engage with content that is within and beyond the curriculum.

Yes, but there is more : The qualifications exist at different levels :

Level 1 Foundation Project Qualification (FPQ) equating to grades 1-3 at GCSE

Level 2 Higher Project Qualification (HPQ) to grades 4-9 at GCSE (both of these require 70 guided learning hours)

and Level 3 Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) focus on project-based learning - worth up to 70 UCAs points (120 guided learning hours).

The Project Qualifications (PQs) give students choices, starting from a choice to explore what they are interested in - the student is in the driving seat and sets the question. The student then has a further choice in how to produce and present an 'end product.' The research – crucially for Language teachers - could be fully or partly in the target language, although the outcome / product submitted for assessment should be in English. The work submitted can be from one of the following 4 units.

Unit 1 = a dissertation

Unit 2 = an investigation or field study

Unit 3 = a performance

Unit 4 = an artefact

Importantly for language teachers, the research and supporting notes can be in ANY language, which would naturally occur by listening, speaking, reading and note-taking in the language, and if the project is used to complement A Level teaching and learning, the topic can be inspired by some of the A Level work, provided it does not replicate their Independent Research Project (IRP).

The project can also allow students to explore their cultural heritage or the cultural heritage of other people in the community as well as offer them an opportunity to pursue an interest outside of the curriculum. This could be of particular interest for EAL students, as a way to celebrate their cultural heritage, enhance their literacy in English as well as gain a recognised Level 3 qualification.

So qualifications are available in a wider range of languages than other accreditations; other motivating benefits for students include: -

- Learning about the lives of other people on Planet Earth in different situations;
- Discovering people from another cultural heritage or country;
- Contacting students in another country, ideally face-to-face over a web link;
- Problem-solving, organisation and many other soft skills;
- Researching and then writing or recording for a purpose;
- Finding out something different and new.

Projects for Languages could include things such as:

Has French cinema been a major influence on the world stage? (dissertation-extension from A Level film study)

Is Colombian Spanish a better dialect than other forms? (dissertation)

What trends can be seen in the use of slang words by modern day German teenagers? (investigation/field study)

Interpretation/Performance of a play

Short film in the style of a specific director (artefact)

Self-published book of new translations of poems (artefact)

One aspect I like is that a Project Qualification can complement other studies, such as GCSE or A Level literature, Economics or Sociology but allow the student to go beyond the set curriculum and add an international dimension. It could indeed be a possible strategy for students

- to keep their languages/cultural studies alive and continue their studies, perhaps a study into why the French, as a society, have longer life expectancies? (Sociology)
- or to study a language, or an aspect of its culture, that is not offered in their school or college

Full details about the qualifications can be found here

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-project-qualification/level-3.html>

and on the Future Ready website <https://www.pearson.com/uk/web/future-ready.html>

If you would like to register your interest in the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) or find out more information about MFL-focused titles, contact

<https://support.pearson.com/uk/s/qualification-contactus>

The PQ approach is also available for KS4 pupils as a Higher Project Qualification (**HPQ**) and a Foundation Project Qualification (**FPQ**). Like the EPQ these qualifications aim to develop learner's transferable skills and preparing them to the world of work by making them more organised and independent. Want to know more?

<https://www.pearson.com/uk/web/future-ready/project-qualification-express.html>