

Project Based Learning

What is Project Based Learning?

- a systematic teaching method that challenges students to discover answers to their questions through real world investigations.

Project Based Learning:

- emphasizes learning activities that are long-term, interdisciplinary and student-centered
- is organized around an open-ended driving question or challenge
- creates a need to know essential content and skills
- requires inquiry to learn and/or create something new
- requires critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and various forms of communication
- allows some degree of student voice and choice results in a presented product or performance

Roles:

- Students: ask questions, build knowledge, and determine a real-world solution to the issue/question presented
- Student groups determine their projects and work together to accomplish specific goals
- Instructor: regulates student success with intermittent, transitional goals to ensure student projects remain focused and students have a deep understanding of the concepts being investigated; doesn't provide answers, but rather facilitates

Why Implement Project Based Learning?

- With this type of active and engaged learning, students are inspired to obtain a deeper knowledge of the subjects they're studying.
- Project Based Learning allows students to reflect upon their own ideas and opinions, exercise voice and choice, and make decisions that affect project outcomes and the learning process in general.
- Project Based Learning helps prepare students for the thinking and collaboration skills required in the workplace.

Process: Phase One

Choosing a Topic and Brainstorming

- ❖ The topic is chosen from curriculum content
- ❖ Topics are relevant to students' everyday experiences so that they can raise valid questions
- ❖ A topic allows for basic numeracy and literacy skills and for the integration of several subject areas
- ❖ The topic allows students to practice previously acquired skills
- ❖ It may take several discussion periods to choose and refine a topic
- ❖ A web or some other visual representation can be used throughout the investigation for debriefing discussions
- ❖ This is the time when students begin deciding what aspects of the topic they will investigate

Process: Phase Two

Investigation

Students engage in activities which allow them to:

- ❖ explore
- ❖ collect data
- ❖ draw from observations
- ❖ construct models
- ❖ observe and record findings
- ❖ predict
- ❖ discuss
- ❖ share progress
- ❖ dramatize
- ❖ interview and survey

Process: Phase Three

Culminating and Debriefing Events

Students are involved in preparing and presenting the results of their investigations.

These presentations may include:

- ❖ displays
- ❖ talks
- ❖ dramatic presentations
- ❖ guided tours of constructions

Students share their knowledge with peers, family, the school and/or the community.

Project Based Learning Example:

Making Community Connections (Gr.1-2)

Phase One:

- Making a list of people they knew who work in their community
- Discussing, writing and drawing about experiences they have had with these people
- Brainstorming questions they would like answered

Phase Two:

- Contacting individual people and businesses
- Visiting each person and place to record their interviews and take pictures
- Drawing pictures and writing about what they saw and learned

Phase Three:

- Presenting their findings to fellow classmates and family

Sample Topic Areas:

- **Plants**
- **Animals**
- **Environment**
- **Space**
- **Human Body**
- **Community**
- **Transportation**
- **The Earth**