Using Project-Based Learning (PBL) to Engage Students, Engage Teachers and Raise Achievement

Pinellas County Leadership Week

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Contemplate your students...
One trend that makes you smile and one that makes you wonder!
Warning Signs ~ Table Talk!
Definition of Insanity
INSANITY DEFENSE

i'm working on it
What’s our Hope?

"Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think."
-Albert Einstein
Goals for the Session

• Explore PBL as an instructional approach
• Articulate what a PBL culture looks like and your role in appreciating and advocating its spread through classrooms
• Support teachers and students as they design and execute PBL assignments
• Share best practices
• Consider support tools to target PBL practices and outcomes
• Identify resources and next steps!
Tools for Today

PBL value-added too....
Parking Lot!

Questions

Suggestions

Follow-up

Opportunity for Change
Professional Notebook
Ground Rules

Respect everyone’s opinions
Stay true to agenda
Limit sidebars
Be present
Success depends on participation
Active listening is appreciated
One person speak at a time
Others...
Group Member Roles

- **Table Captain:** keeps the work moving forward and on task
- **Reporter:** verbally shares findings to larger group
- **Scribe:** captures and records ideas to provide reporter
- **Time Keeper:** alerts team to amount of time left when working
- **Materials Manager:** gathers necessary materials for the group
Three Essential Clusters of Leadership Practices That Positively Impact Student Achievement
Clusters of Effective Leadership Practices

- Focus
- Efficacy
- Monitoring
Focus

Instructional leaders identify no more than 6 priority instructional initiatives that are linked clearly to specific student needs.

“Deciding what not to do is as important as deciding what to do.”

- Steve Jobs
The challenges associated with the Focus Practice are:

- Focus on what?
- How?
Approach Matters...
What makes a PBL-assignment?

Hmmm.....
Project Based Learning

Looks like...

Sounds like...

Feels like...
Triangulate our Approach

Student Interest

Authentic Need

Program Standards

SREB
A Project or PBL?

- Determine which examples are a PBL assignment versus a project
- Be ready to share two examples that you are most sure about...

Pages 2-4
Not Dessert?
The Main Course, Not Dessert

Reflection Questions

• What do you assume?
• What do you agree with?
• What do you wish to argue?
• What do you aspire to?
PBL – Versus “Doing Projects”

Lecture → Activity → Quiz

Lecture → Activity → Lecture

Quiz → Review → Exam → Project
Food for Thought...

"It is better to know the questions than all of the answers"

~ James Thurber
Gumball Experiment
Design Process

Communication

Ask/Inquire

Improve

Imagine

Experiment/Evaluate

Plan

Create

Launch
Design Process

- Ask/Inquire
- Imagine
- Plan
- Create
- Experiment/Evaluate
- Improve

UNCERTAINTY / PATTERNS / INSIGHTS

CLARITY / FOCUS

RESEARCH

CONCEPT PROTOTYPE

DESIGN
Projects are complex real world learning experiences that have *predictable outcomes*. Often the design may differ but the outcome is the same.

In contrast to projects, project based learning assignments are typically open-ended with multiple solutions or plausible answers. Problems are the highest level of contextual learning producing the greatest depth of understanding.
Triangulate our Approach

Student Interest

Authentic Need

Program Standards
Voice and Choice...
Focus Frenzy: Project Elements

With a partner or table team, use the following element descriptors to examine example project ideas and critique what you like, what you may suggest...
Project Party!
Tap Students’ Talents!
Title:

Driving Question:

You are a (insert a real-workplace role).

You are faced with (insert a problem).

You must (insert what must be done to solve the problem).

Once you have decided on a course of action, you will (insert an opportunity for presentation to an authentic audience).
Project Scenario

Driving Question

Career Connection

Standards

Major Product

Skills
What standards will you use to design your project-based learning assignment?

In your Notebook, claim your standards.

Recommendation: Within the 1st quarter of the year, take 1-3 weeks to complete.
A Driving Question Captures the Heart of a PBL Assignment
The Driving Question

Should inspire students to ask questions and become engaged in the project.

Should be able to be answered through a variety of solutions

Should not be answered by a simple “yes” or “no”

Should cause students to make connections to prior learning and personal experiences

Should be important over an extended period of time and transferable to other situations.
Efficacy

The personal conviction of teachers and administrators that their actions are a primary influence on academic and technical success of students.
Efficacy

If teachers and school leaders believe that variables outside of the school’s control have the greatest impact on student success, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.
“...I had no clue that my students could achieve at these high levels...”

~ A WV teacher skeptical about PBL until...
PBL Culture: What ground rules in your learning environments would support growing PBL?

At your tables, generate a list of 5-7 shared answers...
school-PBL- ground rules
Clusters of Effective Leadership Practices

- Focus
- Efficacy
- Monitoring
Monitoring

Regular (at least once per quarter) systematic observation of adult actions - What teachers and leaders do in order to improve student achievement;
This includes both student outcomes and instructional practices
Monitoring

• Frequent monitoring
• Focused on adult actions in the context of student achievement
• Constructive

“Witch Hunt vs Treasure Hunt”
Influences on student learning

*John Hattie 1999-2009 – research from 180,000 studies covering almost every method of innovation*

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<th>Influence</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
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<td>Feedback</td>
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<td>Ability Grouping</td>
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</table>

Source: [http://growthmindseteaz.org/johnhattie.html](http://growthmindseteaz.org/johnhattie.html)
Experiment/Evaluate

What do you notice about what makes “good” feedback?
More than a check-list—

Using observations to improve quality instruction and promote student success
Monitoring what Matters

- Restaurant Consultant
- Clean up your Act!

Pages 6-7 of Observation Tool
Opportunities for Teachers to Own their Learning

Fishbowl technique: Kathleen will create teams of three charged to role play a conversation ...
Find your triad!

1. **School leader:** ask questions about the PBL plan and explore instructional aspects
2. **PBL teacher:** describe approaches, planning pieces and possible areas of challenge
3. **Fishbowl friend:** listen for great exchanges to share with the larger group!
Clusters of Effective Leadership Practices

Focus

Efficacy

Monitoring
The greatest impact on student achievement stems from a combination of **focus**, **monitoring** and **efficacy** practice.

*Effective monitoring is possible only when leaders focus on a limited number of instructional priorities. Efficacy is present only if teachers and leaders believe they have a profound effect on student outcomes.*
Let’s Put your Work into Action!

• Focus: How to help create a shared understanding?
• Efficacy: How will you support building a culture?
• Monitoring: Strategic steps?
Online Resources

All files and additional resources

Google Folder: bit.ly/Resources-PBL

and

Shifting the Learning Environment

Are you poised for students to take more ownership in their learning?
It’s worth it!
WILL YOU MARRY ME
We Appreciate your Feedback!
Thank you for leading the way in supporting students!

Shout outs to Pinellas County Talents!