This session takes a look at the design and implementation of effective project-based learning in any classroom environment. Whether your classroom is low-tech, high-tech, high school or primary, Project-Based Learning can have a benefit and a place in your curriculum.
WHAT BROUGHT YOU HERE?

- It’s always good to know what you all want out of this session
- What are you hoping to learn here?
PROJECT-BASED LEARNING AS A TEACHING PHILOSOPHY
PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IS NOT A NEW IDEA

“Confucius and Aristotle were early proponents of learning by doing. Socrates modeled how to learn through questioning, inquiry, and critical thinking -- all strategies that remain very relevant in today's PBL classrooms. Fast-forward to John Dewey, 20th-century American educational theorist and philosopher, and we hear a ringing endorsement for learning that's grounded in experience and driven by student interest.”

From Edutopia
WHY DON’T WE DO IT?

- As an educational consultant and embedded coach, I have worked with many teachers on implementing PBL into the classroom.
- The #1 reason we do not implement PBL is TIME.
- As teachers we deal with increasingly ‘packed’ curriculum with increasing outcomes and accountability.
- My hope is to dispel the idea that you ‘Don’t have time.’
EFFECTIVE DESIGN OF PBL

There are specific traits and processes for effective PBL that can be formally, or informally introduced to support learning.

1. A line of inquiry, a big question or issue that creates interest and inspires further learning.

2. Definition of learning connections that tie to curriculum.

3. Identification of the explicit learning needs and supports students will need through the learning process.

**UBD MODEL**

**UbD: Stages of Backward Design**

**Stage 1. Identify desired results.**

- **Guiding Questions**
  - What are the established goals?
  - What “big ideas” do we want students to come to understand?
  - What essential questions will stimulate inquiry?
  - What knowledge and skills need to be acquired given the understandings and related content standards? What focus questions will guide students to targeted knowledge and skills?

**Stage 2. Determine acceptable evidence.**

- **Guiding Questions**
  - What is sufficient and telling evidence of understanding?
  - Keeping the goals in mind, what performance tasks should anchor and focus the unit?
  - What criteria will be used to assess the work?
  - Will the assessment reveal and distinguish those who really understand versus those who only seem to understand?

**Stage 3. Plan learning experiences and instruction.**

- **Guiding Questions**
  - What instructional strategies and learning activities are needed to achieve the results identified in Stage 1 and reflected in the assessment evidence specified in Stage 2?
IN LIGHT OF YOUR COURSE, WHAT ARE SOME MAJOR ISSUES?

- Define your line of inquiry in order for students to feel both intrigued and motivated.

- This is often different than explicit course outcomes.

- For example, the English 20 curriculum deals with texts forms and writing types, writing structure and style

- In a collaborative group recently, we discovered that an overriding theme might be “When is it appropriate to express oneself?” This is discussed nowhere in the curriculum, but fits perfectly with texts and ideas studied in the course.
BASED ON INQUIRY, BIG QUESTIONS

- Think about what questions your students might explore on their own about your subject.
- Think about what drew you to your subject and what you want to learn more about
THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOW/NEED TO KNOW

- Differentiate learning
- Teach fundamental concepts
- Blended learning, Flipped classroom
- Classroom Discussion to develop common understandings
Co-Create assessments (Rubric building as learning process)

Build in editing times and processes.

Authentic assessment by parents and community members raises stakes without testing.
IMPLEMENTATION

- Start with areas of the curriculum you know well and are highly passionate about.
- I started with novels.
- Use what you have at hand, technology may help, or hinder.
START SLOWLY, BUILD MOMENTUM

- One unit at a time, change only what is appropriate to PBL, it is not the only strategy for teaching, and is not always the best fit.

- Once you have a solid unit, look to other areas where authentic work will benefit learning!
It is extremely helpful to have a coach or mentor when working with planning effective PBL for the first time.

Source those in your school or division who can support you.

Team-teaching, Intern teacher scenarios work exceptionally well.
SOME EXAMPLES....DIVISION 2

- How can we write together, even though we all write differently?
- Why are Alberta’s national parks worth saving?
- Let’s prove that we care about our world!
SOME EXAMPLES...DIVISION 4

- What is it about the novel that makes it so important; could you write one?
- Does Shakespeare matter anymore? Prove your perspective!
Technology can simplify many processes, but only if you know how to use it.

If it is going to take longer or be more complex using technology, then don’t.
DEALING WITH PACKED CURRICULUM

- Remember when I said this was the #1 challenge for teachers starting in PBL?
- If students are presenting a product at the end, they will teach each other; many topics can be ‘covered’ at once.
- Depending on your assessments, students display learning via feedback to other students, or self-assessment of the project.
CROWDSOURCED IDEAS AND DISCUSSION

- What might you try **this term** to transfer to PBL.
- Does not have to be major, but dip your foot in the water.
PROJECT-BASED LEARNING AS A TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

ASSESS AND ADJUST THROUGHOUT
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