

Project Based Learning

In Project Based Learning (PBL), students go through an extended process of inquiry in response to a complex question, problem, or challenge. While allowing for some degree of student "voice and choice," rigorous projects are carefully planned, managed, and assessed to help students learn key academic content, practice 21st Century Skills (such as collaboration, communication, creativity & critical thinking), and create high-quality, authentic products and presentations.

Rigorous and in-depth Project Based Learning:

- **is organized around an open-ended Driving Question or Challenge.** These focus students' work and deepen their learning by centering on significant issues, debates, questions and/or problems.
- **creates a need to know essential content and skills.** Typical projects (and most instruction) begin by presenting students with knowledge and concepts and then, once learned, given them the opportunity to apply them. PBL begins with the vision of an end product or presentation which requires learning specific knowledge and concepts, thus creating a context and reason to learn and understand the information and concepts.
- **requires inquiry to learn and/or create something new.** Not all learning has to be based on inquiry, but some should. And this should lead students to construct something new--an idea, an interpretation, a new way of displaying what they have learned.
- **requires critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and various forms of communication.** Students need to do much more than remember information--they need to use higher-order thinking skills. They also have to learn to work as a team and contribute to a group effort. They must listen to others and make their own ideas clear when speaking, be able to read a variety of material, write or otherwise express themselves in various modes, and make effective presentations. These skills, competencies and habits of mind are often known as "21st Century Skills."

