



Project Based Learning

What it does for your kids

Allows for kids to learn in all styles

'REAL' world learning

Gives students choices in learning-high interest

Encourages use of higher order thinking skills: questioning, seeking resources, creative problem solving, goal setting, organization, and time management

Utilizes hands-on approach and processes of learning-learning process is valued, not just product

Provides for in-depth understanding

Enhances communication skills

Students become self-directed

Students take ownership of learning-high motivation

Learning is meaningful through use of academic skills, connection with students' lives and prior learning, and connect academic disciplines

Students learn to assess their progress

Projects build self-esteem and confidence



Asking Questions

Helping with projects requires asking questions that require your child to think. Your child may get frustrated and want you to just give them the answer, but don't...use questions to guide them to answers. This is when they are using higher order thinking skills. And even if you like your ideas better, keep it to yourself and let your child pursue their own ideas.

Examples:

- Why do you think you want to learn about ___?
- Who would know a lot about _____?
- How could you make that more interesting (better, more exciting, etc)?
- Why do you think that is important?
- What do you think is causing that problem?
- What are some solutions?
- Do you think that is the BEST solution?
- How can you add art (math, dance, music, science, etc) to make this more interesting?

The idea is to MENTOR your child, guide them, not do it for them. This is easier said than done, because we all want our children to present their best. Be realistic, sometimes kids just don't give their best. It is a PROCESS in learning to value quality work, not just a quality end product.



PROJECT BASED LEARNING (PBL)



Process Skills and Expectations

These skills will be taught to your children through direct instruction and with ongoing facilitation during the project process.

1. Generating ideas, formulating the driving question, planning
2. Time management: time-lines and goal setting
3. Finding resources: types of resources, how to cite resources, writing interview questions, note-taking
4. Collaboration: communication skills, listening, speaking, asking questions
5. Self assessment
6. Organizational skills
7. Problem solving
8. Creative thinking (outside the box): driving questions, visuals, presentation, resources
9. Performance skills: dress, voice, body language, staging, props

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS PROJECT BASED LEARNING?

Project based learning is NOT your old fashioned school project that is typically done by parents who want their child's project to be the best. **Project based learning IS an opportunity for your child to learn responsibility, inquiry, research, presentation, self-monitoring and USE their academic skills to accomplish a goal in learning.**

HOW DOES PROJECT BASED LEARNING WORK?

During project based learning, students are working individually or in groups to answer a 'driving question'. They utilize research, communication, and academic skills to create a way to answer the question and predict what they learned to an audience (classmates, parents, or community).

WHAT DOES THE CLASSROOM LOOK LIKE DURING PROJECT BASED LEARNING?

During project based learning, students are working in many areas of the school. They may be researching in books or on the internet, they may be planning an interview with an expert, they may be making telephone calls, taking notes, collaborating with another student, making a visual aid, constructing something, or writing a report. Students are not sitting at desks focused on their teacher teaching, they are teaching and learning independently using academic and process skills.

HOW WILL I KNOW MY CHILD IS LEARNING WHAT THEY SHOULD LEARN?

While working on projects, students are actually using the academic skills taught to them during the traditional part of school. The best assessment of proficiency is a skill is the ability to use it and apply it to something meaningful. Each classroom also has project performance rubrics to help the student and parents see levels of achievement.

WHY DO PROJECT BASED LEARNING?

Project based learning shifts students away from classroom practices of short, isolated, teacher-centered lessons and instead emphasizes learning activities that are long-term (quarterly), interdisciplinary, student centered, and integrated with real world issues and practices.

WHAT IS MY ROLE AS A PARENT?

The most important thing to remember is that this is your CHILD'S project, not yours! Your role includes:

- ▶ being a resource for information
- ▶ helping your child find other resources (library, experts, etc)
- ▶ providing time, space, and materials for project work they may want to do at home
- ▶ holding your child accountable for time-lines, due dates, etc.
- ▶ asking questions to help your child find meaningful projects
- ▶ using 'teachable moments' to direct your child to ideas
- ▶ remembering that the process is as important as the product and that your child will learn as much or more from working on the project as what they learn about the topic

