Project-Based Learning

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Project-Based Learning...

• ...is a pedagogical approach—using projects—that focuses on...
  — student learning of academic content
  — critical thinking/problem solving
  — collaboration
  — self-management

• ...has been shown to improve student learning

• ...has key features that are present on a continuum, depending on the context and purpose of the project

• ...requires teachers and students to take “non-traditional” approaches towards working together
Essential Project Design Elements

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- **Challenging Problem or Question** - Heart of the project: engage without intimidation (creates a real need to know something)

- **Sustained Inquiry** - An extended process of asking questions, finding resources, and applying information

- **Authenticity** - Real-world context, tasks and tools, quality standards, or impact

- **Student Voice & Choice** - Students make decisions, including how they work and what they create

- **Reflection** - Students reflect on learning, the effectiveness of their inquiry, the quality of their work, and obstacles

- **Critique & Revision** - Students receive and use feedback to improve their process and products (formative evaluation)

- **Public Product** - Students make their project work public by explaining, displaying and/or presenting it beyond the classroom
Project-Based Teaching Practices

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- **Design & Plan** - Create a project for your context and your students; include student voice and choice when planning
- **Align to Standards** - When planning, make sure the project addresses key knowledge and understanding from relevant subject areas
- **Build the Culture** - Foster student independence and growth, open-ended inquiry, team spirit, and attention to quality
- **Manage Activities** - Working with students, organize tasks & schedules, set deadlines, find & use resources, create products & make them public
- **Scaffold Student Learning** - Support all students in reaching project goals using various lessons, tools, and instructional strategies
- **Assess Student Learning** - Determine what students know, understand, and can do using various formative and summative approaches
- **Engage & Coach** - Learn and create with students; give them support when they need skill building, redirection, encouragement and celebration
Resources for Project-Based Learning

- Buck Institute for Education
  https://www.bie.org/

- WPI Center for Project-Based Learning
  http://wp.wpi.edu/projectbasedlearning/
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