

Projects: Integrating Knowledge

Why do we need to do projects?

Please read the following parent letter previously sent:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fFh0pbR4q2pJ-BjVCX-59n7DOGA3jYmQ4bBg3EOEzF4/edit>

Why has this changed?

The State's requirement/intent has not changed, we are improving yearly in instituting best practices as according to all PBL sources.

PBL Sources:

How can younger students think of a driving question and complete a project?

Younger students have completed wonderful, creative projects, but it may be difficult for some to understand the aim of the requirement. To help facilitate understanding, we will provide students in grades K-3 a list of driving questions and project ideas, in addition to these actual examples created by students in the past. Your mentor teacher's weekly questions will assist you and your student with the entire journey from driving question to project presentation.

Is a project required for every class a student takes every semester?

Yes and no – Consider the following:

- A virtual field trip may form the inspiration and basis of a project for a class on the student's schedule. Anything may serve as inspiration for a project idea, as long as the finished project uses or addresses the subject matter, in some fashion, of the class for which it is counted.
- A project, if containing enough multi-disciplinary content, may cover more than one class on the student's schedule.
- If siblings are taking the same class, they may work on the same project together, counting for all students.
- Students may work in peer groups on the same project for the same class, providing there is enough content demonstrated for the number of students in the group.

Who approves the project? How do we know we are working on a project that won't be rejected at the end?

Your mentor teacher's weekly question will assist with the driving question, gathering of sources, compilation of data and presentation plan. The mentor teacher will approve the project idea early on, which will then lead to a successful project in the end.

What are the requirements for the finished project? When is the due date?

Presentations can be in-person at a partnership open house (if that is an option at the time) or submitted by video at any time in the second half of the semester. The format can be just about anything: an original composition, poster board presentation, public service announcement, commercial, slide show, demonstration, etc. The presentation should be a min. of 2 minutes with content and skill commensurate with the student's grade or age.

Isn't this just busywork for students and parents?

It may seem at first that projects are busywork, but they are designed to be real-world applications of the subjects the students are learning, which most parents and teachers believe is really the goal of learning just about anything. Most students and parents have a reason for taking certain classes. Demonstration of a wider perspective, use of the subject matter in the community, being able to teach something related to the class

content are all good goals for taking classes. Projects help demonstrate mastery of content other than just the recitation or re-creation of the content itself.

Examples of K-5 projects:

Class: swim lessons

Driving question: How does learning to swim help me to help others?

Project: Student gave a PSA (public service announcement) and visual charts on what riptides are in a lake and how to swim to safety.

Class: music lessons, piano

Driving question: How does a piano make sound?

Project: Examination of the inside of a piano, drawings and labels of the inside of the piano and video explaining the parts and how they interact.

Class: drama field trip to a play

Driving question: what does it take to put on a play?

Project: Student made a stage out of a large cardboard box, drew the characters on popsicle sticks, then performed the play that inspired her. To conclude, the student explained what type of animal each character was, demonstrating what it takes to put on a play and taught the audience about different kinds of animals.

Class: birding

Driving question: what types of birds live in my area and how can I support them?

Project: students created sketch books or google slides of native SWM birds, their calls, habitat and food sources and gave a video presentation.

Class: voice lessons

Driving question: why does a song get stuck in your head?

Project: research 'ear worms' and what part of the brain they trigger. Create a poster to explain this or compose own jingle.

Class: music lessons

Driving question: Can music help someone with OCD or anxiety issues?

Project: student researched and discovered that music lowers cortisol levels, explained what cortisol is and how it helps in a video presentation.

Class: music lessons

Driving question: How does music affect people?

Project: siblings produced a 2+ min video explaining the brain connections between learning music, memory and improved reading and retention skills.

Class: music lessons

Driving question: How can I understand parts of a measure better?

Project: 5 y/o student demonstrated 4/4 time and parts of a measure using playdough and apples – cutting into respective sections as she explained, then went back to the start and counted it out. Her older siblings did the same in a demonstration of syncopation.

Class: drum lessons AND entrepreneurship class

Driving question: how can I turn my love of drums into a business?

Project: 4th grader created unique drum sticks and created a google slideshow of basic steps of a business plan to market the sticks.

Class: Nature: gardening

Driving question: How do the plants change from a seed in the ground to a plant we can eat?

Project: Project board depicting stages of germination, requirements for life, etc. with in person or video presentation.

Class: Nature field trip – inspiration: restaurant placemat saying 'Farm to Table'

Driving question: What do they mean by 'farm to table'?

Project: Student creates a logistical map of the agricultural process, including transportation, warehousing, purchasing, preparation.

Class: Sewing and EEME (electronics class)

Driving question: If I'm good at sewing and I like it, can I turn it into a job? Is technology used in sewing?

Project: research the history of the textile industry – how has technology changed the industry? What do jobs in this country look like?