

# ***Transforming the Classroom with Project-Based Learning*** **Course Syllabus**

## **Catalog Description**

This workshop is designed to familiarize participants with the principles of Project-Based Learning (PBL) and strategies for implementing PBL projects in their classrooms. Throughout this six-week workshop, exemplary projects will be analyzed, critiqued, and evaluated for applicability to participants' classroom needs. Participants will gain hands-on experience developing collaborative, inquiry-based projects that support their curricular goals. Participants will learn to blend PBL and standards-based design strategies to create curriculum units that enhance student learning. Each participant will leave the online workshop with a detailed plan for a PBL project.

## **Prerequisites**

This is an introductory course for teachers, technology specialists, curriculum specialists, professional development specialists, or other school personnel. Participants are expected to have regular access to computers. In addition, participants should be proficient with using email, browsing the Internet, and navigating to computer files.

## **Goals**

This workshop will enable participants to:

1. Learn about principles of PBL
2. Develop a collection of web-based PBL resources to support curricular planning
3. Learn how to develop PBL activities to support curricular goals
4. Learn to utilize technology in the planning, implementation, and assessment of Project-Based Learning
5. Develop techniques to help students effectively participate in Project-Based Learning
6. Plan a standards-based, technology-enhanced PBL project for classroom use
7. Participate in an online collegial network

## **Assessment and Course Requirements**

Each session includes readings, an activity, and a discussion assignment, which participants are required to complete.

### **Course Products**

As a final product, participants will complete a *Project-Based Learning* template to generate a complete plan for a project-based unit to be implemented in the coming school year.

### **Discussion Participation**

Participants will be evaluated on the frequency and quality of their discussion board participation. Participants are required to post a minimum of two substantial postings each session, including one that begins a new thread and one that responds to an existing thread. Postings that begin new threads will be reviewed based on their relevance, demonstrated understanding of course concepts, examples cited, and overall quality. Postings that respond to other participants will be evaluated on relevance, degree to which they extend the discussion, and tone.

## **Required Readings, Activities and Assignments**

### **Session One: What is Project-Based Learning?**

Participants will read the following articles to learn about the basic principles of Project-Based Learning, and explore the outcomes made possible in a classroom structured around PBL.

- *Project-Based Learning: A Primer*  
[http://www.techlearning.com/db\\_area/archives/TL/2003/01/project.html](http://www.techlearning.com/db_area/archives/TL/2003/01/project.html)

- *Building a Bridge to Knowledge for Every Child*  
[http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art\\_288](http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art_288)

As an activity for this session, participants will watch and reflect on a series of video clips from a George Lucas Educational Foundation documentary called *Learn & Live*. The story documents a technology-enhanced PBL project in a fourth and fifth grade classroom at the Clear View Charter School in Chula Vista, CA.  
[http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art\\_631](http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art_631)

Participants will also review several of the Exemplary Projects listed on the Techscape PBL and Design Center web site ([http://www.wested.org/pblnet/exemplary\\_projects.html](http://www.wested.org/pblnet/exemplary_projects.html)) as they think about how each project reflects, or fails to reflect, the key characteristics of PBL.

Participants will use the video and this session's readings to explore the differences between traditional teaching and Project-Based Learning and to analyze their own teaching practice.

### **Session Two: Planning a Project-Based Learning Unit**

Participants will examine the characteristics of Project-Based Learning and strategies for analyzing curriculum in light of quality PBL instruction.

1. *How Does Project-Based Learning Work?*  
<http://www.edutopia.org/modules/PBL/howpbl.php#question>
2. *How to Analyze a Curriculum Unit or Project and Provide the Scaffolding Students Need to Succeed, Coalition of Essential Schools*  
[http://www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces\\_res/85](http://www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces_res/85)

As an activity for this session, participants will view and evaluate two more clips from the *Learn & Live* documentary. They will also explore the several websites which help inspire teachers to create project-based learning activities that can have an impact on local and global communities. Lastly, they will download and begin work on the Project-Based Learning Template.

- *Learn & Live: Student Researchers*  
[http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art\\_632](http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art_632)
- *Learn & Live: Learning to Work as a Team*  
[http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art\\_635](http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art_635)
- *Summer Sleuths Coaching Project*  
<http://www2.imsa.edu/programs/pbln/sleuths/>
- *Nonprofit Prophets*  
<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/prophets/>
- *The Jason Project*  
<http://www.jasonproject.org/>
- *iEARN*  
<http://www.iearn.org/>
- *Project-Based Learning Template*  
[http://www.edtechleaders.org/documents/pbl/pbl\\_template\\_2005.doc](http://www.edtechleaders.org/documents/pbl/pbl_template_2005.doc)

### **Session Three: Framing Inquiry - The Project-Based Learning Process**

Participants will learn about techniques and strategies for designing standards-based projects that foster inquiry-based learning. The readings for this session are based on *Understanding By Design* by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe.

- Backward Design Process  
<http://digitalliteracy.mwg.org/curriculum/process.html>
- Principles of Backward Design  
<http://www.lttag.education.tas.gov.au/planning/models/princbackdesign.htm>

As an activity for this session, they will view another clip from the *Learn & Live* documentary and they will continue to use the *PBL Template* to develop their own Project-Based Learning project.

- *Live and Learn: The Changing Role of the Teacher*  
[http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art\\_637](http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art_637)

#### **Session Four: Technology in the Design, Structure, and Presentation of Project-Based Learning**

Participants will read excerpts from two reports on the role of technology in PBL.

- *Laptops for All, George Lucas Foundation*  
<http://www.edutopia.org/modules/modarticle.php?>
- *Information Technologies, Hardware and Software: Their Use in Project-Based Learning*  
<http://www.edtechleaders.org/documents/Pbl/Session4.pdf>

As an activity for this session, participants will view and evaluate two clips from the *Learning & Living* documentary about using multimedia to share research and to present PBL learning outcomes.

- *Sharing Research through Multimedia*  
[http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art\\_633](http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art_633)
- *The Project's Culmination*  
[http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art\\_638](http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art_638)

They will also continue designing their own Project-Based Learning project by completing Part II of the PBL Template.

#### **Session Five: Assessing Project-Based Learning**

Participants will read the following articles to better understand the role of assessment in Project-Based Learning.

- *Assessing Student Work with Project-Based Learning (Challenge 2000)*  
<http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/PBLGuide/AssessPBL.html>
- *Assessment of PBL*  
<http://www.gsn.org/web/pbl/plan/assess.htm>
- *Defining 'Rubric'*  
<http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/PBLGuide/ThoughtPieces/Rubric.html>

As an activity for this session, participants will view and evaluate a clip from the *Learning & Living* documentary, *Assessing Project-Based Work* [http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art\\_634](http://glef.org/php/article.php?id=Art_634)

Participants will continue to work on their project by completing Part III of the PBL template and use one of the following software tools to create an assessment tool for their Project-Based Learning project.

- *Rubistar*  
<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/>
- *Project-Based Learning Checklists*  
<http://www.4teachers.org/projectbased/checklist.shtml>

#### **Session Six: Creating Your Own Project-Based Learning Unit**

In preparation for implementing their own project-based learning units, participants read about implementing project-based learning in a multimedia project and an excerpt from the ISTE publication *Project-Based Learning Using Information Technology*.

- ISTE publication *Project-Based Learning Using Information Technology*.  
<http://www.edtechleaders.org/documents/Pbl/ISTESession6.pdf>
- Steps for Planning and Implementing a PBL+MM Project  
<http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/PBLGuide/Guide/Steps.html>

In the Activity section, participants will complete Part IV “Timeline” and Part V, “Sample Project Planning Table for Students” on their PBL Template. Then they will share their unit on the discussion board for collaborative feedback from their colleagues.