

Gold Standard PBL: Project Based Teaching Practices

Teachers who make Project Based Learning a regular part of their teaching enjoy their new role, although for some it might take time to adjust from traditional practice. It's fun to get creative when designing a project, instead of just using "off the shelf" curriculum materials. Most teachers like working collaboratively with their colleagues when planning and implementing projects, and interacting with other adults from the community or the wider world. And PBL teachers find it rewarding to work closely alongside students, tackling a real-world challenge or exploring a meaningful question.

teachers don't "teach" in a PBL classroom. Many traditional practices remain, but are reframed in the context of a project.

Design & Plan

Teachers create or adapt a project for their context and students, and plan its implementation from launch to culmination while allowing for some degree of student voice and choice.

Align to Standards

Teachers use standards to plan the project and make sure it addresses key knowledge and understanding from subject areas to be included.

Build the Culture

Teachers explicitly and implicitly promote student independence and growth, open-ended inquiry, team spirit, and attention to quality.

Manage Activities

Teachers work with students to organize tasks and schedules, set checkpoints and deadlines, find and use resources, create products and make them public.

Scaffold Student Learning

Teachers employ a variety of lessons, tools, and instructional strategies to support all students in reaching project goals.

Assess Student Learning

Teachers use formative and summative assessments of knowledge, understanding, and success skills, and include self and peer assessment of team and individual work.

Engage & Coach

Teachers engage students in their learning and work alongside them to identify when they need skill-building, redirection, encouragement, and celebration.

Gold Standard PBL

Seven Project Based
Teaching Practices



When transitioning to PBL, one of the biggest hurdles for many teachers is the need to give up some degree of control over the classroom, and trust in their students. But even though they are more often the "guide on the side" than the "sage on the stage," this most certainly does not mean that

Adapted from *Setting the Standard for Project Based Learning: A Proven Approach to Rigorous Classroom Instruction*, by John Larmer, John Mergendoller, Suzie Boss (ASCD 2015).