Project Based Learning

About
Project based learning (PBL) is working collaboratively over an extended period of time to solve a complex real world problem, demonstrating mastery of knowledge and skills. It is inquiry-based, open-ended, problem-solving, real-world, and involves the instructor acting as a coach. Use it as one tool in your tool bag, but be careful using it with inexperienced students. Be sure to build up core skills first. It can be useful as a final/capstone component.

The High Quality Project Based Learning Framework: 6 Keys to Success

1. **Intellectual Challenge and Accomplishment**
   - It is challenging and rigorous, provoking students into higher level thinking.

2. **Authenticity**
   - It must be based on real-world problems and issues, especially with adult-learners.

3. **Public Product**
   - It leads up to presentations, performances or showcases upon completion. This holds students responsible for their work and helps them disseminate it to others.

4. **Collaboration**
   - A big focus is on working together. There are strategies on how to grade for this – individually or as a group.

5. **Project Management**
   - Students learn soft skills like project management along the way.

6. **Reflection**
   - Students think back on their performance and how/what they learned.

Framing a Good Research Question
These keys require you to pose a focused, effective question to your students. Concentrate on real-world actions which solve a problem or innovate something new.

**BAD:** What is epic poetry?
**BETTER:** How can we write an epic poem reflecting 21st Century values?
**BEST:** Write an epic poem reflecting 21st Century values.

**BAD:** Why is science important in helping solve global warming?
**BETTER:** How should the state improve water quality in Minnesota’s lakes?
**BEST:** Create a new state policy to improve water quality in Minnesota’s lakes.

Framework Adapted from: https://hqpbl.org/resources