

Project Based Learning

Saint Paul College

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://hqpl.org/resources>