



A PROPOSAL FOR PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

An interesting book recently came across my desk—*Learning in Depth: A Simple Innovation That Can Transform Schooling* (Egan, 2010). The author makes the point that education consists of both general knowledge and detailed understanding or deep knowledge. He proposes that students follow the regular curriculum, but with one critical addition: “beginning with their first days of school and continuing until graduation, they will each also study one topic—such as apples, birds, sacred buildings, mollusks, circuses, or stars—in depth. Over the years, with the help and guidance of their supervising teacher, students will expand their understanding of their one topic and build portfolios of knowledge that grow and change along with them. By the time they graduate each student will know as much about his or her topic as almost anyone on earth—and in the process will have learned important, even life-changing lessons about the meaning of expertise, the value of dedication, and the delight of knowing something in depth.”

There are many parallels noted in the book between this approach to Project-based Learning (PBL) and the PBL process recommended by PBLWorks (Boss & Larmer, 2018), formerly the Buck Institute for Education. The Gold Standard PBL promoted by PBLWorks focuses on seven practices integral to PBL:

- Build the Culture
- Design the Plan
- Align to Standards
- Manage Activities
- Assess Student Learning
- Scaffold Student Learning
- Engage and Coach

Refer to both sources to maximize your implementation of PBL.

References

Boss, S. & Larmer, J. (2018). *Project based teaching: How to create rigorous and engaging learning experiences*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Egan, K. (2010). *Learning in depth: A simple innovation that can transform schooling*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.