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Project-Based Learning: Education Done Right

What is project-based learning or PBL? It can be best explained with experiential learning, it happens from learning something but from experience and real-world applications. The main focus of this research is to find out how effective and helpful it is PBL, after gathering information on the subject. Craft my interview questions, and then interviewed two teachers with a long history in project-based learning to further expand the research. With all that set, it was time to interview them, Teacher 1 has about 9 years of experience in PBL. Teacher 2 has 7 years of experience in PBL.

There's a lot of training and learning that needs to be completed by a teacher, in order to create those special learning experiences for the students. Using PBL takes the subject you are learning and applies it at the same time, as it builds towards a final product that has a connection to a real-world problem (L. M. White 1). A lot of the projects are broken down to help students to understand and be engaged in the learning experience, one of the keys to having a successful project is to be really engaging. A lot of the classes that were observed were working with power tools to create a catapult and at the same time learn the math and physics required to calculate different things.

“Students who are good at math, because they memorize the process are really challenged when working with projects,” said Teacher 1. Project-based learning takes it a step further and it applies it to the real world, instead of learning the subject they get to see the uses in the real world. As well as challenge the students to think and get out of the comfort zones, as they are group-based work. PBL helps students build communication skills and be more social.

Adapting Project-Based Learning in schools brings a lot of benefits to help teachers and students. A teacher that was interviewed said, “My class average went up by at least 20% on a college-level test I give, after switching to PBL.” This a very important part of adapting Project-Based Learning as it brings a lot of improvements and it’s very effective. Project is adapted into the class and the materials they will be learning, to help it is broken down to benchmarks and tasks. That helps to set up the materials that will be learned and give a plan to the students to help get from one point to the next so they could have a successful project.

Teacher 1 was asked how PBL can be effective in a classroom they said “PBL is a very effective type of learning, only if the teacher knows what they’re doing.” this is a very important point, Project-Based Learning is available in more schools today, but there is no training that teacher would have to do or take a class to be able to implement Project-Based Learning. There need to be more resources available to the teachers, this will ensure to have a successful implementation of Project-Based Learning. It a big weakness for PBL and leads to fewer schools that adopt it since the teachers have no experience or training.

The development of planning and strategy is a big part of Project-Based Learning (Laelasari 1), it has been shown that it helps to develop different skills that helped students to have an awesome learning experience. Creating those unique learning experiences, to help with

the real-world application aspect of it, the student does not finish with a test but they have a final product that shows all the skills that they have learned with all the benchmarks. “I would never go back to using anything but Project-Based Learning because it helped students learn so much,” said teacher 2. It’s such a powerful way of teaching, it helps grow so many skills, PBL is getting more powerful over time and it’s improved every time the teacher uses it. The teacher takes feedback from students, to try to adapt it to what students like, it’s the most important aspect of PBL that it is student-driven, so students have the choice in the project, teachers are always willing to take their feedback to help improve the learning.

The students always asked the teachers why are we learning this, to know what it has to do in the real world since all concepts that are taught have a connection to the real world in project-based learning there’s no question as to why they learn it. Students get to see it, experience it, and feel the final product they are making, and that shows how the concepts learned can be used in real life. Since doing it this way it is really challenging to learn it but it means students are more engaged in learning and leads to better understanding. So that students can someday apply it to their lives.

It has been shown that project-based learning is a very effective strategy, with the students always participating in group-based projects, learning by problem-solving, also collecting data, and teamwork, as well as the presentation of the results, are very successful.

The project-based learning system enhances a lot of skills for the students, collaboration, and cooperation since it is teamwork focused. It’s set up to focus on the student, teachers set up the projects that are student-driven, throughout the project the teacher is there to help each student with a one-on-one workshop to help the student understand a certain topic needed to

complete the project. “Teachers aren’t teachers anymore, they are facilitators” said teacher 1, teachers are there to help the students understand the topic while giving the freedom to choose a product that will be made at the end and how it will be made, Project-based learning is based off Student choice: the students have choices in the project, teachers take the students feedback and make the experience better, Authentic experience, instead of a boring presentation to show what was learned, the students get to show it off with a real product, Global significance it has to somehow tie into a real-world experience, Exposition of student work, and finally it has to be very engaging so that students are interested and ready to learn.

Students are always motivated to be in class and learn since it’s so engaging, the way this learning process transfers the knowledge to students is very interesting. The project is done to motivate the performance of student activities in preparing a product, for example, the students at a math and physics class calculated a projectile path with the math that was learned and build a device to shoot projectiles, students are able to predict where it will land, how far up it goes, and calculate how fast it is going in less than 15 minutes, the way they learn is by going outside of their comfort zone the teachers challenged them to think and use the skills used to be able to master that skill.

Yes maybe giving students worksheets and practicing the work to remember it, might just work to get a good score on a test, but most students have said that they would forget things after a test just because it’s boring and has no connection to a real-life situation. That’s where Project-Based Learning comes in, students are always engaged with learning and are very excited, in fact, most of the class that was observed said that it’s highly enjoyable and would be recommending it to other students.

Careful planning is necessary to implement a very successful project, where both the teacher and the individual student are benefiting. The teacher focuses on individual students to give workshops and teach the skills needed in order to be able to make a project, a lot of planning goes on for the teacher, sometimes between multiple teachers that share ideas and adapt it into a project that is most likely to grab the students attention, so that it keeps them motivated to learn throughout the project. It helped students to be able to be globally competent, and compete in the workplace that requires you to have more skills than just being good at a subject, because students have seen what the skills they have learned to help in the real world they know how to use the knowledge to apply it, instead of knowing the subject and not know how to apply it to a real-world situation. Project-Based Learning gives the student a lot more skills that will help them in the future that a more traditional learning process.

There are so many good outcomes to the use of Project-Based Learning, students are more challenged so it leads to very successful final projects. Some Projects have gone so long to be featured on websites, to be presented to a school board, or even in a statewide event, and in a large event that is nationwide where 200+ schools attend every year. As impressive as that sounds more of the focus is on the student, they have shown to do significantly better on tests and apply the knowledge to real life, and they are more likely to remember the skills and subjects that were covered in the course.

It's been proven by a lot of research that Project-Based Learning is a very powerful way to teach, most teachers stick with it and never want to go back to teaching the traditional way, but there is a lot of weakness to it. Project-Based Learning is not commonly used by schools, there is not any training or course for teachers to take to be able to implement Project-Based

Learning into the classes. It's not as supported as other learning processes, it needs a lot of attention and to be considered one of the main learning process, it is so powerful to use and gives great results. Students are enjoying the addition of Project-Based Learning to the classes, they are so successful and very useful to the teacher as well as the students.

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