



Ridgemont Local Schools
Service-Learning/PBL Professional Development Process

Building "R" Future
Small Group Sessions, January 28-29, 2014

Envisioning Goals:

1. Service-learning and project based learning which addresses real world problems for real world audiences
2. Customized student learning based on student need and readiness which uses technology as a primary tool
3. Deeper, amplified learning which makes Numbers 1 and 2 purposeful and meaningful to students

Essential/Driving Question: *How can we design/create highly engaging work (learning experiences) that our students cannot resist? What would it look like?*

Small Group Participants/Grade Levels/Subject Areas

Current Status of Project Ideas and/or Implementation

Goals/Next Steps

Resources/Technical Assistance/Feedback/Other Help Needed

Prior to February 25, please complete (as much as possible at this time) the online survey (use the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZD6FS5G>) in preparation for our time together in late February. If you prefer, please complete and fax the survey that follows this page to 614.636.4726.

**Ridgemont Local Schools
Service-Learning/PBL Professional Development Process
Mid-Year Update Survey**

Teacher(s) Responding:

Grade Level(s)/Subject Area(s):

What project ideas/topics have you been exploring/considering so far this year?

What project(s), if any, have you already piloted/completed? If applicable, how did you feel about the outcomes re: your project(s)?

What goal(s) do you have for the remainder of this year? These can relate to your own understanding of service-learning/PBL, as well as to developing and/or implementing additional project ideas.

Goal #1:

Related action steps:

Goal #2:

Related action steps:

What resources/technical assistance/feedback/other help do you need?

What potential goals do you envision for 2014-2015?

Goal #1:

Related action steps:

Goal #2:

Related action steps:

Goal #3:

Related action steps:

What resources/technical assistance/feedback/other help will you need?

PBL: What Does It Take for a Project to Be "Authentic"?

edu edutopia.org/blog/authentic-project-based-learning-john-larmer



Photo credit: Edutopia

Everyone thinks that Project-Based Learning has something to do with "authentic" learning. But not everyone agrees what this means.

Take this quick quiz.

Which of the following projects could be called authentic?

- a) Students learn about endangered species in their region and take action to protect them, including a public awareness campaign, habitat restoration fieldwork and communication with local government officials.
- b) Students design and create a calendar with pictures and information about endangered species, which they sell at a pre-winter break community event and donate the money to an environmental organization.
- c) Students play the role of scientists who need to make recommendations to an environmental organization about how to protect endangered species in various ecosystems around the world.

To authenticity purists, a project is not really authentic unless it is *in* the real world, connected directly to the lives of students and real issues in their communities. By this standard, choice "a" above certainly qualifies, and maybe "b", but probably not "c".

But I think the answer is "d) All of the above."

There is a sliding scale of authenticity for projects, which goes from "not authentic" to "somewhat authentic" to "fully authentic."

Not Authentic

PBL means the students' work does not resemble the kind of work done in the world outside of school, or it is not intended to have an effect on anything apart from an academic purpose. A not-authentic "dessert project" would involve the kind of assignment students are typically given in school: compose an essay, create a poster or model, write and present a book report, or make a PowerPoint presentation on a topic they've researched. Beyond their teacher and maybe their classmates, there's no public audience for students' work, no one actually uses what they create, and the work they do is not what people do in the real world.

PBL means students are doing work that *simulates* what happens in the world outside of school. In a project that is somewhat authentic, students could play a role (as in choice "c" above) -- scientists, engineers, advisors to the President, website designers, etc. -- who are placed in a scenario that reflects what might actually occur in the real world. Or students could create products that, although they are not actually going to be used by people in the real world, are the kinds of products people do use.

Fully Authentic

PBL means students are doing work that is *real to them* -- it is authentic to their lives -- or the work has a *direct impact on or use in the real world*. The "real world," by the way, could still be school, which is a very real place for students. In these projects, like choices "a" and "b" above, students might advocate for a cause, take action to improve their community, perform a service for someone, create a physical artifact to display or distribute, or express their own ideas about a topic in various media.

A project can be authentic in four ways, some of which may be combined in one project:

1. The project meets a real need in the world beyond the classroom, or the products that students create are used by real people.

For example:

- Students propose designs for a new play area in a nearby park.
- Students plan and execute an environmental clean-up effort in their community.
- Students create a website for young people about books they like.
- Students write a guide and produce podcasts for visitors to historic sites in their county.
- Students serve as consultants to local businesses, advising them on how to increase sales to young people.
- Students develop a conflict resolution plan for their school.

2. The project focuses on a problem, issue or topic that is relevant to students' lives -- the more directly, the better - or on a problem or issue that is actually being faced by adults in the world students will soon enter.

For example:

- Students create multimedia presentations that explore the question, "How do we make and lose friends?"
- Students learn physics by investigating the question, "Why don't I fall off my skateboard?"
- Students form task forces to study possible effects of climate change on their community and recommend actions that could be taken.
- Students decide whether the U.S. should intervene in a conflict inside another country that is causing a humanitarian crisis.

3. The project sets up a scenario or simulation that is realistic, even if it is fictitious.

For example:

- Students are asked by the Archbishop of Mexico in 1818 to recommend a location for the 22nd mission in California. (This happens to be a featured project on BIE's new online program, PBLU.org.)
- Students act as architects who need to design a theatre that holds the maximum number of people, given constraints of available land, cost, safety, comfort, etc.
- Students play the role of United Nations advisors to a country that has just overthrown a dictator and needs advice about how to start a democracy.
- Students recommend which planet in our solar system ought to be explored by the next space probe as they compete for NASA funding.
- Students are asked to propose ideas for a new TV reality show that educates viewers about science topics such as evolutionary biology and the geologic history of the earth.

4. The project involves tools, tasks or processes used by adults in real settings and by professionals in the workplace. (This criterion for authenticity could apply to any of the above examples of projects.)

For example:

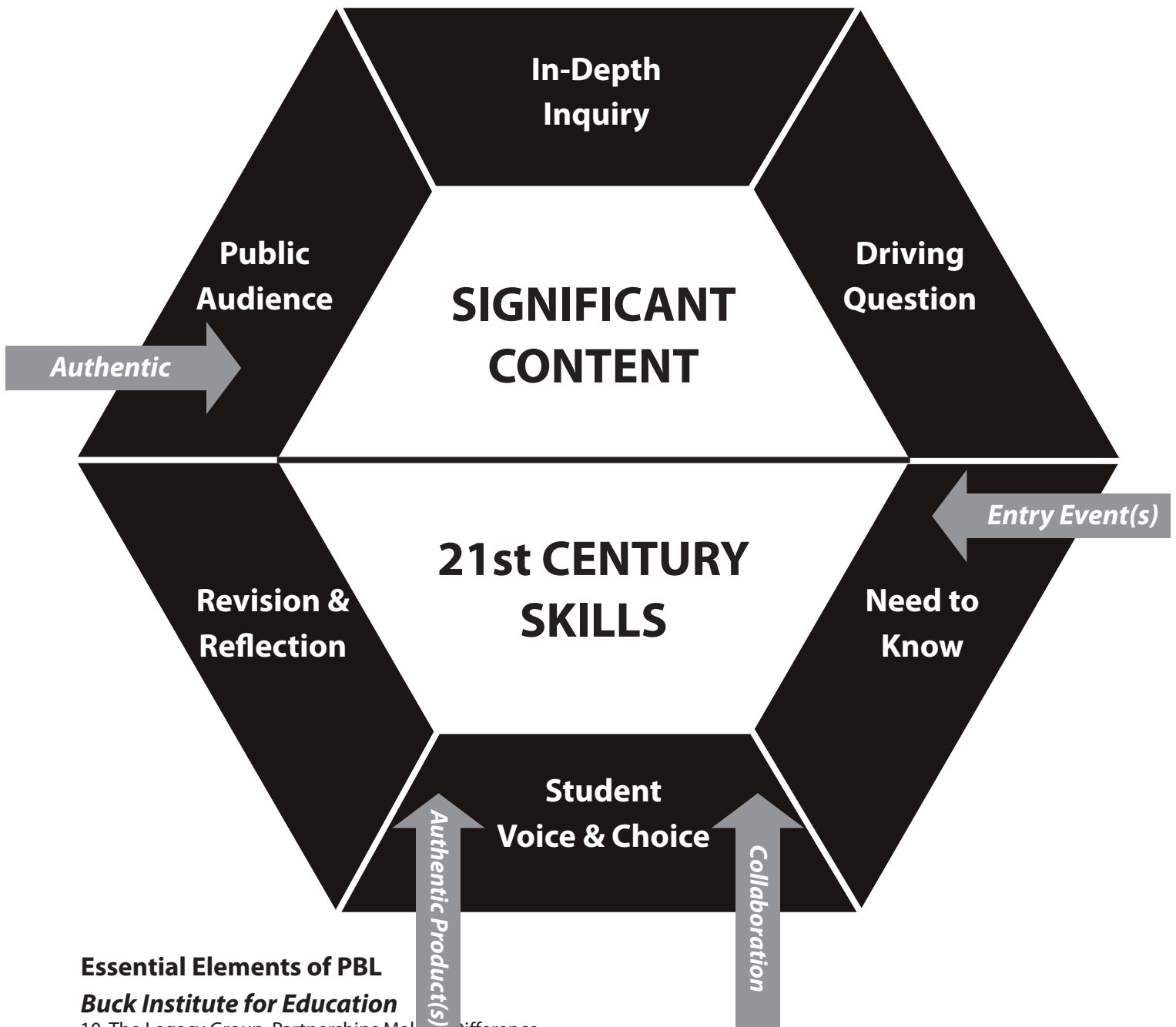
- Students investigating the physics of skateboarding test various surfaces for speed, using the scientific method and tools scientists use.
- Students exploring the issue of how we make and lose friends conduct surveys, analyze data, record video interviews, and use online editing tools to assemble their presentations.
- Students acting as U.N advisors to an emerging democracy analyze existing constitutions, write formal reports, and present recommendations to a panel.

I agree that fully authentic projects are often the most powerful and effective ones, because they are so engaging for students and allow them to feel like they can have an impact on their world -- so the more of them, the better. But if you can't get there yet, don't feel like you're failing the authenticity test in your projects. Some is still better than none!

PBL Definition

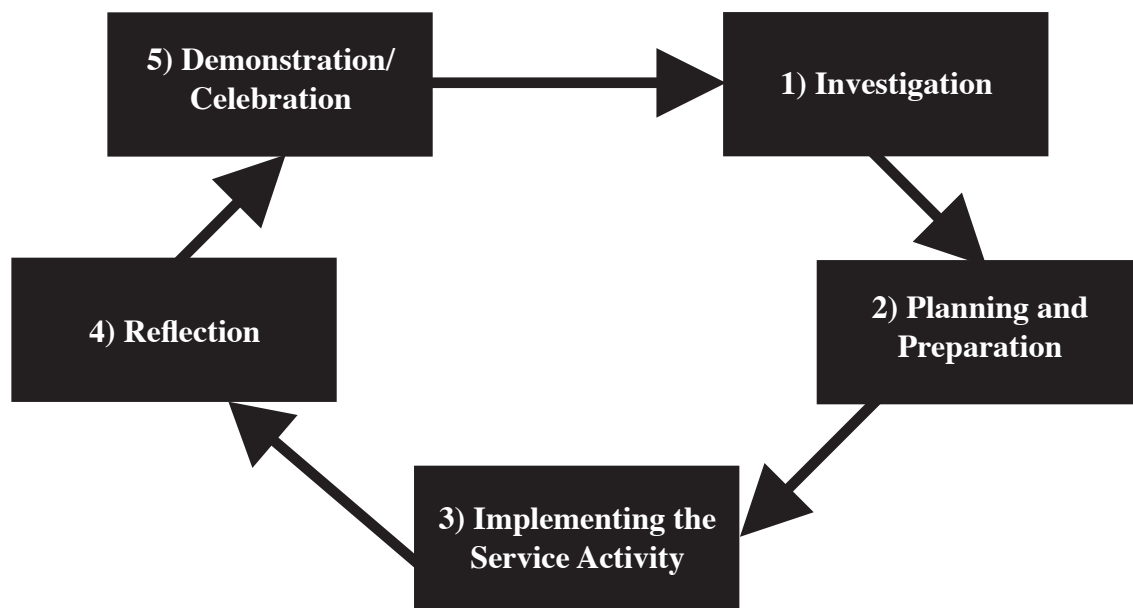
Project Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional approach built upon authentic learning activities that engage student interest and motivation. These activities are designed to answer a question or solve a problem and generally reflect the types of learning and work people do in the everyday world outside the classroom. PBL is generally done by groups of students working together toward a common goal.

PBL is a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning essential knowledge and life-enhancing skills through an extended, student-influenced inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks.



K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit

Service-learning: An Overview



A typical service-learning project includes five components:

1. **Investigation:** Teachers and students investigate the community problems that they might potentially address. Investigation typically involves some sort of research and mapping activity.
2. **Planning and Preparation:** Teachers, students, and community members plan the learning and service activities, and address the administrative issues needed for a successful project.
3. **Action (Implementing the Service Activity):** The “heart” of the project: engaging in the meaningful service experience that will help your students develop important knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and will benefit the community.
4. **Reflection:** Activities that help students understand the service-learning experience and to think about its meaning and connection to them, their society, and what they have learned in school; and
5. **Demonstration/Celebration:** The final experience when students, community participants and others publicly share what they have learned, celebrate the results of the service project, and look ahead to the future.

Assessment is part of all activities to ensure that you can measure the learning and development that occur through service-learning, and to help you diagnose student needs, provide feedback, and improve instruction. These components are the building blocks of any service-learning project.

K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit. Created by RMC Research Corporation 8 for Learn and Serve America’s National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

