

Project Based Learning *Transcript of Speakers*

Module 1. Laying the Groundwork for Project Based Learning Topic A. Project Based Learning and 21st Century Skills

Clip 1: What Is Project Based Learning?

REGINALD RAY: What do you want to know? It sounds so basic and so simple, but really, it's a revolutionary question that teachers in the past have not asked their students. What do you want to know?

TINA SMITH: It's a different kind of way for students to learn. I like it a lot, only because then they can take charge of their learning. They can discover on their own, they can figure things out on their own, and that's really what we want from the students. We want them to be able to figure out how do you solve problems on your own, because as adults, that's what they're going to have to do, daily.

JOSHUA CHROSNIAK: It lets the students kind of take control and say, "Well, the teacher's not the only one that has all the knowledge. I have knowledge too. I can figure something out on my own and work through a problem."

VOICEOVER: Welcome to Educational Impact's Project-Based learning program. As you go through this course, you will learn how the many familiar strategies you may have practiced in your classroom for

years can come together into a powerful project-based framework. This framework not only gives your students a deeper understanding of the content, but also gives them an opportunity to develop skills now recognized as essential too to life in the 21st Century. Skills like collaboration, creativity, communication, and critical thinking. These are the job skills they will need long after they leave the school environment. PBL expert Reggie Ray, a host of teachers, and the administration from a PBL-based charter school, and many examples of real classrooms actually using PBL will guide you through basic concepts, project design, the student's perspective, the teacher's perspective, how to assess project-based learning, and the different role players and stakeholders in a successful PBL implementation.

REGINALD RAY:

What would think of in a traditional teaching environment is the teacher stands up at the front of the class, the teacher gives all of the information, the teacher becomes like the center of information delivery. They're kind of like the sage on the stake.

SHARON JONES:

I grew up where we just sat in rows, and we thought about what the teacher told us to think about. And the discipline part of that has its merit, but it really did not make our minds soar. Project-based learning dose that. It allows the student to soar. It allows the student to get on the inside of themselves and bring it out.

REGINALD RAY: With project-based learning, in order to really bring the focus back to highlighting the students as the center of what we do, we have to kind of get to a more of a facilitating role. So now the teacher becomes the facilitator for instruction to happen. Many teachers have done a lot of these concepts all along the way. It just wasn't framed in the buzz word of project-based learning. The actual framework of project-based learning is it just provides a systematic, focused approach on doing some of those good strategies that have come out of great teaching for years.

Clip 2: Using Project Based Learning to Create Meaningful Instruction

VOICEOVER: Throughout this program, you will hear reflections from teachers, students, and the administration from the Pearl Academy. This is a charter school in Cleveland, Ohio that is dedicated to project-based learning. Their observations, along with real classroom projects in action, will give you insight into how PBL looks and feels when implemented into a real school environment.

SHARON JONES: This school, Pearl Academy, was designed for project-based learning. One of the things that we did when we were planning for project-based learning is that I said to the teacher, "What is it that the student wants to know?" That was difficult for the teacher. So one of the teachers, I challenged the teacher. Go back into the

classroom and ask your students what is it that they want to learn? She did that. And she developed a list of about twelve items that the students wanted to learn. I want to know about dinosaurs, I want to know about turtles, I want to know about stars, I want to know how the earth was created. She made a whole list, hung it in her room, and so every time she starts a new project, she liens it off. So what's happened? The child thinks that they have arranged a curriculum. A child thinks that they are guiding their learning. The child thinks that they are having fun, and they are. But really what has happened is that only thing the teacher did is they rearranged the curriculum a little bit, and instead of starting on page one and going to page 36, they went to page 15, or they went to page 25, then they jumped back to page two. They released their creativity, and in releasing their creativity, they can use more standards, they can differentiate more, and they can make the students have fun. And they learn more.

REGINALD RAY:

In this process, we're going to show you examples of how project-based learning can help build so much more of a rich learning environment for your students through interactive, authentic assessments, through engaging your community, your family, and all of the stakeholders in the process. Project-based learning is one of the strategies that will help you provide meaningful learning opportunities for your students to where they can do hands-on

activities, where learning can be more than just about memorizing facts. Learning different key terms and concepts, but learning becomes more of a hands-on, interactive, real-world situation that they can become true learners, and that information becomes more solidified within their mind, and within their context of what they're learning and what they're doing.

Clip 3: Project Based Learning Misconceptions

CHRISTIE BUSCH: It was a big adjustment this year coming into project-based learning from traditional teaching. I had to refigure lessons, how I thought about standards, and how I thought about teaching in general.

TODD HOFER: Once you get through the initial shock of, "Okay, I've never done this before, it's new," if you're a traditional teacher, where it's, okay, you have this lesson plan for this day, you teach your lesson, they practice, you give them assessment, next day new lesson. Once you break that mold, then it – I think it's fun. It becomes – I think it becomes easier. I think a lot of people in general – no one likes change. We get set in our ways, things – we're content with the way things are going now.

SHARON PAJK: I was very hesitant at first with project-based learning because it involves a lot of the kids thinking on their own and working

together as a group. And because I have certain expectations in my classroom and things, I was worried that the kids would lose focus on their projects, or whatever they were given to do. So that was my main concern. But actually, it tended to be quite the opposite.

REGINALD RAY:

One of the things that we find with project-based learning is that a lot of teachers have a lot of misconceptions. They're scared about taking on this new initiative. What is it going to mean for me in my classroom, how am I ever going to teach everything that I need to teach. Content standards become one of the huge concerns, because we live in a day and age where standardized tests are a heavy focus, and what we do in the classroom, what we do in education. And for someone to come in and say, "You have to do this new, inventive project-oriented way of teaching and method," it's scary for a lot of teachers. I don't know how I'm going to do this. How am I going to get my students to work together. A lot of the things that teachers fear about project-based learning, once they get into the methodology and they start working with the concepts and start working in their classroom, they really find that it tends to work itself out. So when you do project-based learning, you're able to work with the content, really pull it in, and help students understand it in a deeper way. And as we talk and go through, you'll get a chance to kind of see how that can come together.

SHARON JONES: Project-based learning is the cutting edge. You must have your standards, you must teach to the standard, you must know what the objective is, you must know where you want to go. You have to know those things. You must collect data, you must assess, you must do all of those things, but in all of that, you can create, have fun, and teach every student the way they need to be taught. Really project-based learning doesn't say, "Throw out all of the best practices instruction." It doesn't say that. It says, "Take the best strategies from direct instruction, bring it into the classroom, open it up to the students so that they can learn, and develop a project off of that."

CHRISTIE BUSCH: I think I'm a better teacher now than I was teaching the traditional way. I give my kids an opportunity to put their input into their learning and their learning styles, and it just makes the year so much more successful.

Clip 4: The First Step: Establish Essential Questions for Your Project

SHARON PAJK: In project-based learning, they are doing things, they are answering their own questions. The kids formulate a question that they want to know more about, and basically they're engaged that way.

CHRISTIE BUSCH: I usually don't pick the projects for project-based learning. I actually sat my students down and asked them, "Other than math and reading, in your other core subjects, what are things you want to learn in first grade?" And we actually just compiled a long list of things that the children were interested in, and that's what we go off of. And I just find the resources, standards, and the materials that they need in order to match that project.

CHRISTIE BUSCH: What did your class vote for for our new class pet?

STUDENTS: Turtle!

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Turtle! Who is excited to get our new class turtle? I'm very excited. But, Mrs. Bush is kind of worried. Does anyone know why I might be a little worried? Arianna, do you know why I might be worried?

STUDENT: Because we don't know how to take care of him.

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Oh, we don't know anything. I don't know anything about turtles. I have never had a turtle before. Has anyone else had a turtle before?

STUDENTS: [All talking]

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Okay, so some of you might know. We need to come up with some questions. We need to do lots of investigation on what we might need or need to do for our turtle. So who can give me some questions on what we need to investigate in order to get our class turtle? Piper?

STUDENT: How much does food cost?

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Yes, we need to know how much does this turtle's food cost.
Absolutely. Adam?

STUDENT: What do turtles eat?

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Oh, we've got to know what the turtle eats! I have no idea what turtles eat. There's lots of questions that we need to know.
Manny?

STUDENT: How do turtles behave?

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Oh, how do turtles behave? Do we want a mean turtle?

STUDENTS: No.

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Do we kind of want a happy turtle that we can kind of take out of the cage every so often?

STUDENTS: Yes.

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Yes. Josh, can you give me one?

STUDENT: We have to learn how to pet it.

CHRISTIE BUSCH: How about how to learn to handle it, hold it. There we go. We want to know how to handle that turtle. We don't want to hurt it, do we?

STUDENTS: No.

CHRISTIE BUSCH: No. Sasha?

STUDENT: How do we take care of it.

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Oh, how do we take care of it? I have one for you. We went to the zoo yesterday, and we seen turtles, and we need to know what about its habitat? Who can tell me something about what we might need to investigate to make sure that this turtle has the correct habitat that we need? Juliana?

STUDENT: How to give their favorite snack.

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Favorite snacks. We have all about their food. Can we put the turtle, you think, in the fishbowl?

STUDENTS: No!

CHRISTIE BUSCH: We need to find out what kind of shelter this turtle needs. We know we can't put him in the fish tank, and we can't give him a blue chair, right?

STUDENTS: No!

CHRISTIE BUSCH: No. We need to find out what does this turtle need for its habitat. So far we have six really good questions that we need to investigate further. Elise?

STUDENT: How much does a turtle cost?

CHRISTIE BUSCH: We have how much does the food – we don't have how much does the turtle cost. Who's paying for the turtle?

STUDENT: You.

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Oh, then we really better definitely find out how much that turtle costs. All right, so we have all these great questions, and we need to come up with maybe just one that we'll type all this stuff in together. So we're going to talk about that in a second, but I want to know how are some ways that our class is going to be able to find out about all these questions? There's a lot of questions – that's a lot of answers to find out. How are we going to be able to find these out, what can we do? Raven, what can we do?

STUDENT: Go on the internet.

CHRISTIE BUSCH: We could go on the internet. Mrs. Bush always uses that really big word that begins with the letters I-N as in in. What do we need to do on the computer? We are going to invest... Everybody?

STUDENTS: Investigate!

CHRISTIE BUSCH: We have to investigate and explore. We need to find out on the internet. Who can give me another great way that we can look at our turtle and see what it needs? Sierra?

STUDENT: Go to the pet store.

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Oh, we could go to the pet store. Do you think we could have someone from the pet store come into our class and teach us all about a turtle?

STUDENTS: Yes!

CHRISTIE BUSCH: I bet we could, and I bet that would be a really awesome, fun day for you. How about we have one other thing I think we could really use. What do we use every day in here? What is something that we can look in all these different things and find all this information out?

STUDENT: We could look in a book.

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Books! Oh, my goodness, look. I have one right here. Books! We could use these wonderful books to find out all about turtles. We went to the zoo yesterday. Can we use our knowledge from the zoo to help us out on some of these questions?

STUDENTS: Yes!

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Yes, we can. Our question for this project is we need to know what we need, and what we need to do, to take care of our class pet turtle. Right? Good question?

STUDENTS: Yes!

CHRISTIE BUSCH: Good.

SHARON JONES: The most important part, I think, about project-based learning is that you ask an essential question. You're asking the students a question rather than telling the students what you want them to know. You ask them the question, and they come back to themselves, and to you, and to each other with the answer.

JESSICA STANFORD: Like I said, when you bring that essential question to the students, they kind of gear where they're going to go with it, and sometimes we're just thinking, "Oh, we're going to hit science standards." But they're the ones pulling in those math standards and those English/Language Arts standards and those Social Studies standards. So when you leave the learning up to the kids, like I said, I think they're pushing themselves a little bit further than we would. So when you come with an essential question first, I believe that those standards kind of fall into place.

Clip 5: Powerful Project Based Learning Suggestions for Every Classroom

STUDENT: Project-based learning is like when you get to work in groups with your friends, or with other people that you would like to work

with, and it's like actually what healthy living is, or – because we're doing this project on healthy living, just like Mr. Crozmat taught us, that we're gonna be researching up some websites that show you how you have to eat healthy and make sure your weight's okay, and one's gonna be the reporter, and then you get to design your own – you can have a restaurant, a poster board, or like, just a regular logo. A logo – a logo is – we've been working on this in art for a couple of days – it's where you get to make your own designs, and it can be the name of your restaurant, or the poster board, and that – what my group is, is we're called the Fruity Juicy Smoothie, and we're going to be doing it out of a cardboard box, and it's – that's going to be our restaurant's name. I think it's a good project because it tells you what healthy living does for you, and how it can make you more healthier and more exercise and stuff. So I think it's good.

TINA SMITH:

Last year, I worked with sixth and seventh grade math, and I was teaching statistics, and after teaching them the mean, median, mode, range, and I used stats for basketball players to help them to understand how do basketball teams come together. So I gave them the tasks of creating their own basketball team, and I gave them stats from the Trailblazers and from the Cavaliers. Well, the students had to work in teams, and they both are – three or four students came together and looked at these statistics to decide,

“Well, should I pick this player because they had more free-throws than the other player Or, should I pick this player because they’re taller than most players?” Whatever they would – decided to use – and I used those stats in order to make this decision – the students liked it, they were interested, because it was something that they could relate to. They actually felt like they were a part of some type of big decision, even though it was pretend. They knew it was pretend, but they loved it.

JESSICA STANFORD: We have done a few this year. We’ve done a science one about plants, and brought in other curriculums for it. We’ve done math with plants, and done our writing and our ELA standards with the plants. Our biggest one that we’ve done so far as we went on a field-trip to the zoo, and the students geared their learning towards what they wanted to see at the zoo. So we met the needs of the standards by asking them the needs and wants of animals. We also used maps. They created their own maps to go to the zoo, and then we saw how those maps compared to the maps at the school. So they were using real-life situations to gain that knowledge that they needed.

JOSHUA CHROSNIAK: Actually, one in particular that I’ve done I did with a seventh grade class where we talked about human anatomy and body systems, and it’s something that they were studying in science class, so I

talked to the science teacher about what she had talked about with the kids first, and then each kid laid down on a life-sized piece of paper, traced out their body, and then we used Tempera paint to paint an interpretation of the insides of their body. I tried not to be that be-all of knowledge, and let the kids kind of experiment. You know, what would your insides look like? What colors do you think are on the inside of your body. It gave them a chance to really explore, and really try to understand what is on the inside of my body? What does that really look like? And the result of that was very surprising. They very much enjoyed it. I do try to be more technical in my artworks and what I teach the kids as far as what art is. It's important for me that they understand why they're making art, they understand what art means, how it's connected to the rest of the world. I think the kids then have a fuller understanding of the world around them, because when I'm pulling different elements in from other places, then kids can see the world in a different way. They can understand something in a different way, and they also understand that art isn't just making an image, and then that's the end of it. That it actually means something, it represents something, and again, how it relates to the rest of the world around us.

TODD HOFER: Being able to sell it to the students as life-applicable is huge. And I think that's really the key behind all of it is selling it to them as

they want to learn, they want to participate. It's not boring anymore.

Clip 6: What Should I Expect From My Students Once They Complete Their Projects?

REGINALD RAY: It's really focused on our students. Our students is why we're here. What's going to best set them up and prepare them for the things that they're going to face in their world, what's going to be in their life after they leave our environment? So the things that we do have to be focused on what's best for them.

SHARON JONES: They can research, they can create, they can emulate.

TINA SMITH: You can see a whole new side when student work together and collaborate. And also when they feel – or they take ownership of their project, and their piece that they're working on, you can see a whole different side of the student, and that's what I really love about when they're working on their project.

KRISTINE McCUTCHEON: The rewards are seeing the end product and seeing the students learn to work together, and learn to work collaboratively in that environment. And seeing some of those students creativity come through, through project-based learning, because that's definitely more of an avenue to get students creativity to come out.

SHARON JONES: It is really an excellent process. It's really a mindset. Project-based learning is really a philosophy. It's a way of opening up your mind, it's a way of opening up your – all the possibilities of getting to every type of student and teaching them the way they need to be taught.

Clip 7: Additional Learning Activities to Reinforce Your Understanding of PBL

VOICE OVER: There are six activities in this program. They are optional, and are meant to help deepen your understanding of the various elements of PBL as you go through the modules. These will be downloadable PDFs, and will appear in the activities field to the right of your video box.

REGINALD RAY: As you participate in some of the activities within project-based learning, you will actually learn project-based learning as if you were involved in the process. It would be almost blasphemous for us to not engage you in the process as we talk about how well people learn by being engaged in projects and inside of the process. You'll go through developing the driving question, beginning with the end in mind. We want you to plan out a project, set up your assessments. We'll also have you participate in some of the activities where you will put yourself into the role of a student. You see it from a teacher's perspective, as well as from a students' perspective, because if you don't understand both

sides of the context, both sides of that dynamic, it doesn't give you the right perspective as to why as a teacher you do things the way that you do. As best we can, we'll put you into those situations where you can learn the information, not just from sitting and watching, but also being actively involved in doing some of the strategies and processes that we talk about within this module, and in the context of this learning process.

VOICEOVER:

Here are some quick tips to get the most from your online learning experience. At the end of a video clip, click the next button to play each successive video clip. You also have the option to expand the video and bullets to full-screen for easier viewing. If you look at the right-hand side of the program page, you will frequently, but not always, see links to supplemental handouts and learning activities. These are optional resources, but are strongly recommended. These handout sections provide documents referenced in the video. Be sure to check with your instructor assignment tab for your required assignments if you have a group leader. Don't forget the Add to Journal button to use as your personal note-taking tool. And finally, at the end of a module, be sure to check the menu page to take your assessments when a module has an assessment.