Project Based Learning in the Secondary Classroom
Jeffrey Parks
Assistant Principal
Clinton High School
Clinton, SC
jeffreyparks@lcscd56g.com

Karen Teague
Assistant Principal
Emerald High School
Greenwood, SC
teaguek@gwd50.org
What do these words have in common?

Creativity
Collaboration
Interpersonal Skills
Rigorous

Perseverance
Self-Direction
Critical Thinking
Technology
How do we as educators create learning opportunities that promote the qualities that prepare our students to be effective in the workplace?
You have multiple ways to assess students (content, written skills, oral skills, collaboration, agency).

You will develop stronger relationships with your students.

You can create partnerships in your community.

You can individualize learning for the students in your classroom.

You can work across academic disciplines.

Notice the differences in a PBL classroom as opposed to a traditional classroom.
Why Project Based Learning Works for Students

It creates a pathway to success for each student through the assessment of both academic and real world skills.

It gives students opportunities to learn both collaboratively and individually.

It allows students to become active participants in their learning as they construct it literally minute to minute.

It gives students ownership of their groups and their classrooms.

It develops soft skills in students.

How does this classroom compare to a traditional classroom?
Creating a PBL

**Step 1**

Know your essential question and your problem statement.

Our essential question for a unit revolves around our standards; our problem statement is how we take those standards and give it real world meaning.

Consider how your content might connect to your school, your community, or our world.

Think about what will provide relevance to students.
Creating a PBL

**Step 2**
Create a plan for your project.

- What standards will you cover?
- What protocols will you use?
- How will you assess students?
- How will groups work?
- How much time will you devote (both to certain tasks and the project as a whole)?
- What will the public product entail?
Creating a PBL

**Step 3**

Design an “Entry Event” and an “Elevator Pitch” to get students thinking

The entry event is a classroom simulation that connects the real world to your content area.

The elevator pitch is how you are going to provide relevance to your students for the project; this is where you make it “real” for the students.
Step 4.
Include your community resources to provide authenticity.

This gives a sense of purpose to your students.
The community will value what you do; it creates a wonderful partnerships.

Keep in mind that community can be as small as a group of students in your school or as big as the world.
Examples of PBL’s in the High School Classroom

**AP Human Geography - Stop Hunger Now**

- Combined study of agriculture with population
- Created a fundraising idea for Interact/ROTC to raise money for Stop Hunger Now
- Created a commercial to entice students to participate in fundraiser
- Created Infographics on particular areas of the world where SHN supplies food
- Created t-shirt designs for the Interact/ROTC/AP class to where when they participated in Stop Hunger Now
Supply and Demand

• Economics - supply and demand
• Students created t-shirt designs to sell for the school
• Created surveys and conducted research to determine at which price students would buy a particular design
• Compared cost to amount of students willing to purchase the shirt
• Created supply and demand curves to go along with their research
Opportunity Costs

• Two different business owners came and presented on their business (coffee house and a pizza restaurant)
• Students worked in teams to determine incentives to increase sales at each business
• Created surveys that were sent out through social media to area college and high school students
• Used that information to create proposals for the business owners
• Each team presented their suggestions to the owner/manager
Holocaust Museum

- Studying how people face adversity
- Students chose various topics related to the Holocaust to study further in groups
- Created individual displays that they would present their information for 5 minute sequences
- Set up a museum in the school gym where other classes came to “tour”
- Each group presented on their topic a minimum of 15 times to various age ranges
EMERALD HIGH SCHOOL
HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
MUSEUM
Great Depression Simulation

Start with Dorthea Lange’s picture

- Students use this as a starting point
- Spark inquiry into a topic of interest
- No two students can choose the same picture
- Can choose topic and presentation piece
Great Depression Simulation

Tell the story of the Great Depression in Greenwood, SC through the lens of a variety of perspectives:

- Diary entries
- Radio broadcasts
- Newspapers
- Models of housing
- Plays and skits

- Made connections to the homeless issue in our community
- Brainstorm ways to help those individuals
- Future opportunities to be involved in the community and with Meg’s Closet (homeless shelter for needy women and children)
Why does Project Based Learning work so well?

It allows student choice.
It allows student voice.
It gives them an opportunity to explore new options for exploration.