Nuts and Bolts of Project Based Learning
Successful Projects…

- Arise from a meaningful question
- Take time
- Require investigation
- Are semi-structured, requiring substantial student input
- Follow a timeline with articulated milestones to be reached along the way
- Require a tangible end product
• Successful Projects, cont. …
  ❑ Include presentation for a real audience
  ❑ Include moments of reflection
  ❑ Blur subject area boundaries—
    emphasize issues, skills, concepts
  ❑ Blur line between “slow” and “fast” learners
  ❑ Create a culture of accomplishment
  ❑ Connect students with adult mentors
  ❑ Conceive of teachers as “coaches/ facilitators”
    and students as “colleagues”
Project Planning Sheet

• Begin with the end in mind
• Create your Essential Questions
• Plan the Assessment: Products, Artifacts and Criteria
• Map the Project (--the day to day)
• Identify materials needed
• Differentiation
• Reflection
• Assessing Projects

– Assessment starts on Day One
– Develop criteria (standards) from models
– Co-construct assessment with students
– Include presentation for a real audience
– Include moments of reflection
– Collegial pedagogy → mutual vulnerability
– Assessment looks at the project design, too!

**Essential Question**
Who Owns Assessment?
• **What and How to Assess**

• **Content**
  – Mid and Final Products (individual slice)
  – Quiz or exam
  – Student reflection
  – Other ?? (Expert consultants?)
  – Note: Look for “knowing transformation” of content

• **Process**
  – Observation
  – Work logs
  – Evidence of drafting, revision, participation in critique, etc.
  – Other ???
• What and How to Assess

• **Skills**
  – Observation
  – Product analysis
  – Performance
  – Student reflection/testimony
  – Other ???

• **Surprises**
  – Observation
  – Student reflection/testimony
  – What’s “off the grid?”
• Caveat!!

• **No Group Grades!!**

• (Group product, individual accountability)

• **Balances to strike (always):**
  • Content, process, skills
  • Achievement, growth
  • Other ??
Begin With The End In Mind

• What do you ENVISION?
  ○ Think IDEAL here
  ○ Try to avoid “This won’t work because…”
  ○ We can find solutions to problems later!
Create Your Essential Questions

• This is the class’ focal point
  ○ What should everyone UNDERSTAND as a result of completing this project?
• Example: How clean/safe is our water?
What is your Product?

- What will the students produce?
- When will they produce them?
- You need multiple deadlines and critique sessions
Product: Criteria

• Not just what students will do, but HOW WELL it should be done
• Rubrics
• Show samples of beautiful work
MAP The Project

• Backwards Design
  o Begin with the end in mind
  o How can you make sure every student is successful
MAP The Project – Build Your Calendar

• How long will your skill/concept lessons take?
• What does your schedule look like: pull outs, holidays, testing…
  o Have several critique sessions!
  o Make final products due one week before exhibitions
Identify Materials Needed

• Uber-important, but sometimes neglected
• Has been the downfall of many a project
• Take your time make a list, go shopping
• Organize for student accessibility
Differentiation

• Are there entry points for all?
• Build in supports for struggling students
• Challenge work--how do you push students to work deeper?
Reflection

• Take the time for student reflection-look at, think about, discuss final products
• Student self-assessment, What am I proud of? How can I do improve?
• Take the time for teacher reflection-look at, think about, discuss final products