

- **Teach what you are PASSIONATE about, and begin with the end in mind**-take the time to truly visualize what the end product(s) will look like, and how students will exhibit their work
- **Become obsessed with the project!** That seems like a strange thing to write, but if you can, choose a project that you are kind of obsessed with - that you would want to research, learn about and be engaged in even if you didn't have a classroom full of students you were trying to engage in it, also. Base your project on something you truly care about.
- **Do the project yourself first** (OK, that was Jeff Robin's - [What PBL Is - Video](#))-really, it's not just a catch phrase; it takes a long time, but is well worth the effort
- **Think about the AUDIENCE** you are creating the project for, because they are often at the heart of why you're doing something. Make sure the audience is meaningful to your students and extends outside the walls of your classroom.
- **Plan the ENTIRE project before you begin teaching it**-this will ensure that all of the work that you do is relevant, meaningful, and connected to your project; it will take a LOT of time on the front end, but will lead to much more harmonious weeks
- When planning, **use a planning sheet to map out your ideas**. From there, create action items under each activity then **TUNE IT WITH STUDENTS and STAFF!** (try to branch out into other schools for students and staff) Save this document or these documents so that you can just add student work to it to make a process board to showcase at student Exhibitions.
- **Get the kids excited about the project and involved in the planning!** When students recognize their voice and choice in the project, they are more likely to do the work with enthusiasm. I find it easier, when times get tough, to be able to say, "Remember, we decided together that this is important and will pay off," instead of trying to convince them to do something just because I want them to.
- **Use project packets.** This idea came from the students. Instead of having homework packets, I design project packets over the weekend with individual missions and group missions. During project work time, students can choose what they want to work on and I don't have to spend every morning or afternoon in the copy room. I can show you examples. I give them out on Monday and students choose whether they are due on Friday at the end of class or Monday at the beginning. The packets contain about 5-7 activities: reading and writing activities and critical thinking games all related to the project. The packets also include project steps. Ideally, every mission is geared toward completing the project.
- **Do mini-workshops** with small groups on aspects of reading and writing or your subject matter for 10-15 minutes. Make these mini-workshops like lessons: the good 'ol (hook, intro, guided practice, individual practice) then switch and do them with the other half. More participation from quiet students this way and you have an opportunity to deliver lesson 4 times.
- **Be thoughtful about what you assign and what you plan to grade**-think about how much time you will need to grade/assess each piece, and plan accordingly; spending your entire weekend grading may not be good for you.
- Before each day or piece of a project, spend time thinking about **why are we doing this?** This will help you answer those inevitable questions, and if there is no good answer, it might help eliminate the busy work.
- **Build in time for structured critique.** Get students looking for particular content and checking other students' research during critique sessions. The more specific the questions for critique, the more you can share the load with students to check each other's work (and learn content in the process). For example, on a research brief, have students list their resources and ask their peer editor to check those resources and evaluate their notes for "truthiness".
- **Spend more time on project design than any other aspect of your work**-awesome, engaging projects are the key to positive student achievement and behavior (the best classroom management is well-planned activities).