

Title of Session: Problem Based Curriculum

Moderator: BJ Berquist

Title of File: 20060619pbc

Date: June 19, 2006

Room: Problem Based Curriculum Group

BjB: Hopefully, Chris will be here soon to lead the discussion

BjB: while we wait for Chris, how about starting with introductions?

StephaniB1: I teach English and creative writing in an urban city high school.

BjB: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania

StephaniB1: Do you collaborate with writing teachers?

CrystalDC: I teach math at a middle school in Utah.

BjB: I love to collaborate, Stephanie!

BjB: I am a member of the WriteTalk group also...great group for writing

StephaniB1: Bj, how do you integrate problem solving in an abstract artistic way?

BjB: creating a product is a good way to do that, Stephanie

BjB: a poster or a TV ad, etc.

BjB: you can also use the Tapped In student campus and have your students post reflective writing to the threaded discussion board

StephaniB1: Ok. What is learning transfer? I guess I mean does it happen extrinsically with students? Do you help students with process by giving guided steps?

SusanMS joined the room.

BjB: I think you have to provide guided learning so the students can learn to transfer knowledge

BjB: Hi, Susan

SusanMS: Hi Bj

StephaniB1: Makes sense.

BjB: once you've modeled the guided learning then the students can work more independently

SusanMS listens quietly

BjB: Stephanie's question was how do students demonstrate transfer of knowledge, Susan

BjB: anyone else have any input on the topic?

SusanMS ponders the answer

DavidWe: In high school, we created two episodes of "Biological Jeopardy" with answers and questions

DavidWe: We videotaped the episodes and it was very rewarding that the biology teachers took ALL the biology classes to see our production

DavidWe . o O (we also nailed one question, almost word for word, on the Bio. Achievement Test)

DavidWe: We also made a lot of spoofy commercials, but...we were in 10th grade

SusanMS: For what age/grade level, Stephanie?

StephaniB1: I've collaborated with our dance teacher and creative writers. We spent a week transferring writing skills (5 senses) and creating dance movement to a theme. We also videotaped.

StephaniB1: Grades 10-12.

SusanMS . o O (Have students design creative projects in which students take the primary responsibility for framing questions, carrying out an analysis, and producing work of substantial complexity and quality)

SusanMS: That's a general framework for all levels and projects

SusanMS: I do realize I came in late into this session on PBC

StephaniB1: I've read here: the potential of attaching "relevance" to all academic subjects. Susan, thanks for breaking it down in specific parts. Students coming up with the framing question would make the subject matter relevant across curricula.

BjB: that sounds impressive, Stephanie

StephaniB1: So, the overall design across subjects is obviously in the form of a thematic or problematic question that should be explored or solved?

BjB loves interdisciplinary projects

DavidWe does too

StephaniB1: Instructor facilitates and learners have authentic experiences. Is a reflective journal re: process enough assessment? Or a final production, etc?

JeffC: consider rubrics

StephaniB1: I use rubrics. When students present orally, their peers also assess using a rubric and the overall score is an average of total assessments. I've found this to be equitable?

JeffC thinks rubrics offer a good way to get authentic assessment... that along with portfolio assessment make the most sense, especially when looking at language arts, problem based curriculum, etc.

SusanMS agrees with Jeff along those lines

StephaniB1: Do all of you utilize the portfolio consecutively all year? How do you manage the housekeeping aspect? Are students responsible and you look at specific sections according to unit teaching?

JeffC hasn't been in the classroom for some time now... but there are online portfolio tools as well... check out the online portfolio initiative <http://www.osportfolio.org/>

StephaniB1: I've also read: How to formulate a question of proper scope and difficulty. Basically, (Blooms Taxonomy) as far as higher order thinking skills such as analysis and synthesis of information. This would be a framing hierarchical question? Thanks Jeff.

SusanMS: I am a sub and what I see are portfolios for themes with selective assessments depending on the unit/skills being assessed

SusanMS: Bloom's Taxonomy and Multiple Intelligences appear to be addressed

StephaniB1: Thanks. I suppose it all depends as far as what teacher envisions as an outcome? I like Gardner's Multiple Intelligences also. It really worked well when working with dance and writing.

SusanMS: Rubrics and peer evaluation of projects were used in a grade 2/3 class re oral/written presentation projects

SusanMS: in the LA area of the curriculum

StephaniB1: Crystal, what do you do with math? Do students come up with framing questions?

StephaniB1: Susan, how do you add layers of complexity to this design of PBC for high school? Is it as effective?

CrystalDC: I think it is much more difficult to apply rubrics in math. Typically, I present the problem and then students have to come up with methods and questions for solving the real-life problem. It typically isn't quite as abstract.

CrystalDC: Or maybe I just haven't been taught how to use rubrics effectively in math.

SusanMS: My experience is mostly at the K to 3+ or so areas

JeffC: Rubistar has 467 rubrics for math.

StephaniB1: Crystal, I think solving real life problems is pretty abstract at times! (and creative)

JeffC: <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>

BjB . o O (webquests?)

SusanMS: or ThinkQuests

BjB: <http://www.webquest.org/>

StephaniB1: So, it seems that 'quests' are synonymous with critical reflection and abstract thinking b.c there isn't one easy answer to the 'problem.'

BjB nods

SusanMS: If you want to address real life issues the ISTE site comes to mind
http://www.iste.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Publications/Books1/besmth/Webquests,_Thinkquests,_and_Other_Web_sites.htm

StephaniB1: Thank you. I'll definitely check it out.

SusanMS . o O (choosing a cell phone plan)

StephaniB1: Is it that competitive?

SusanMS: It is here in Ontario, Canada

CrystalDC: I guess it goes back to guided learning. If you are giving students a problem in math to assess a particular concept, you have to guide the students more than if you gave them a completely open-ended problem.

BjB: guide or model?

BjB . o O (is there a difference?)

StephaniB1: I suppose we have to definitely consider our population of learners. Yet, students are flexible and clever regardless of background experiences and SES. Guided learning is relevant all the time.

BjB: our hour is nearly up. I apologize that the discussion leader was not here, but I think you discussed some good topics

StephaniB1: In SLC, Utah we have an organization called SpyHop who are also affiliated with listenup.org (Listen Up!) based in New York. It's awesome and innovative. Thanks everyone for your insights and questions.

BjB: www.listenup.org

BjB: oh, cool, Stephanie

StephaniB1: YES. Again, I appreciate your time.

BjB: do you have a contact person at Listen Up?

CrystalDC: Thanks for sharing and for the math rubric websites!

BjB . o O (perhaps they would be interested in doing a session in Tapped In)

StephaniB1: I've done a project with them about collaborations, etc. Pretty sweet.

BjB: Crystal, also check out the webquests site

BjB . o O (you can search for math quests)

StephaniB1: I will call Austin Haeberle-Creative Director. Good reason to reconnect. Cool!

BjB: keep me posted, Stephanie. My email is bjb@tappedin.org

StephaniB1: excellent. I hope more transpires. And Susan, I'm psyched I was chatting with an Ontario connection. Your application of process is impressive to me.

BjB waves goodnight. Thanks, everyone, for your contributions to the dialogue.

CrystalDC: Thank you!