

NEWS & VIEWS

Tips. Research. Best Practices. Community.

ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

WITH
PROJECT-BASED
LEARNING



It's Dropout Prevention month! Across the country, educators are improving their dropout prevention rates by enhancing student engagement in the classroom through project-based learning. More than ever, educators are facing new challenges as a generation of students inundated with technology since birth are entering classrooms. It is quickly becoming clear that we are facing a learning crisis. To meet the needs of these new students, educators have to strategically implement new methods of teaching.

Making a switch to project-based learning (PBL) is not just a pedagogical choice: it is a commitment to trying new things and creating an environment that makes students want to come to school every day.

LET'S TALK ABOUT BEST
PRACTICES

MEET OUR SPEAKER:



Lyn is the Asst. Professor of Education and Coordinator of Field Experiences at LaGrange College in Georgia. Prior to that she was the Director of Special Education for the Roanoke City Schools in Alabama, and a past Special Education Teacher.

Lyn holds an Educational Specialist in Teacher Leadership from LaGrange College, a Master of Science in Special Education from Jacksonville State University in Alabama, and Bachelor of Science in Education (Special Education) from Auburn University, as well as being a National Board-Certified Teacher and Exceptional Needs Specialist. Lyn has also been the President of the Randolph County ARC for 23 years and brings a wealth of expertise in helping students with special needs to reach their potential and in providing effective instructional support for educators.

WATCH THE WEBINAR



NEW STRATEGIES FOR A NEW GENERATION

We cannot continue to do the same thing that we've always done, because that is no longer working. In a world full of screens and technology, we have to focus on increasing student engagement. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Students are craving human connection, so create opportunities for students to learn how to communicate with their peers.
- Know that engagement is not the same thing as compliance. A student that is in compliance is not necessarily engaged with the content. Engagement in a classroom is typically noisy, and compliance is normally quiet.
- Incorporate relatable elements into your lessons, whether that be memes, silly examples, or even using your students' names in word problems!
- Give students a choice on assignments so they can take ownership of the way they get to learn (for example, they can choose to use a vocabulary word in a sentence or write the definition of the vocabulary word.)



Include ALL students in your project-based learning activities!

BRING LEARNING TO LIFE WITH SITUATION CARDS!

Available in Education Associates' Adapted curriculum titles!

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Tom is feeding Mrs. Jones her lunch. Strained peas and corn are all over Mrs. Jones. Tom should:	
A	Wash Mrs. Jones' face and hands and get clean clothes.
B	Leave
C	Clean

Beth is working as a caregiver. Her patient, Mr. Wade, hits his leg against the bed and when she is helping him into his wheelchair, his leg begins to bleed. She should:	
A	Keep on with her day. The bleeding will stop.
B	Call for help. The nurse in charge will come check Mr. Wade.
C	Yell at Mr. Wade for being so clumsy.



GETTING STARTED WITH PBL

Project-based learning may be intimidating at first, but it doesn't have to start out with a complex student enterprise! Here are some ideas on where to get started with PBL:

- **Start small.** Look at your curriculum and brainstorm what kind of interactive classroom project you can pair with something that your students will already be learning. For example, if you are teaching percentages, have students go "shopping" and have them calculate discounts and sales tax!



Students learn about horticulture through hands-on experiences with plants.

- **Don't get overwhelmed.** It is easy to compare your classroom to someone else's, but don't fall into this! You know your learners, so find something small that works for them and continue to improve over time.
- **Collaborate with your colleagues.** Is there someone else in your building or district who is doing something that you're interested in? Ask them how they got started! There is strength in a community of teachers sharing ideas.

“Project-based learning through Project Discovery brings [the] real world into your classroom.”

L. PERRY


PBL IS FLEXIBLE

One of the great things about utilizing project-based learning in your classroom is that it is extremely flexible, scalable, and adaptable. You can use it in a number of contexts and it can grow with you!

- **Find a good fit.** PBL can be used at any grade level or functioning level. The key is to find something that is age-appropriate, exciting for your students, and incorporates many different learning standards.
- **Give yourself grace.** You're learning how to teach using this methodology, too! As you grow and learn what students respond to, you can adjust your strategies and take on more complex projects.
- **Take time to reflect.** Think about what went well and what could be improved. Have students give you feedback at the end of each unit so you can assess what they enjoyed participating in. Look at how effective the project was in teaching different learning targets.



Students preparing and serving food at a fundraiser dinner that will fund their student enterprise.



Looking for the missing piece?

LET'S CONNECT!

[GET STARTED](#)

PBL IS FOR EVERYONE

Project-based learning allows educators to design an integrated classroom that allows learners of ALL levels to collaborate and learn with their peers.

- Students in special education programs thrive with project-based learning because it makes learning concepts tangible. They can collaborate and communicate with their peers and can showcase their skills through flexible assessment methods.
- PBL is a great opportunity for high-achieving students to encounter more complex, challenging problems. This can teach them to take responsibility for their learning if they are struggling with these types of problems.
- Pair students with identified disabilities and high-achieving students together for some activities. It is okay if students at different levels have different learning goals.



A student with special needs participates in a lesson on drying babies after a bath using a doll.

“Hands down, in my 30 years in education, I have never experienced a program or curriculum as impactful as Project Discovery. L. PERRY

ALL-IN-ONE OPTIONS

Project Discovery provides all aspects of project-based learning to your classroom in a convenient kit!

The National Dropout Prevention Network has identified Project Discovery as a Model Program. Project Discovery encompasses many of their effective strategies for dropout prevention, including:

- School & Community Collaboration
- Individualized Instruction
- Alternative Schooling
- Active Learning
- Educational Technology
- Professional Development
- Career & Technical Education

LEARN ABOUT DROPOUT PREVENTION & PROJECT
DISCOVERY

