

THE PROJECT-BASED LEARNING CONTINUUM

STAGE ONE

Teacher designs project

Project is a supplement to the curriculum

- a lesson
- one part of whole

Teacher predetermines product, outcome, and assessment

Single-disciplined

Real-world impact is incidental

All project work fits within class period

Student creativity involved, but little student choice allowed

Teacher acts as director of instruction

STAGE TWO

Teacher designs project

Project is integrated into the curriculum

- a unit
- larger part of whole

Students are given choices regarding process and product within the parameters set by the teacher

May cross disciplines

Some resources are found outside the classroom

Real-world impact built-in

Teacher acts as director of activities

STAGE THREE

Teacher designs the essential question, focus, and goals

Teacher aligns project(s) with the standards

Project spans the length of the class (quarter, trimester, semester)

- is basis of the curriculum
- is the whole of the curriculum

Crosses multiple disciplines and, most likely, includes multiple planners (teachers) from different disciplines

Students design projects

Definite real-world impact

Work is constructivist

Authentic assessment using multiple assessment targets

A large portion of project work may take place out of the building

Work is complex

Teacher acts as facilitator

STAGE FOUR

Teacher (whole staff) designs infrastructure (project proposals, time logs, journal reviews, etc.)

Project is the basis of the whole-school program

Students design projects

Students design essential question, focus, and goals

Students align projects with standards

Real-world impact is an inherent component

Work is constructivist

Authentic assessment with students choosing assessment target

Much work takes place out of the building

Not discipline-based

Work is rigorous

Work is complex

Teacher acts as facilitator and advisor

