



Project Based Learning



BECAUSE

We empower students to be risk takers, effective communicators, creative problem solvers and active global citizens

WE BELIEVE

Students should behave as purposeful, reflective responsible social beings; exercising choice in order to actively achieve goals

SO WE PROVIDE

Project base learning opportunities where students work collaboratively and individually

THAT LEADS TO

Authentic and meaningful co-created learning experiences that connect students to their world

AND RESULTS IN

Informed and empowered students who know they can make a difference in the world

PARTNERS

David and Claire Price (from the UK innovation unit) have supported Hilltop Road's success with project based learning. David and Clare have provided whole school training on project based learning and team coaching sessions over the years.

PRACTICES

All staff engaged in training with David and Clair Price on a weekend conference. This was to ensure all staff received the same message and consistency of practice. This training is run annually and any new staff attend the same training.

PBL projects are completed as a grade. Grades are expected to produce 1 major and 2 minor PBL projects a year.

The school timetable allows for 1-hour collaborative planning time each week. During this time grade teams are able to meet and discuss the planning and the timeline of their PBL projects amongst other grade administration.

When PBL practices were being established, grade teams had coaching sessions with David and Clair to discuss previous and future projects to gain feedback and advice around the planning and implementation. This enabled staff to gain clarification in a timely manner and refined their understandings of the PBL process.

It was important for the school to have a fail-safe culture in relation to PBL projects. There was a general consensus that it was okay if projects did not go according to plan. This opened up conversations around why projects failed and enabled staff to feel comfortable to try again.

In some PBL projects resources need to be purchased. Budgets are discussed on a project basis. Teams would discuss the anticipated costs with the principal prior to engaging in the project. As long as the grade could clearly articulate how the funds would be managed in accordance with their PBL program and timeline, it was approved. This enabled staff to think big and not be restricted by funds or the need for materials.

Staff joined PBL forums and connected with other schools that engage in PBL. This enabled the sharing of ideas and the opportunity for other educators to give timely feedback.

As successful PBL programs continued to be developed, there was a greater need for teachers across all stages to share their units with other staff. As a result, an online archive was developed for all teachers to access past projects.

RESULTS

Projects link to real world issues that are current and relevant to them, which has increased student interest and engagement. PBL has increased student confidence with the development of leadership and communication skills, as well as increased perseverance. We believe that PBL also fosters deeper understanding of concepts as students apply their knowledge in real world contexts and are able to discuss their learning years after the project was executed. Through PBL, students also develop essential capabilities such as collaboration, communication, problem solving and research skills.