

P R O J E C T D E S I G N R U B R I C

Essential Project Design Element	Lacks Features of Effective PBL <i>The project has one or more of the following problems in each area:</i>	Needs Further Development <i>The project includes some features of effective PBL but has some weaknesses:</i>	Includes Features of Effective PBL <i>The project has the following strengths:</i>
Key Knowledge, Understanding & Success Skills	▶ Student learning goals are not clear and specific; the project is not focused on standards. ▶ The project does not explicitly target, assess, or scaffold the development of success skills.	▶ The project is focused on standards-derived knowledge and understanding, but it may target too few, too many, or less important goals. ▶ Success skills are targeted, but there may be too many to be adequately taught and assessed.	▶ The project is focused on teaching students specific and important knowledge, understanding, and skills derived from standards and central to academic subject areas. ▶ Important success skills are explicitly targeted to be taught and assessed, such as critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration, and self-management.
Challenging Problem or Question	▶ The project is not focused on a central problem or question (it may be more like a unit with several tasks); or the problem or question is too easily solved or answered to justify a project. ▶ The central problem or question is not framed by a driving question for the project, or it is seriously flawed, for example: – it has a single or simple answer. – it is not engaging to students (it sounds too complex or “academic” like it came from a textbook or appeals only to a teacher).	▶ The project is focused on a central problem or question, but the level of challenge might be inappropriate for the intended students. ▶ The driving question relates to the project but does not capture its central problem or question (it may be more like a theme). ▶ The driving question meets some of the criteria (in the Includes Features column) for an effective driving question, but lacks others.	▶ The project is focused on a central problem or question, at the appropriate level of challenge. ▶ The central problem or question is framed by a driving question for the project, which is: – open-ended; it will allow students to develop more than one reasonable answer. – understandable and inspiring to students. – aligned with learning goals; to answer it, students will need to gain the intended knowledge, understanding, and skills.
Sustained Inquiry	▶ The “project” is more like an activity or “hands-on” task, rather than an extended process of inquiry. ▶ There is no process for students to generate questions to guide inquiry.	▶ Inquiry is limited (it may be brief and only occur once or twice in the project; information-gathering is the main task; deeper questions are not asked). ▶ Students generate questions, but while some might be addressed, they are not used to guide inquiry and do not affect the path of the project.	▶ Inquiry is sustained over time and academically rigorous (students pose questions, gather & interpret data, develop and evaluate solutions or build evidence for answers, and ask further questions). ▶ Inquiry is driven by student-generated questions throughout the project.

Authenticity	▶ The project resembles traditional “schoolwork;” it lacks a real-world context, tasks and tools, does not make a real impact on the world or speak to students’ personal interests.	▶ The project has some authentic features, but they may be limited or feel contrived.	▶ The project has an authentic context, involves real-world tasks, tools, and quality standards, makes a real impact on the world, and/or speaks to students’ personal concerns, interests, or identities.
Student Voice & Choice	▶ Students are not given opportunities to express voice and choice affecting the content or process of the project. ▶ Students are expected to work too much on their own, without adequate guidance from the teacher and/or before they are capable.	▶ Students are given limited opportunities to express voice and choice, generally in less important matters (deciding how to divide tasks within a team or which website to use for research). ▶ Students work independently from the teacher to some extent, but they could do more on their own.	▶ Students have opportunities to express voice and choice on important matters (questions asked, texts and resources used, people to work with, products to be created, use of time, organization of tasks). ▶ Students have opportunities to take significant responsibility and work as independently from the teacher as is appropriate, with guidance.
Reflection	▶ Students and the teacher do not engage in reflection about what and how students learn or about the project’s design and management.	▶ Students and teachers engage in some reflection during the project and after its culmination, but not regularly or in depth.	▶ Students and teachers engage in thoughtful, comprehensive reflection both during the project and after its culmination, about what and how students learn and the project’s design and management.
Critique & Revision	▶ Students get only limited or irregular feedback about their products and work-in-progress, and only from teachers, not peers. ▶ Students do not know how or are not required to use feedback to revise and improve their work.	▶ Students are provided with opportunities to give and receive feedback about the quality of products and work-in-progress, but they may be unstructured or only occur once. ▶ Students look at or listen to feedback about the quality of their work, but do not substantially revise and improve it.	▶ Students are provided with regular, structured opportunities to give and receive feedback about the quality of their products and work-in-progress from peers, teachers, and if appropriate from others beyond the classroom. ▶ Students use feedback about their work to revise and improve it.
Public Product	▶ Students do not make their work public by presenting it to an audience or offering it to people beyond the classroom.	▶ Student work is made public only to classmates and the teacher. ▶ Students present products, but are not asked to explain how they worked and what they learned.	▶ Student work is made public by presenting or offering it to people beyond the classroom. ▶ Students are asked to publicly explain the reasoning behind choices they made, their inquiry process, how they worked, what they learned, etc.