



## Educational Innovation for All Students

Week 3: Project-Based Learning  
Teaching that Engages, Part 1

Project-based learning (PBL) is at the heart of New Tech Network's (NTN) instructional approach. In PBL, students start each new unit of study with a complex and authentic task to complete. Learning often occurs in integrated subject-area courses, like English and Social Studies, where students collaborate with their peers to investigate a real-world problem. This demands mastery of subject matter content, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, oral and written communication skills, and individual agency (work ethic). The student inquiry process is supported along the way by NTN practices like Entry Events, the Need-to-Know (NTK) process, engaging with content area experts, skill building workshops, and authentic assessment. Projects culminate with the development and presentation of a real-world product, which is evaluated by community experts, educators, and peers.



### QUALITY PROJECT-BASED LEARNING DESIGNS HAVE THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

- They recognize students' **inherent drive to learn**, their capability to do important work, and their need to be taken seriously by putting them at the center of the learning process.
- They engage students in the central concepts and principles of a discipline. The project **work is central** rather than peripheral to the curriculum.
- They highlight provocative issues or questions that lead students to in-depth **exploration of authentic and important topics**.
- They require the use of essential **tools and skills**, including technology, for learning, self-management, and project management.
- They specify **products** that solve problems, explain dilemmas, or present information generated through investigation, research, or reasoning.
- They include **multiple products** that permit frequent feedback and consistent opportunities for students to learn from experience.
- They use **performance-based assessments** that communicate high expectations, present rigorous challenges, and require a range of skills and knowledge.
- They encourage **collaboration** in some form, either through small groups, student-led presentations, or whole-class evaluations of project results.

(Buck Institute for Education, 2003)

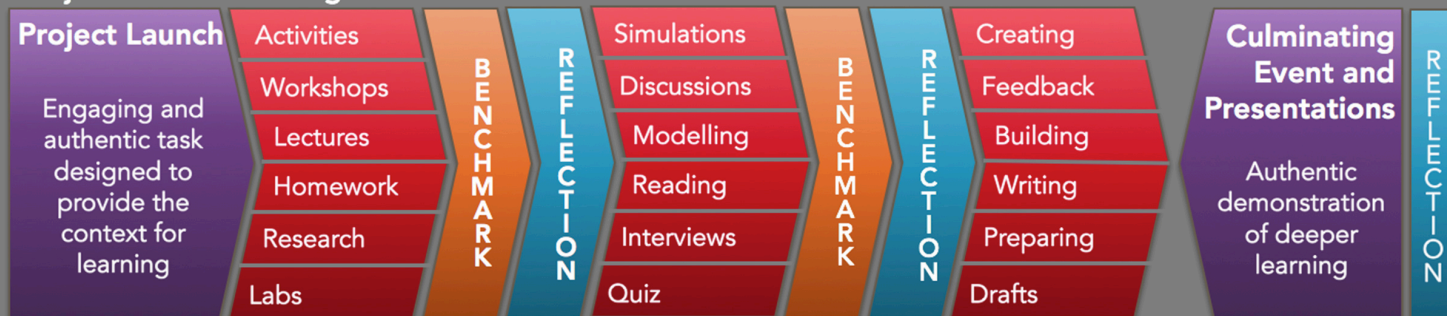
## DOING PROJECTS ("GROUP WORK") VS. PROJECT-BASED LEARNING



### Traditional Unit with Culmination Project



### Project Based Learning Unit



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### TESTIMONIALS

*"Project-based learning has completely transformed my idea of what students are supposed to learn in school. Prior to PBL, content was the deciding factor of whether or not students were ready for the next level. PBL has allowed me to realize that content is a small piece to a very large puzzle that determines a student's success. It has allowed me to instruct my students in how to utilize technology, communication skills, critical thinking, and global connections to give meaning to the content in order to help them become global citizens."*

*Josh Amstutz, Winton Woods High School Mathematics Teacher, Certified New Tech Trainer*

*"The New Tech program has not only improved my communication with people but also my presentation skills. It's great to be able to go to different events and not be nervous about presenting in front of people. It also has taught me project-based learning, which is a tool that can help me with my future college career."*

*~ MaKayla Boyd, Class of 2016*

### Look for more upcoming information on New Tech Network:

Week 1: WHY NEW TECH NETWORK?

Week 2: WHAT IS NEW TECH NETWORK?

**Week 3: PROJECT-BASED LEARNING: Teaching that Engages - Part 1**

Week 4: GROWTH MINDSET: Culture that Empowers *Part 1*

Week 5: DIGITAL LITERACY: Technology that Enables

Week 6: COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS: Outcomes that Matter

Week 7: PROJECT-BASED LEARNING: Teaching that Engages *Part 2*

Week 8: GROWTH MINDSET: Culture that Empowers *Part 2*