*Learning Innovations – A Division of WestEd* 91 montvale Avenue Stoneham, MA 02180

**The Teacher Center of Broome County**



##### Teacher Study Group Grant Award

**2014-15**

# **FINAL REPORT DUE BY APRIL 13, 2015**

**DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES**

**STUDY GROUP TOPIC:** Supporting 21st Century Learning Skills Through Project Based Learning

**List of group members:** Mary Webster, Suzy Kitchen, Laura Crounse, Lissa Connelly, Jill Browne

**The final report must be word-processed and submitted both in print and through e-mail using this form. Send print copy Teacher Center @ WSKG, BOCES Mail Drop #22 and e-mail file to** [**bctc@btboces.org**](mailto:bctc@btboces.org)**. This report will be posted on the Teacher Center web page at http://teachercenter.info.**

## Describe the initial goal of the group noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.

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| The initial goal of this group was to use the following texts: *Project Based Learning for Gifted Students* by Todd Stanley and *Thinking Through Project Based Learning: Guiding Deeper Inquiry* by Jane Krauss & Suzie Boss, to inform us of best practice and research in PBL. We also set the goal of meeting in a collegial setting to discuss and plan for implantation of Project Based Learning as well as to expand our understanding of PBL as it applies to our current conceptual topics.  We did not need to make any adjustments to our goals, but had to reflect on our initial thinking of what PBL is and begin to make a plan for implementation of PBLs in our classrooms. |

## Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

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| After we set up our meeting and roles in the group. We set norms and an outline of an agenda that we would try and follow. Our actions focused on these  set norms as to what would be our essential question: What is PBL and how should we use it? How does PBL promote 21st Learning skills?  We had free flowing discussions about the texts that came from a burning question about what we had read. Our topics focused us on our curriculum and what our next steps should be. As we read and annotated the essential pieces of the readings prior to meetings, expertise was synthesized between group members, discussed and interpreted for meaning and clarity. We organized and prioritized lessons/units to correlate with project based learning theories, tried some lesson and shared the results back at each meeting |

## Describe how the action plan was implemented.

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| We implemented several pieces of the PBL program and began to get feedback and projects from students.  The action plan for PBL will continue with professional development this summer and making sure we work with core 21st Century Learning skills (such as collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking). PBL has at is core these skills in the forefront. |

## Evaluate the impact of the study group effort on teacher/student performance.

## How has this study group changed you as a teacher? Do you anticipate that any of your teaching practices will have changed?

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| We have heard the term PBL thrown around for a long time. This study group gave us collaborative focus and the research to back up the teaching that we will begin to engage in. All of us actually began looking at our curriculum and realized we have a lot to be proud of, but that there is so much more we can do to be aligned with the practices of PBL. We learned that there is a spectrum of project based learning variables and we are feeling our way as to where we are on the scale of these variables. We learned new methods of evaluating our current lessons and make them more in line with PBL practices/methods. We have truly become to realize how key learner outcomes are to teaching and how powerful rubrics can be for assessment and how these are crucial for authentic learning. |

## What evidence do you expect to see of student achievement improving as a result of your participating in this study group?

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| We plan to see more collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, communication, and organization in our students. As they engage in authentic learning experiences they can develop thinking toolkits and more self-reflection as well. We hope to foster deeper learning competencies and stronger learner outcomes. |

What evidence is there that the goals of the study group has/has not been met?

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| We already feel like some of the goals have been met. We are trying to apply the skills and research we learned about and we plan to focus our summer planning on aligning our units in grades 3-8 as PBL and well-connected concepts. We would love to experts in PBL to give use more training and practical advice. |

## Comment on the value of the study group process? Did it work for you?

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| The collaborative, collegial sharing in this group was uplifting. Since we are in so many buildings and have little to no common time together, having the time and resources to study and reflect has allowed us to grow professionally.  The value of this type of study group was that is gave us an important way to see how we can best meet the learning needs of our students and to give them meaningful and authentic experiences in school. |

## How can we make this study group program better?

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| This was our 2nd year with this format and we really loved working and meeting together. Having the text is a great way to learn and collaborate. As we teach in 9 buildings we rarely get the time to reflect and plan on such a great endeavor as PBL. Maybe one possible suggestion: offer book study groups in the summer. |

A final report is due two weeks after the last meeting or by April 13, 2015, whichever date is first. The report must be typed and double-spaced using the provided form. One copy must be submitted in print and the file must be submitted through e-mail to bctc@btboces.org. Return to the Teacher Center (Mail Drop #22), 601 Gates Rd., Vestal, NY