Foundations of Project-Based Learning: Session 2 Guide

Purpose

This document serves as a guide for Session 2 of the Foundations of Project-Based Learning series. Included is an overview of the session, topics to cover, strategies to model, and activities to consider. Facilitators should refer to the [Foundations of Project-Based Learning Edmodo group](#) for resources. [Session slides can also be found here.](#)

Session 2

The second session introduces participants to Entry Events. The purpose of addressing Entry Events so early in the series is to establish a concrete strategy to begin building the culture of Project-Based Learning. Entry Events also lead to the Driving Question and the "need to knows," which guide student inquiry and ideation. As Entry Events initiate the PjBL process, consider a key question related to project launches (e.g., How do we launch a Project-Based Learning experience?).

Topics to Cover

Entry Events: Entry Events are the overarching topic of this session. Model and define these clearly. [PBLWorks'](#) definition of Entry Events is:

> "Entry events should engage and intrigue, and provoke students to want to know more. We avoid pre-teaching important content, because we have not yet created that need to know. Entry events might be a field trip, a guest speaker, a video, a simulation or a piece of real or mock correspondence."

As Entry Events are defined and modeled, participants might be hesitant to embrace some new practices that go against their established approach (e.g., pre-teaching). Allow teachers time to question and reflect the process as they are introduced to this new strategy.

The Purpose and Aims of Entry Events: Clearly explain the purpose of Entry Events:

- Entry Events begin building the culture of the learning setting;
- They trigger curiosity among our students; and
- They introduce the Driving Question in an accessible and relevant manner.

Elements of Entry Events: The [Entry Event checklist](#) gives details of the Entry Event elements. These elements should also be shared with participants early in the session in a simplified manner:

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- **Relevant "Hook" Material:** Includes a relevant video, text, image, or activity that students can analyze and interpret. Students are interested in this material at the onset of the Entry Event.

- **Student-centered**: Students can approach the event with their own lens. Does not require background knowledge, just perspective and voice.

- **Question-driven:** Questions start broad. All responses are validated.

- **Trigger curiosity:** Starts with an activity that allows students to lead themselves to the core concepts and next steps (what are the "need to knows"?).

Adapted Visual Thinking Strategies: This is a recommendation but one of many ways to approach an Entry Event. Still, an adapted version of [Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)](#) can offer participants concrete steps for Entry Event questioning. Consider modeling and introducing the following line of questioning:

1. Take a moment to review this.

2. What is going on in this image (or video, text, etc.)?

3. How do you know that?

4. What else do we notice?

Validating participant responses is key in VTS but it is recommended that this strategy be adapted. Validating responses in pure VTS calls for the facilitator (the teacher) to repeat the response that the student made, but this implies that the teacher is the sole source of valuable information and that something a student says is not valid unless a teacher also says it. Explain to participants that validation be adapted by:

- Adding relevant knowledge.

- Synthesizing participant responses.

- Rephrasing with new key vocabulary (avoid repeating students verbatim).

As teachers, we have specific concepts and objectives to which we want to lead our students. The conversation has to lead somewhere. As students share their open-ended interpretations, teachers should be listening for key words or ideas that align with the objectives or concepts for the unit. When we hear those, get more specific with your questioning. As you validate, rephrase items with language that can lead them toward additional relevant concepts.

What to Model

Entry Events: Entry Events and associated questioning are the primary focus for Session 2. This can be modeled and discussed at least once during the session. Refer to the [Entry Event Checklist](#) for guidance.

Activities to Consider

Participants should engage in an activity for any new piece of content introduced to them. This will allow them to explore and consider new material through their own lens while identifying opportunities to apply their new competence to practice. For Session 2, the new content is the

Entry Event and associated questioning. Consider these activities as participants learn about and apply elements of Entry Events to practice:

- **Virtual White Board Brainstorm**: After participants are introduced to a modeled Entry Event, consider using Jamboard or other virtual whiteboard to brainstorm essential elements of the Entry Event they experienced, phases of the Entry Event, or student behaviors that they might see during an Entry Event.

- **Entry Event Planning**: Participants should prepare an Entry Event. This can be done individually or collaboratively, depending on teachers' needs and interests. If time allows, facilitators can have participants model their planned Entry Events to receive feedback.

Closing

Closing for each session should focus on clarifying questions from participants, reflection, and next steps. For Session 2, participants can share how introducing a learning experience with an Entry Event is different or similar to what they have done in the past. Session 3 will focus on planning processes and inquiry. After students are introduced to a Driving Question through an Entry Event, they can consider their "need to knows." These "need to knows" guide planning, planning matrices, and inquiry of a unit, all items that participants will prepare in Session 3.

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