

## Foundations of Project-Based Learning: Session 4 Guide

### Purpose

This document serves as a guide for Session 4 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 4

The fourth session guides participants through preparing assessment materials, a process initiated during Session 3 through discussions on learning targets and evidence for transferable skills. Session 4 is, in part, self-directed. There are a number of step-by-step processes to structure participants' development and exploration of different assessment materials for content and transferable skills. Facilitators should familiarize themselves with all rubrics in the Edmodo Planning Materials folder to determine the most relevant examples to share and explanations to give regarding rubrics and other assessment materials. Consider a key question for Session 4 related to preparing assessment processes and tools (e.g., How can we assess content and transferable skills?).

### Topics to Cover

**Rubrics:** Discuss rubrics in the context of a PjBL unit. How are they designed? How are they used? What needs to be included? What will work for participants' individual contexts?

**Language of Rubric Levels:** Discuss considerations for language in rubrics:

| Target /Indicator  | Score   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
|  | Lacking or Not Included (1)   | Needs Development (2)  | Meets Expectations (3)   | Exceeds Expectations (4)   |
| <b>The learning targets should go here. This is the "what" that students need to be able to do by the end of the unit.</b> | Consider how you might phrase this level to allow for some reflection. What happens when the criteria are not met for this target? Maybe the audience does not understand the student's concepts. Maybe the student's idea is not fully formed. The consequences of not meeting the target can also be implied with the benefits in other levels. | Treat this as an opportunity for students to see how they can improve on this target (i.e., what is included, what might be missing, and what can still be added). This can be implied depending on the language used in the next level. | <b>The project-specific criteria for this learning target should go here. This is "how" students show they meet the learning target in the context of your unit.</b> | Use this is a way to show students "what's next" and how to expand their skills within this learning target. |

### Contact Information:

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**Criteria:** Criteria are the project-specific elements that students include in their process or product to show they have met the learning target. Consider this past participant’s example:

- **Target:** I can use critical thinking to engage in sustained inquiry and research processes
- **Possible Criteria:**
  - I made informed decisions about the type of information I needed.
  - I collected relevant information and data from multiple sources.
  - I analyzed the information to identify patterns across multiple sources or data sets.
  - I interpreted and synthesized my research to develop conclusions about the information people need to know about the disease.

| Target /Indicator  | Score                       |                       |   |                          |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|
|  | Lacking or Not Included (1) | Needs Development (2) | Meets Expectations (3)  | Exceeds Expectations (4) |
| I can use critical thinking to engage in sustained inquiry and research processes. |                             |                       | I interpreted and synthesized my research to develop conclusions about the information people need to know about the disease. |                          |

### What to Model

**Learner Centered Language:** Continue to model learner centered language throughout activities and discussions. As participants explore and analyze rubric qualities, samples, and their own criteria and rubrics, facilitators should model productive [project-based teacher language in their feedback, praise, and redirection](#). Consider how your participants would need to speak to their students in a learner-centered and direct manner. Explore these resources as you prepare for the first session:

- [Power of our Words Educational Leadership article](#): This is a short article by Paula Denton on concepts discussed in her book, The Power of our Words.
- [Reinforcing, Reminding, and Redirecting language](#): This is an overview (also adapted from Denton's book) of RC language that can be helpful for both academics and behavior. Consider how it might fit for your Entry Event and how you build the culture of Project-Based Learning.
- [What Having a Growth Mindset Actually Means](#): A Harvard Business Review Project-Based Learning.

### 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 4, the new content is developing criteria and rubrics for transferable skills as well as content-specific criteria in the context of a PjBL unit. Consider these activities as participants explore and draft materials:

**Independent Exploration:** Allow participants to explore the [Project-Based Learning rubric resources on your own.](#)

Task participants with the following:

- Identify one transferable skill that is addressed in the unit: Remember that this should be documented at some point.
- Develop an “I can” statement for it (if they have not already done so).
- Write criteria for the “I can” statement (How can students show they met the target in the context of your unit? This can be your “at expectations” level).

**Breakout Room Share-out:** Task participants with the following in small groups:

- Share your unit topic/Driving Question with your group.
- Give your group some context of your unit. Explain how the one transferable skill is documented in your unit.
- Share the transferable skill that was your focus during independent work time (what is the “I can” statement? What are the draft criteria for it?)
- Receive feedback on the criteria (will students understand it? Is it clear where an evaluator can find evidence of the criteria?)

**Model Unit and Unit Plan Template Walkthrough:** Session 3 was framed in a model unit. As participants prepare to finalize their plans and materials, consider walking through how a PjBL experience would play out with your model unit. Share slides, planning materials, lessons embedded in the unit, activities, rubrics, and student samples. Facilitators can also show a completed unit plan template of their model unit to demonstrate what design elements look like in writing and how this unit functions in terms of schedule.

## Closing

Closing for each session should focus on clarifying questions from participants, reflection, and next steps. For Session 4, participants can share how their draft criteria or rubric levels and/or reflect on how communicated criteria in student friendly language can influence student processes and competencies. Session 5 focuses on sharing final unit plans. Participants should have an open-ended and thought-provoking challenge or question that will drive our unit, an emerging plan to engage students and launch the project via an Entry Event, materials and procedures to guide student planning, criteria and/or rubrics that communicate how students will meet the targets. Remind participants that planning a unit is iterative. As they prepare to share their materials for the last session, they can reflect on how to align the elements that they have planned.