

What's the Difference Between "Doing Projects" and "Project Based Learning"?

| Projects . . . | Project Based Learning . . . |
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| Can be done at home without teacher guidance or team collaboration. | Requires teacher guidance and team collaboration. |
| Can be outlined in detail on one piece of paper by the teacher. | Includes many "Need to Knows" on the part of the students and teachers. |
| Are used year after year and usually focus on product (make a mobile, a poster, a diorama, etc.). | Is timely, complex, covers many skills and learning outcomes, and takes a team of highly trained professionals' significant time to plan and implement. |
| The teacher work occurs mainly after the project is complete. | The teacher work occurs mainly before the project starts. |
| The students do not have many opportunities to make choices at any point in the project. | The students make most of the choices during the project within the pre-approved guidelines. The teacher is often surprised and even delighted with the students' choices. |
| Are based upon directions and are done "like last year." | Is based upon Driving Questions (Big Picture) that encompass every aspect of the learning that will occur and establishes the need to know. |
| Are often graded based teacher perceptions that may or may not be explicitly shared with students (like neatness). | Is graded based on a clearly defined rubric made or modified specifically for the project. |
| Are closed: every project has the same goal. (As in the example above, the end result is always creating a diorama or building a popsicle fort.) | Is open: students make choices that determine the outcome and path of the research. |
| Cannot be used in the real world to solve real problems. | Could provide solutions in the real world to real problems even though they may not be implemented. |
| Are not particularly relevant to students' lives. | Is relevant to students' lives or future lives. |
| Do not resemble work done in the real world. | Is just like or closely resembles work done in the real world. |
| Do not include scenarios and background information or are based on events that have already resolved. | The scenario or simulation is real or if it is fictitious, is realistic, entertaining, and timely. |

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| <p>Are sometimes based around a tool for the sake of the tool rather than of an authentic question. (Make a Prezi.)</p> | <p>Use technology, tools, and practices of the real world work environment purposefully. Students choose tools according to purposes.</p> |
| <p>Happen after the “real” learning has already occurred and are just the “dessert.”</p> | <p>Is <u>how</u> students do the real learning.</p> |
| <p>Are turned in.</p> | <p>Are presented to a public audience encompassing people from outside the classroom.</p> |
| <p>Are all the same.</p> | <p>Are different.</p> |
| <p>Make a model (or diorama or mobile . . .) of Fort Victoria.</p> | <p>Design a fortification that would take your community through a bio or other non-traditional attack and make a recommendation to the city council for future planning.</p> |