

Projects vs. Project Based Learning

Traditional Projects

Can be done at home without teacher guidance or team collaboration

Can be outlined in detail by the teacher on one piece of paper

Are used year after year and usually focus on a few TEKS

The teacher's work occurs mainly after the Project

The students do not have many opportunities to make choices during the project

Are often graded based on teacher perceptions that may or may not be explicitly shared with students like neatness -

Are based upon directions and are done "like last year"

Are closed: every student creates the same product (like a model of The Alamo)

Cannot be used in the real world to solve real problems

Are not particularly relevant to students' lives

Do not resemble work done in the real world

Do not include scenarios and background information or are based on events that have already been resolved

Teacher assigns a tool for students to use

Are turned in

"Make a model (or diorama...) of The Alamo"

Project Based Learning

Requires teacher guidance and team collaboration

Includes many "Need to Knows" on the part of the student

Is timely, complex, covers many TEKS, and takes a team of trained professionals significant time to plan & implement

The teacher work occurs mainly before the project starts

The students make most of the choices during the project within the approved guidelines. Students often come up with creative and innovative ways to demonstrate mastery of the TEKS

Is graded based on a clearly defined rubric made or modified specifically for the project

Is based upon Driving Questions that encompass every aspect of the learning that will occur and establishes the "need to know"

Is open: students make choices that determine the outcome and path of the research

Could provide solutions in the real to real problems even though they may not be implemented

Is relevant to students' lives or future

Is just like or closely resembles work done in the real world

The scenario or simulation is real or if it is hypothetical, is realistic, engaging, and relevant

Uses technology, tools, and practices of the real world work environment- Students choose tools based on need

Is presented to a public audience encompassing people from outside the classroom

"Design a fortification that would protect citizens of Little Elm during a non-traditional attack and present findings to the City Council for future planning"