

Curriculum Corner

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Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning integrates real world learning into our curriculum. As a focus of our strategic plan (read the entire plan at <http://www.duxbury.k12.ma.us/cms/lib2/MA01001583/Centricity/Domain/4/strategicplankeynote.pdf>), we embed this focus into our goals across all four schools. Project-based learning is more than simply making projects a part of an assignment or classroom activity. While engaged in a project connected with real world applications, higher order and critical thinking require the student to apply their knowledge rather than simply restate or recognize facts. In a world where facts are available instantaneously, students incorporate skills that will serve them well in an evolving, technological world. Student use of technology throughout the project provides them a tool to develop their opinions, research options and come to conclusions.

Key elements to project-based learning include:

- Creation of an engaging and motivating environment for learning
- Rigorous content is at the core of the project
- Critical thinking and skills such as analysis and inquiry
- Application of skills and content to a real world situation
- Students have some choice and voice in the process
- Final outcomes are shared
- Process such as feedback and revision is equally important as product

Each school is including an ongoing project-based learning goal in their current School Improvement Plans for the 2013-2014 school year. We expect to continue to expand opportunities for this type of learning at all grade levels.

The Curriculum and Instruction web page contains many references you may wish to explore: <http://www.duxbury.k12.ma.us/Page/3118>

Examples of Project-Based Learning



Early Elementary:

Students collaborate to redesign a school courtyard

Upper Elementary:

Students begin a campaign to protect a species threatened in their local community (i.e. baby snapping turtles when they hatch each spring)

Middle School:

Students create a brochure of their community to share with a global classroom partner

High School:

Students design an outdoor environmental area to study native ecology and life systems