Proficiency-Based Learning (PBL)
in South Burlington School District

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February 13, 2020

What are the defining characteristics of proficiency-based learning?

What is your greatest fear about proficiency-based learning?

What is your greatest hope about proficiency-based learning?

Proficiency-based learning is about **clarity**.

Proficiency-based learning is about **mastery**.

Proficiency-based learning is about **transfer**.

PBL is about clarity.

- **Clear, shared learning objectives** structure each course.
- Assessments **explicitly link to learning goals**.
- Learning Targets help students meet **tangible goals** along the way.
- Learning Scales give students a **clear picture of their progress** in concrete language.
- Learning Practices are reported separately from performance so students develop **effective learning strategies**.

PBL is about mastery.

- Timely, actionable feedback helps students improve.
- Increased practice opportunities allow students to hone skills before final assessment is recorded (like in sports).
- Students have more than one chance to provide evidence of proficiency to ensure mastery before moving on.

PBL is about transfer.

- Transferable skills are marketable 21st Century Skills.
- Transferable skills provide a common language & strengthen connections across discipline areas
- Transferable skills help students connect classroom learning to internships, service learning, and career goals.
- Transferable skills connect across years of school to develop learner self-identity.

PBL in South Burlington (Grades 6-12)

- Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements (PBGRs) & Performance Indicators (PIs) developed and implemented
- VT Transferable Skills adopted as cross-curricular Student Learning Expectations (SLEs)
- Student progress on PBGRs & SLEs reported 4x per year Grades 9-12 and 6x per year at Grades 6-8

PBL in South Burlington (completed work)

- Adopted a new graduation policy
- Used embedded professional development to review student work & talk about proficiency assessment
- Attended PBL conferences, symposiums, and workshops
- Designed common assessment system tied to proficiencies
- Designed a new report card to report on proficiencies
- Implemented online scheduler for student support
- Created a PBL webpage for students & parents

PBL in South Burlington (currently)

- Working with experts in the field to design & align learning targets & learning scales
- Reporting learning practices (effort, participation, punctuality, etc) separately from academic grade
- Engaging in conversations about learning and assessment
- Growing together professionally

PBL - The Challenges

- We continue to assign **traditional letter grades** while also reporting out on proficiencies & transferable skills
- We're still working on PBL instructional **shifts in the classroom** (e.g., feedback, questioning techniques, assessment strategies)
- We're still working with students & families to develop a solid, **shared understanding of PBL**.
- We're **holding students harmless** during the transition
- We're going to make it **manageable for teachers**
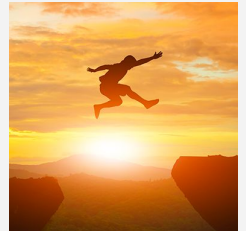
The research supports PBL.

- ❏ Self-reported grades (1.33)
- ❏ Strategy to integrate with prior knowledge (.93)
- ❏ Self-efficacy (.92)
- ❏ Transfer strategies (.86)
- ❏ Deliberate practice (.79)
- ❏ Effort (.77)
- ❏ Teacher clarity (.75)
- ❏ Elaboration & organization (.75)

- ❏ Help seeking (.72)
- ❏ Feedback (.70)
- ❏ Learning goals vs. no goals (.68)
- ❏ Problem-solving teaching (.68)
- ❏ Setting standards for self-judgement (.62)
- ❏ Metacognitive strategies (.60)
- ❏ Spaced vs. mass practice (.60)

Cohen's D effect size with 1.0 denoting a standard deviation difference compared to the control group
Hattie Ranking: 252 Influences And Effect Sizes Related To Student Achievement

PBL requires collaboration.

Collective Teacher Efficacy (1.57)

Cohen's D effect size with 1.0 denoting a standard deviation difference compared to the control group
Hattie Ranking: 252 Influences And Effect Sizes Related To Student Achievement