Does PBL Work?

There is forty years of accumulated evidence that the instructional strategies and procedures that make up standards-focused Project Based Learning are effective in building deep content understanding, raising academic achievement and encouraging student motivation to learn. Research studies have demonstrated that PBL can:

- be more effective than traditional instruction in increasing academic achievement on annual state-administered assessment tests.¹
- be more effective than traditional instruction for teaching mathematics,²,³ economics,⁴ science,¹,⁵,⁶ social science,⁷ clinical medical skills,⁸ and for careers in the allied health occupations⁷ and teaching.⁷
- be more effective than traditional instruction for long-term retention, skill development and satisfaction of students and teachers.¹,⁹,²
- be more effective than traditional instruction for preparing students to integrate and explain concepts.¹⁰
- improve students’ mastery of 21st-century skills.¹¹,¹²
- be especially effective with lower-achieving students.¹,⁴,⁶
- provide an effective model for whole school reform.¹³

As with any teaching method, PBL can be used effectively or ineffectively. At its best, PBL can be the catalyst for an engaging learning experience and create a context for a powerful learning community focused on achievement, self-mastery, and contribution to the community. At its worst, it can be a colossal waste of time for all concerned. The videos and tools in this web site will help you understand Project Based Learning and use it effectively.

For more research on PBL effectiveness and use, please visit our research library.
REFERENCES


