

PROBLEM BASED LEARNING UNITS

PBL's take on a life of their own, but it often helps to have some direction and order to begin the process.

1. **Choosing the topic as your “driving question.”** Finding a relevant driving question that will incorporate input from members of the community and result in realistic solutions from the student is the beginning point. Look at your state standards and see what is the obvious area of concentration for your grade level and across the curriculum.
2. **Begin your investigation.** Gather and evaluate information as it relates to your driving question. Collect data to back up your findings to place in charts or graphs.
3. **Who can help?** Who might be the community constituents that you need on your side to bring your proposal (or ideas as solutions) to fruition? Is there information that is missing? Who could you invite into your classroom (distance learning, internet...) that could share more data or simply explain and expand on what you have already found?
4. **Where will the money come from?** What is your proposed budget and how will you pay for it? Investigate grant opportunities or inquire within the community for sponsors.
5. **Putting it all together.** How will you convey your solutions or proposal to the people who need to hear student-generated ideas? Building a 3D model, making an informational brochure, creating an iMovie, designing flyers, writing public service announcements, creating a storyboard and scripting a commercial are just a few options.

Tips for a successful PBL:

- Make sure you can justify your solution based on the analysis of your data.
- Create a timeline of your PBL and stick to it.
- Present to the parents. This will give your students practice speaking and answering questions. By incorporating a Power Point or Keynote along with an iMovie, the finished product is a tangible piece of student achievement.
- When finished, assign the students to reflect on this experience. Have them evaluate themselves as participants and critique the process. Are there things that need to change for the next PBL? Have they discovered a strength or weakness that they want to build upon? What did they learn?
- You must be flexible and give up some of the control. You take the role of a facilitator and let the students be the investigators.