

**PROTOCOL ON
Project-Based Learning in Institute for Learning in
Professional Learning Communities**

➤ **I. Shared Norms and Values**

Practitioner roles, responsibilities, and objectives are jointly defined and clearly articulated around shared norms and values that reflect a commitment to equity and high expectations for all students' learning.

Indicators	Observations/Evidence
A. Is there an ongoing discourse to develop and reaffirm common norms and values about students, learning, teaching, and their roles in the context of the school and community? Are the shared norms and values in writing?	
B. Do the shared norms and values include the belief and expectation that all students can learn and achieve?	
C. Do shared norms and values include both academic and psycho-social student development outcomes?	
D. Are students included in the discourse around shared values and norms? Do they articulate and embrace these values?	

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➤ II. Collective Responsibility for Implementing Shared Norms and Values

When norms and values are shared and clearly articulated as school wide expectations, teachers assume collective responsibility for meeting and holding one another accountable to them. This sense of collective responsibility creates energy throughout the school so that effective practices and processes can be sustained over time and are not dependent upon a particular school leader or condition.

Indicators	Observations/Evidence
E. Is there a mutual understanding and expectation that all members of the faculty are responsible for student outcomes?	
F. Do teachers hold one another responsible for developing curriculum, instruction, and assessments consistent with shared values and norms?	
G. Do teachers analyze disaggregated student performance data to ensure equitable access to resources?	
H. Do students feel connected to a sense of collective responsibility for successful school wide outcomes?	
I. Do teachers hold one another responsible for implementing curriculum, instruction, and assessments consistent with shared values and norms?	

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➤ **III. Focus on Student Learning**

The primary efforts and activities of a Project-based learning are focused on the tough questions of student learning. To answer these questions, teachers engage in reflective dialogue and critical inquiry to seek a better understanding and practice that will ultimately benefit students.

Indicators	Observations/ Evidence
A. Do teachers focus on students' intellectual development (rather only on specific techniques or how to cover curriculum)?	
B. Is teaching practice based on a coherent curricular vision around core ideas and modes of inquiry in the disciplines?	
C. Is teaching practice guided by diagnostic assessments and other data that show how students learn as well as what they know?	
D. Do teachers employ multiple strategies to meet all students' needs, including English language learners and students with disabilities?	
E. Do teachers identify, recognize, and engage students around their prior knowledge and cultural contexts?	
F. Are students aware of teacher expectations and purposes for learning content and methods?	

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➤ **IV. De-Privatization of Practice**

Project-based learning is highly dependant on the issues related to professional learning communities that transform the privatized, isolated practice of teaching by establishing the structures and expectations for public, reflective, ongoing discourse on the challenges of teaching and learning. By making their work “public,” teachers define—and continually redefine—the meaning of good teaching and classroom practice for themselves both as individuals and as members of a professional community.

Indicators	Observations/ Evidence
A. Do teachers share what they know with one another?	
B. Do teachers consult with one another in a spirit of professional inquiry about their Projects and successes with the PBL context teaching and learning?	
C. Do teachers observe and provide critical feedback on one another’s practice through reflective dialogue?	
D. Do teachers work together to review, and to make decisions about practices based on external documentations, learning walks, or other professional experiences?	
E. Do teachers make their work public to students, parents and community, and engage them as valuable partners in the process?	
F. Do teachers have external networks to access ideas, materials, and colleagues (e.g. via institutes, content associations; school/university partnerships, reform collaborations)?	
G. Are additional personnel (e.g. aides, interns, volunteers) and partnerships (e.g. business apprenticeships, service learning) used to create more planning time for teachers?	

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➤ **V. Collaboration**

A key attribute of Project-based learning is the extent to which teachers engage in ongoing collaboration. Because the focus is on improving practice for improved student outcomes, collaboration can occur both within and across traditional departmental structures, depending upon the need and expertise required to solve a particular Project.

Indicators	Observations/ Evidence
A. Do teachers draw on one another's expertise—both within and across groupings and content areas—to address obstacles and to improve their ability to serve diverse student academic and social needs?	
B. Do teachers encourage and support risk-taking and innovative practices based on external documentations, learning walks, or other professional experiences?	
C. Are teachers generating “shared craft knowledge” (i.e. knowledge from individual classroom practice is refined through collaboration)?	
D. Do students have opportunities to work in collaborative ways with one another and with teachers to inform the teaching and learning process?	

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VI. Leadership

Ensuring sustainability of a Project-based learning is dependant on school leadership and individual accountability.

Indicators	Observations/ Evidence
A. Who are the teachers and facilitators accountable to for the implementation of the learning innovation?	
B. Does the school leader act as the facilitator, rather than as the main architect, of Project-based learning coordinating other school-site initiatives?	
C. Do the school leaders actively support shared decision-making through distributive leadership?	
D. Does the school leader ensure organizational structures and resources to support Project-based learning (time, personnel, schedule, etc.)?	
E. Does the school leader negotiate the politics of reform within the local context (e.g. with the district, parents, other agencies)?	
F. Do teachers have authority to make decisions about resources?	
G. Do teachers define and structure staff development based on their needs (rather than as administrators define them)?	
H. Do teachers play an integral role in decisions about students who are ELL or have special needs to modify teaching and learning expectations?	

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VII. School Structures Impacting PBL

Five key school structures and conditions impact the development and sustainability of a Project-based learning: school leadership; school autonomy; shared decision-making; time for teacher planning and analysis; and, professional development.

Indicators	Observations/ Evidence
A. Do teachers have scheduled time for reflection and processing new information both individually and in groups?	
B. Are teaching schedules designed to allow for regular team meetings productive and reflective?	
C. Are PD funds allocated to provide release time (e.g. for meetings, retreats, summer projects)?	
D. Do teachers have an active voice in shared decision making?	
E. Does the school have autonomy from the district to enact school reforms specific to its needs and the student population?	
F. Does the school leadership support teacher initiated reform efforts?	

VIII. Professional Development Structure

The structures PBL-PD impact the development and sustainability of a Project-based learning. It also impacted the deliverables that will need to be provided back to the school leadership.

Indicators	Observations/ Evidence
A. Are PD opportunities structured both for the faculty teams as well as for individual teachers?	
B. Do PD activities draw upon both internal and external expertise?	
C. Is PD embedded, ongoing, and responsive to the school's mission and priorities?	
D. Are new teachers provided with on-going supports and induction into Project-based learning?	