Title of Session: Problem Based Curriculum - Assessment
Moderator: Chris Aguirre
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Room: After School Online

BJ: Welcome to this session of Problem Based Curriculum with Chris Aguirre

ChrisA: well let's get started

BJ: if you're new to Tapped In, go to the Actions menu in the top right of your screen and DETACH

BJ . o O (top right of the chat window)

ChrisA: I was hoping to talk about assessment tonight

ChrisA: if that is ok with everyone

BJ: we usually start most discussions with introductions...Chris, want to start?

ChrisA: Sure I am a CTE administrator from Kodiak AK

GaryCo: I teach grade 8 Humanities at the American Embassy School in New Delhi

ChrisA: Hi Robin Welcome

RobinP: thanks

ChrisA: Well Hi Gary

ChrisA: does anybody do any type of problem based curriculum

ChrisA: Hi Bryan

BJ: are you here for Problem Based Curriculum, Bryan?

BryanH: yes

BJ: great! We're just getting started

ChrisA: I would define a problem based curriculum as one that is based on an experiential problem that integrates submatter.

ChrisA: I was hoping we could talk about assessment this evening

BJ: as in product?

ChrisA: I think assessment is often one the biggest obstacles people face when they want to try this approach

ChrisA: ya I would say as in a product

ChrisA: first I think it is difficulty to pick the academics out of an experience.

ChrisA: although this type of experience lends itself to portfolio it does have tremendous potential for on the spot assessment through observation,

ChrisA: question and answers and active listening

ChrisA: I think these are often called informal assessment

BJ nods

ChrisA: Does anyone utilize any of these methods in their daily practice? and please do not let me monopolize the conversation

ChrisA: I would really like to hear about what all of you do in your classrooms

BJ: as an art teacher all my assignments are project based

ChrisA: ya I think that is what makes the su**BJ**ect so great

BJ: assessment is done through a rubric

GaryCo: often times when a specific skill can be applied to the problem I use a checklist

ChrisA: When you write your rubics do you do them with a mind toward individual skills or do you look to break down the entire experience by steps

BryanH: I assess by projects, comprehension or knowledge base verbally or written, and a guideline is given

ChrisA: do you do that on the spot Gary

BJ: steps and skills

GaryCo: yes depending on the specific situation or I may take notes and then fill out the checklist for the students later

ChrisA: Does anyone look for multiple forms of assessment: like written, rubric and oral questions

RobinP: I keep lots of data checklists and check for comprehension on a weekly basis

BJ: in the special ed classroom you have to do that

ChrisA: so Gary would you consider the feed back to be instant or just after the assignment

BJ . o O (a variety of assessment tools)

GaryCo: usually just after the assignment

ChrisA: I think that anytime you look at using a problem that is large enough in scope that it creates a learning experience for a student it lends itself to multipule forms of assessement

BryanH: I use different forms of assessment b/c certain forms don't work for all students success in the classroom. Everyone learns differently

ChrisA: Hey Gary, do you find your students making adjustments with the feedback you give them/

RobinP nods

ChrisA: I agree everyone learns differently but I wonder if that idea extends to the next step: everyone should be assessed differently

GaryCo: sometimes yes. Perhaps not always at the specific time, but often in future lessons or opportunities to practice a particular skill.

ChrisA: If you think about it we go to great lengths to target a students learning modality but do we bend the assessment to their strength?

BryanH: Sometimes I think it's okay, but I think a standard rubric for certain assignments is also good

BJ: good point, Chris

RobinP: I assume you are talking about classroom assessments only??

ChrisA: I see your point Bryan I think their should be a baseline standard for all of us to work off of

ChrisA: Well I guess I am talking about any action or skill we would find ourselves assessing in a classroom

ChrisA: I would is our goal to "teach a student" or to teach a student "how" to do something

ChrisA: If it is to "teach a student" then I think rubric and exams are great tools for assessment

ChrisA: but if it is to teach a student "how" to do something then it I think assessment needs to be in the moment and used as a way to modify actions to get the desired outcome

RobinP: I agree. I call this "switching gears"

BryanH: good idea I never thought of it in that respect

ChrisA: I think that is what is so cool about using a problem as capstone to lessons or as the entire curriculum it gives you the opportunity to point out the relevance of the assignment, create buy-in and provide instant assessment

ChrisA: Hay I like that Robin "switching gears" very cool

RobinP: Thanks

ChrisA: I think assessment is our biggest challenge as educators because it is a double edged sward

ChrisA: if our goal is truly to teach then assessment should allow students [to] learn from their mistakes and transfer that information to their next experience

BryanH: I feel it is a fine line

GaryCo: are speaking primarily about formative assessments?

ChrisA: if assessment becomes an ends to a means or worse perceived as being punitive then I think we miss the mark and create situations that pull a students focus from the action of learning and places it on the result of their mistakes

RobinP: Nods

ChrisA: Lets place in the context of experience a problem with a student

ChrisA: if you experience a problem with a student you are there to assess not only how they are performing but most likely you will gain an insight into what their working knowledge as to what they are still trying to wrap their minds around

ChrisA: it also allows for constant redirection helping with focus

ChrisA: Does anyone have a problem they assign to students

ChrisA: Ok I have one

ChrisA: I used to teach a unit on game design that incorporated trig to calculate angles and algebra to manipulate variables

ChrisA: I would assess the project on a rubric, I would factor in effort through observation and conversation (informal) and I would use the final outcome as the assessment for the math skills wrapped inside the project

ChrisA: I could use some feed back here does anyone think this effective way to assess this type of problem?

BryanH: That seems like a good way to assess that assignment

ChrisA: thanks Bryan

ChrisA: do you have an assignment that you use multiple forms [of] assessment on?

RobinP: Is the final outcome weighted heavily?

BryanH: How long was the project?

ChrisA: no it's not

ChrisA: they are equally weighted

RobinP: Is the final outcome expectations explained in detail? I guess the rubric would tell students that, but some students need it spelled out for them.

GaryCo: Rubrics are a good way to go. I'm curious what the specific criteria for effort was as that is sometimes tricky to assess.

ChrisA: I agree that some students would need that spelled out but I also think that if I used multiple forms that were not weighted then I was able to maintain the goal of the project as being the game itself not the math or the steps

BryanH: If the students knew exactly what the teacher was looking for than I think effort would be ok B/c you will be able to tell who is giving more effort than someone else

BryanH: if you know your students well that is

ChrisA: I agree Gary in that case I had 16 students and I worked in pairs with each of them. That allowed me a unique view into knowledge base and their ideas for solving the problem

ChrisA: That also gave me a unique view as to their mindset and ultimately the effort they put into their project

RobinP: I do not teach high school but have one of my own. I am not crazy about group projects with rubrics. Someone always does more than the others. I know cooperative learning is the craze now but I have one of those students that would be glad for someone else to do the majority of the work.

ChrisA: I think with any problem based curriculum the concept of "sticking with it" is built into the problem

GaryCo: partner works well for that it also lets you hear some of the problem solving and thought processes

ChrisA: I agree Robin Group work can be abused by group participants

RobinP: I do like partner work and it does take the pressure off the individual student who may be weak in an area.

BryanH: So have the students grade each other on their participation in that group

RobinP: Good idea Bryan.

ChrisA: I think assessment for a problem based curriculum needs to tie the student and teacher together somewhere along the line

ChrisA: if it doesn't then any group aspect of the problem lends itself to abuse

ChrisA: I like that Idea Bryan does anyone do that?

RobinP: Not I, but do like that idea.

BryanH: sure why not

ChrisA: I know I have looked at student assessment for projects in the form of critiques but I found my students lacked the vocabulary to express their point accurately

GaryCo: for informal assessments... I also in those cases like to have the students help to develop the rubric

BryanH: I think students have more respect and will normally put more into a group project if their peers are grading..that's been my experience thus far

ChrisA: I like that idea Bryan

ChrisA: how has that worked out for you?

GaryCo: it works well the students feel like they have more buy in to the process

BryanH: We did a science project this year and I told the students before hand that their peers would be grading them, my trouble makers worked the hardest on that project and found it very valuable

BryanH: I agree Gary

ChrisA: that's cools why do you think that was Bryan

BryanH: because they took ownership and cared what the others thought of them, this may not work all the time but during this project it worked well

ChrisA: Well our time is about up

RobinP: Thanks for sharing.

ChrisA: Thanks for showing up tonight

GaryCo: Thanks Chris

ChrisA: I really enjoyed the conversation

ChrisA: goodnight everyone

BryanH: Thanks for the chat

BJ: thanks, Chris.

ChrisA waves