

North Mason's Physicians of Learning

Today's teachers, unlike the math and science teachers of earlier generations, are physicians of learning. They identify different student learning styles and challenges and then determine which resources will best help students master the material.

Project Based Learning (PBL) is a good example of how the training and curricula of today's teachers is a resource of incalculable value for our kids.

At North Mason, our teachers are using PBL classes to motivate students even when the kids are not particularly excited about subjects like chemistry and biology.

A PBL class might begin with an engaging problem or situation, for example: a murder. Then, to answer "who done it," the students ask questions that can span a variety of scientific disciplines, especially math, biology, and chemistry. These PBL classes provide students with at least three kinds of interactions.

1. Interaction with text. Students write instructional information on the left-hand page of a notebook. On the right-hand side, they write their questions that may require tests or field-work beyond the written material.
2. Interaction with fellow students. Students work in teams and each member helps solve the central problem and the smaller problems that provide clues.
3. Interaction with the teacher. The teacher is resource trained to work with kids who understand and engage with the material and kids who would benefit from other learning strategies.

Today, our teachers know more about learning than ever before. PBL offers our students rigor in their subjects and the motivation to realize more of their true potential.

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