Samantha Porn

PBL part 1

1. Describe the characteristics of a Problem Based Learning lesson

* A systematic teaching method
* Engages students
* Does not give a direct approach to the final answer
* Teaches communication skills, presentation skills, organizational skills, time management skills, research skills, etc.
* Assessment is on an individual basis, taking into account how well a student understood the content, and how they performed and contributed during the group project

2. Describe the purpose and structure of a web quest.

* Students examine and try out what they know
* Students discover what they need to learn
* Students develop their people skills for achieving higher performance in teams
* Students improve their communications skills
* Students state and defend positions with evidence and sound argument
* Students become more flexible in processing information and meeting obligations
* Students practice skills that they will need after their education

3. Analyze different web quests to determine if they are true PBL lessons or not.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Web Quest** | **Ill Structured Problem? Complex? Messy? No single correct answer?** | **Problem mirrors real life? Provides context, challenge, and motivation?** | **Students as decision makers with roles and responsibilities?** | **Teacher as a cognitive guide/coach?** | **PBL?** |
| **Rain Forest** | This is an ill-structured task that is messy and complex. There is no one right answer to it. | This is a current problem faced in rain forests today. It does provide context and a motivation to solve it. | The students are assigned different roles which lead to different responsibilities in the group. | The teacher’s sole purpose is to answer questions along the way to help guide students to their final answer. | Yes. |
| **Radically Reduced Radiolarians** | It is an ill-structured, complex and messy assignment. There is no one single answer to conclude from this problem. | The problem of authorizing money to study an organism does mirror real life problems. It does provide a challenge to the students because they have little previous knowledge about radiolarians. | Students are decision makers based on their ‘role’ they are given. | Yes the teacher will help guide the students to their findings. | Yes |
| **Solve It With Logic** | I think this is an ill-structured problem. This problem is quite messy and complex, but does have one single answer. | It does mirror a real life problem. It has the students study and examines real life scenarios. | The students are not necessarily given ‘roles’ but they do have a lot of work to complete. | The teacher does not necessarily guide the students as much, but they are there for help if need be. | Maybe |
| **Don’t Drink the Water** | This is an ill-structured problem. It is very complex & messy in that there is much research needed to find a solution to find a remedy for the microbe-infested water. More than one solution is possible in this case. | This problem definitely mirrors real life problems. The motivation for this challenge can come from real life situations of people dealing with infested water supplies globally. | The students are decision makers in how to find a solution to the infested water supply, but there is no set ‘roles’ given to each person. | The teacher does serve as a guide/coach in solving this issue. | Maybe |

**4. Write a written summary of your findings, including a rationale for your decision.**

In my findings, a PBL can come in many forms. It is how the problem is presented, or lack thereof, is what makes a lesson a Problem Based Learning lesson. A successful Problem Based Learning lesson always leads students to learn. This is a mastery skill, which will help students inside and outside the classroom. There are more characteristics that go into PBL lesson, but the skills learned from doing a PBL are greater than a non PBL lesson. The students may struggle in the beginning with a PBL lesson, which will most likely happen; as long as the students are cognitively thinking about their problem or task at hand, the skills learned in doing a PBL will help lead them to answer and solve their problem or challenge. PBLs should be more widely used as a tool in classroom learning.