

Project-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning, while sounding similar, completely change the dynamic of the classroom. In this newsletter, we will explore and compare both pedagogies.

Problem-based learning is a student centered approach to learning in which students learn about a subject matter through the experience of solving open-ended problems found within triggering material. Imagine clinics for a nursing student, except taken to the elementary school student, where they are asked to find the area of something directly in front of them and apply that area to a next step, such as a 3D-puzzle or a school garden. This learning style [originated in medical](#) and nursing schools and has grown in popularity because of its close affiliation with future workplace collaboration and interdisciplinary learning, something that students can take past the academic level.

The integration of problem-based learning requires educational philosophy and perspective changes across institutions and for all faculty members, especially those that enjoy lecturing. This type of learning has also posed [many challenges](#) for instructors - it requires much more prep time and creating these suitable problem scenarios at the younger levels is proving to be much more difficult. Additionally, any prior learning experience doesn't prepare students for problem-based learning and this type of learning can and will take away study time from some other subjects. If a student is more analytical, this method can cause students anxiety - because the learning is messier and the lesson goal can feel more convoluted.

Project-based learning, which uses [complex questions](#) to enhance student's critical thinking, problem solving, team work, and self-management skills, and problem-based learning do carry some similar benefits. Both teaching and learning methods are student-centered approaches, which makes them much more enjoyable and easier to understand for students. They both focus on developing 21st-Century skills that students can take to their future careers. They typically aid student retention and class attendance, benefits for both the teachers and the institutions.

Project-based learning requires students to find more resources, develop timelines, learn to overcome obstacles, and publicly present their projects than problem-based learning. These are all skills that students can take with them as they further their education at the university level or with them in their careers, giving them confidence in business meetings or even quite simply talking to their bosses. Additionally, students with more technical skills have learned much more through project-based learning than any other way of learning. Project-based learning also helped students from all different socioeconomic backgrounds [pass their AP classes](#) by a much larger margin than a traditional classroom setting, which can help your district with DEI initiatives.

Project-based learning, compared to problem-based learning, [focuses much more](#) on mastery of a concept instead of just teaching students to find a solution to the problem. Deborah Neufeld, the Vice Principal at Gaston Middle School in Fresno, California, worked with us so we could support, create, and implement a training specifically for their Project-Based Learning idea. Our training posed the question that every course, teacher and student at our school helped to answer which was 'How do we sustain a healthy and thriving community?' She went on to thank Educators of America for leading each department to investigate how that question could be answered by integrating their content standards and technology. As a result of our professional development, Rutherford B. Gaston Middle School answered that question with the creation of a community garden.

At Educators of America, we genuinely believe that project-based learning is the teaching method that best benefits students as they move forward with their lives, whether they choose an academic or technical career path, it will equip students with the right tools to excel in their chosen field. We offer professional development to help your faculty with the transition to what is the future innovation to transform the next generation, such as what we were able to do for Gaston Middle School. Feel free to skim our website for more information regarding our program and reach out to us for a free consultation with any questions you may have about implementing project-based learning at your school.