Project Based Learning in Philadelphia's OST Network

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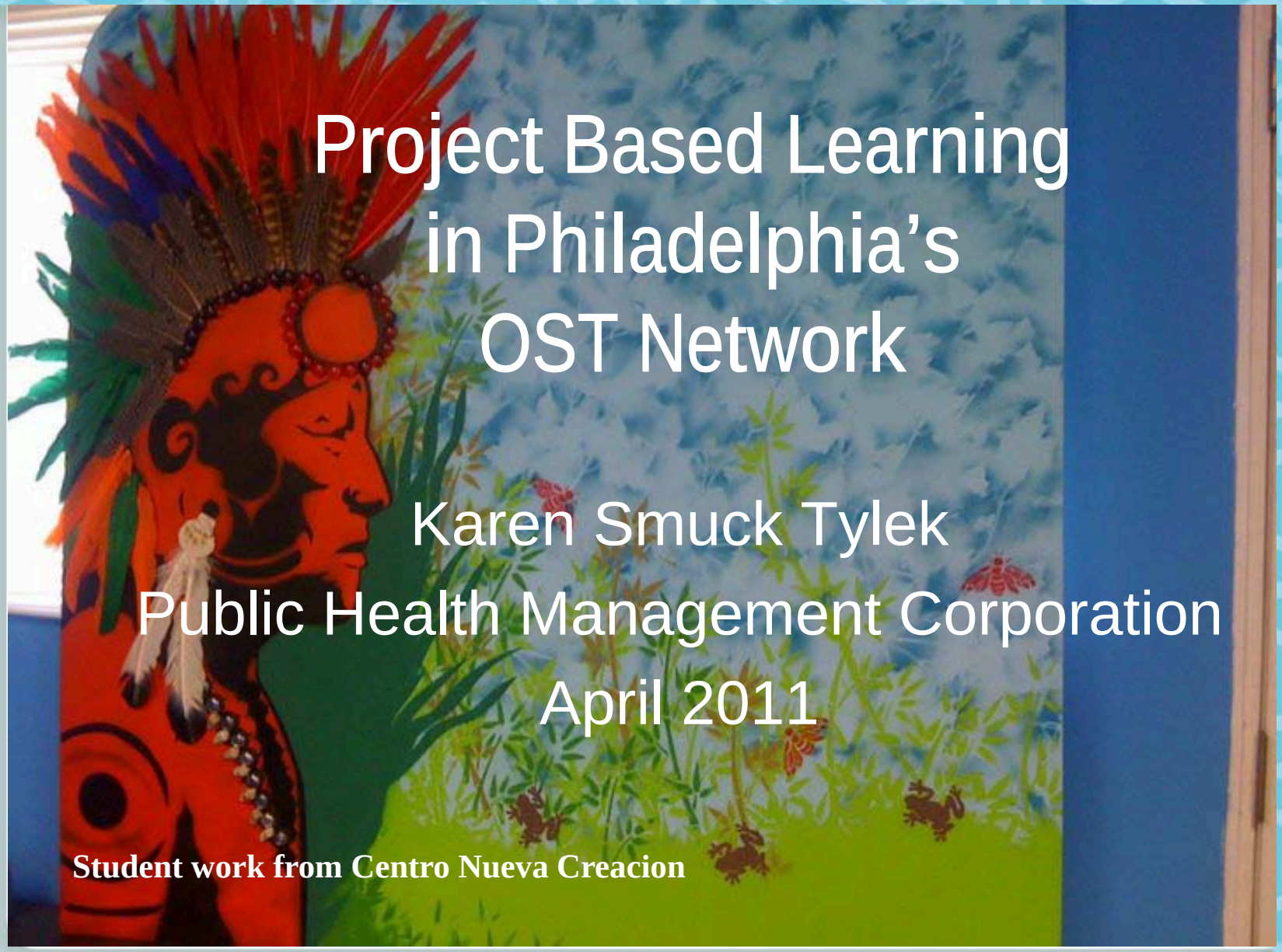

Student work from Centro Nueva Creacion

Introductions

On an index card please write:

- Name
- Position
- Agency
- City

- Or, leave your business card

Agenda

- Introductions
- Philadelphia's OST Network Overview
- Project Based Learning Approach
- PBL in Philadelphia's OST Network
- Closing

Out of School Time (OST) System

Youth at Aspira, Inc.

City funded OST System

- In existence since 1999
- City uses state and local dollars for system
- In FY2011
  - 72 agencies
  - 204 programs
  - Elementary, Middle, and High school models
- In FY2010 served total of 21,502 youth
- Programs operate
  - In public and parochial schools, community centers, churches
  - 3:00-6:00pm, Monday-Friday
- PHMC is intermediary

Initial Interest in PBL

- PBL approach recommended by OST providers during advisory group in December 2008
- PBL is a means to:
  - Unify the network
  - Improve program quality
  - Retain individuality of each program

What is PBL?

- An approach to learning or programming
- Based in inquiry
- Incorporates youth voice
  - Projects planned on-site
- Introduces new content
- Practice of 21st Century Skills
  - Communication
  - Collaboration
  - Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
- Deep, hands-on learning

PBL Research

- 15+ years of research on PBL in the classroom
- Compared to control groups, PBL students show
  - ↑ scores on critical thinking, problem solving
  - ↑ scores on confidence in learning
  - ↑ grades
  - ↑ standardized test scores

PBL Research

PBL can:

- "be more effective than traditional instruction for long-term retention, skill development and satisfaction of students and teachers"
- "be especially effective with lower-achieving students."

-Buck Institute for Education, http://www.bie.org/about/does_pbl_work

PBL Model

- PHMC researched and selected model of PBL developed by the Buck Institute for Education (BIE)
- Buck Institute for Education (www.bie.org)
  - Providing PBL professional development since 1999
  - Reached 5,000 educators in 40 states
- Collaborated to adapt PBL model for OST in June 2009

Project Based Learning Overview

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A Video Example

Greater Brunswick Gender Project

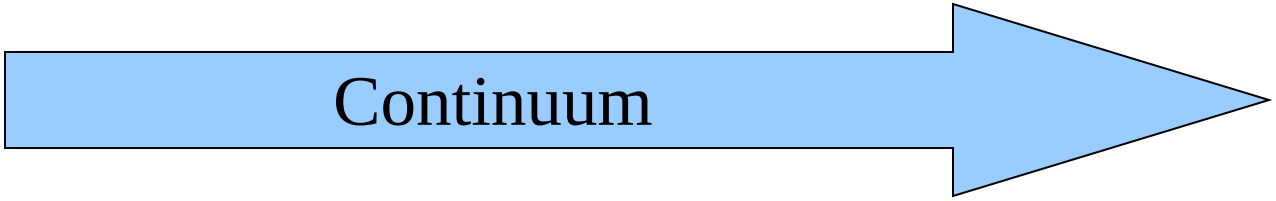
http://www.bie.org/tools/video/learning_to_act_as_women_and_men

PBL in Out of School Time

- Adapted PBL model for OST
- Incorporates OST best practices:
  - 21st-century skills: Communication; teamwork; self-management; creativity; problem-solving
  - Opportunity to learn in 'real-world' context
  - Positive relationships with youth
  - Stresses academic assistance, service learning, and enrichment
  - Encourages youth choice
  - Fun, engaging, different from the school day

Projects v. PBL

Traditional Projects	Project Based Learning
Teacher directed	Student driven
Single answer	Open-ended
Thematic	Driving question
Answer giving	Problem solving
School world	Real world



Adapted from the Buck Institute for Education

PBL Process

Driving Question → Project Activities → **Culminating Event**

Begin with Youth Voice

Aspira, Inc.

- Planning begins with student interest
  - What questions do youth have?
  - What topics interest youth?
  - What can they design, produce, or perform?
- Strategies for gaining youth input
  - Surveys
  - Group Discussion
  - Voting
  - Maintain running list of youth's questions

Driving Question

- Organized around a Driving Question
  - Open ended
  - Relevant
  - Authentic
  - Provocative
  - Requires content knowledge
  - Requires 21st century skills

- Project is an effort to answer the Driving Question; flows from the Driving Question

Adapted from the Buck Institute for Education

Driving Question

What was the Driving Question for the Greater Brunswick Gender Project?

Sample Driving Questions

- What would my life be like as a lady bug? (Elementary)
- How do we plan a vacation to Hawaii? (Elementary)
- How can we turn our trash into cash? (Middle)
- How can we use music to encourage students to stay in school? (Middle)
- What does an equitable city look like? (Middle)
- What does it take to make a successful restaurant? (High)

Culminating Event

- Project culminates in an Event or Product that demonstrates students' learning
  - Youth present their answer to the Driving Question
  - May be something youth *do* or something they *create*
  - Demonstrates content and skills learned
  - Motivating, rewarding

Culminating Event

What was the Culminating Event for the Gender Project?

Culminating Event Examples

- Video
- Play
- Panel discussion
- Collage
- Proposal
- Data display
- Web site
- Song

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Sample Project

In small groups, review the sample project and discuss the strengths and weakness of the following:

- Driving Question
- Culminating Event
- Activities
- Overall project concept

Project Topics

OST Project topics have included:

- Arts and Culture
- Health and Nutrition
- Job Readiness
- Science investigations
- Restaurant Wars
- Music Production
- Magazine Publishing
- Historical investigations

During the Project

- Activities are rigorous
  - Engaging
  - Hands-On
  - Related to answering the Driving Question
- Learning may get "messy"
- Tracked through Task List
- Group/ team work

Cardinal Bevilacqua Community Center

Project Examples

Find project examples, videos, and resources at our blog:

www.ostprojects.wordpress.com

PBL in Philadelphia's OST Network

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PBL Timelines

- Project cycles done continuously
- PBL timelines by model:
  - Elementary: Projects may last 3-5 weeks, with 5-8 projects per year
  - Middle: Projects may last 4-6 weeks, with 4-6 projects per year
  - High: Projects may last 4-10 weeks, with 3-5 projects per year
- Two weeks in between projects for planning

PBL Documentation

- Providers complete and maintain the following PBL documentation for projects:
  - Project Based Learning Planning Form
  - Task Lists
  - Debriefing Form
  - **Project Rubric**
  - Evidence of culminating projects (photos, copies of student work, sample portfolio)

Provider Success

"The implementation of Project Based Learning has changed our entire outlook of our program. Not only has it brought forth innovative ways to encourage literacy and mathematics with our youth, but it has also given our staff a sense of renewal and a fresh perspective about teaching and curriculum…The youth are engaged, desire to learn and even encourage parent participation."

-Christian Holland, Program Director, Episcopal Community Services

Provider Success

"PBL gives a bigger purpose to each day's activities and engages students in a broader perspective."

-Rebecca Mulligan, Youth Program Director, Norris Square Neighborhood Project

"PBL is a flexible way to make teachers experts and youth in charge of their own learning process."

-Cathryn Carkhuff, High School Program Director, Norris Square Neighborhood Project

Provider Success

"Our experience has been that it's a really good way to bring out the leader in everyone. It helps us reach inside the kids and figure out what their strengths are, and that's been really exciting…Finding a way to reach everyone and have them reach their full potential has been the biggest benefit of Project Based Learning."

-Samantha Bute, Site Director, Cardinal Bevilacqua Community Center

PBL and Retention

- In FY 2009 (no PBL) the attrition rate was 55%
- In FY 2010 (with introduction of PBL) the attrition rate was 21%.

Challenges

- Major shift for many of 200+ programs
  - How to incorporate current programming, consultants, specialties
  - Driving Question as starting point
  - Elementary, Middle, High differences
- Need for training
  - Staff turnover
  - Staff availability
- Time for planning

Supports for Providers

- Initial 2-day training by BIE faculty
- On-going training by PHMC
  - PHMC conducted over 60 workshops to date
  - More than 900 participants
  - On-site training available
- Program Monitors play a key role in supporting programs
  - Conduct site visits and document PBL performance on site visit forms
  - Provide general technical assistance
- PBL Blog: **www.ostprojects.wordpress.com**

Online Resources

Resources

Videos for Elementary:

- "From Worms to Wall Street," http://www.edutopia.org/newsome-park-elementary-project-learning-video
- "Five Year Olds Pilot Their Own Project Based Learning," http://www.edutopia.org/video?keys=pilots&tid_2=All&tid_1=All

Resources

Videos for Middle School

- "Greater Brunswick Gender Project," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPVXg8fmtdM
- "Wetland Watchers," http://www.edutopia.org/wetland-watchers-service-learning-video

Resources

Videos for High School

- "M.Y.T.O.W.N," http://www.mytowninc.org/
- "Give Me Shelter," http://www.edutopia.org/maine-project-learning-expedition-homeless-video

Online Project Libraries

- http://projects.hightechhigh.org/
- http://www.pbl-online.org/
- http://www.envisionprojects.org/cs/envision/print/docs/750
- http://www.wested.org/pblnet/exemplary_projects.html
- http://virtualschoolhouse.visionlink.org/projects.htm

Thank you

Thank you for joining us for today's workshop. To learn more about PBL in Philadelphia's OST network, visit our blog:

www.ostprojects.wordpress.com

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