

EDUCATOR

PUBLISHED BY THE WEST HEMPSTEAD UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

INTEGRATION & INNOVATION:



PROJECT BASED LEARNING AND VISIBLE THINKING

Aligned with the district's 2017-2018 theme of "Integration and Innovation," educators across the district are implementing learning strategies in the classroom to unify subjects and make cross-curricular connections, integrate advanced technology, and demonstrate the interconnected use of skills between the classroom and real-world settings. Their collaborative efforts include two prominent methods that facilitate these goals: Project Based Learning and Visible Thinking.

Coordinating the Project Based Learning initiative at the elementary level are Dara Perlow and Stacey Weinberg, STELLAR teachers (Success in Technology, Enrichment, Library, Literacy, Artistry and Research) at George Washington and Cornwell Avenue elementary schools. They are working in conjunction with Ryan Emmanuel-Cooke, the district's Director of Innovative Educational Opportunities, to craft lessons with third-through fifth-grade teachers that engender real-world applications, integrate 21st-century technology skills and encourage collaboration among students.

According to the Buck Institute for Education (BIE), Project Based Learning, or PBL, is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to

investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem or challenge. Students are tasked with an assignment that draws parallels between curricular learning concepts, such as those found in English language arts, math and science, and real-life scenarios to give them greater meaning.

"Project Based Learning focuses on authentic research, the development of research skills and the establishment of real-world connections to demonstrate the importance of [students'] work," said Perlow. "It's a vehicle for impacting positive change because through it, we're asking students to apply their knowledge in a way that will change their world and environment today."

When developing PBL assignments, BIE encourages educators to focus on student learning goals, including standards-based content and skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration and self-management. A PBL project may include challenging problems or questions that are meaningful and create a desire to answer; sustained inquiry that engages students in the process of asking questions, finding resources and applying information; and authentic contexts that speak to students' personal concerns and interests. The PBL method also empowers students with a certain level of decision-making autonomy, encouraging creativity as they decide on how they will work and what they will create. Students are given room to evaluate the quality of their work, receive constructive feedback through a peer-review process, and make their work public by displaying and explaining their finished product for an audience.

Based on the success of prior PBL activities, the district

has established a co-teaching model where general education and STELLAR teachers collaborate on PBL assignments. These educators met at the beginning of the school year to plan, organize and implement curriculum-aligned lessons for grades 3-5. Through this enrichment model, STELLAR students glean the benefits of having two educators coordinate, research and implement projects, and they are able to work at their

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Cornwell Avenue Elementary School fourth-graders created a commercial for their pop-up shop business using the online video editing software WeVideo.



George Washington Elementary School fifth-graders placed spider silk plants in white sponges saturated with a nutrient-rich water solution inside a hydroponic tank.

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A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Residents of the West Hempstead School District,

At its January 30, 2018 business meeting, the West Hempstead Board of Education unanimously adopted a resolution to move forward with restructuring the district's schools. This decision comes after several months of public meetings designed to share details of the proposed plan, listen to input and respond to questions by various stakeholders.

Effective in the 2018-19 school year, the plan groups students by grade level rather than by neighborhood. There are distinct advantages of moving to this model of educational delivery, including increased opportunities for whole-grade collaboration and development, greater consistency in classroom practices and resources, and comprehensive programs in each elementary school.

Under the plan, Chestnut Street School will remain a kindergarten center for the youngest learners in the district. Cornwell Avenue School will transform from an elementary school serving grades one through five into a primary school for students in grades one through three. George Washington School will be an intermediate school, housing students in grades four through six. West Hempstead Middle School will serve seventh and eighth graders, and the High School will continue to house students in grades nine through 12.

This restructuring supports the district's mission of innovating and reimagining 21st century learning. Please be assured that the district is committed to easing the transition for students as the schools restructure. Administrators and staff will be planning opportunities for the students to become familiar with their school for next year, especially for students who will be moving to a new environment. We realize that change is never easy, but are confident that our students will make a seamless transition with the support of our valued staff.

The district thanks all community members who attended the forums on the restructuring and looks forward to keeping parents and residents updated as the plans are developed over the coming months.

Sincerely,

Patricia Sullivan-Kriss
Superintendent of Schools

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own pace in a hands-off environment where teachers guide, rather than dictate, the students through the process.

"Innovative classrooms are not defined by fixed places, but by the spirit of curiosity and collaboration among students, teachers and others in a true learning community," said Emmanuel-Cooke.

It isn't the co-teaching model alone that is showcasing this new strategy. Third- through fifth-graders at both elementary buildings are participating in a vast array of PBL activities.

Transitioning from iPads to Chromebooks, third-graders are developing digital alphabet books to educate first- and second-graders about technology tools and digital citizenship. Laid out alphabetically, each book's individually designed pages reflect the meaning of a specific word that starts with the given letter. Lessons are enhanced through fonts, text color, and page designs containing relevant background images and supporting photos, and even a voice-over component where the third-graders recorded their voices reading the text.

As part of the fourth-grade math curriculum, students opened a pop-up shop, similar to a mall kiosk, to sell yarn bracelets that they made in their art classes. Working in groups, they learned

"We're always challenging our students to revise their thinking. We're providing amazing strategies for students to build background knowledge, establish a foundation and express their thinking."

- Faith Tripp, Director of English as a New Language



Cornwell Avenue Elementary School STELLAR teacher Stacey Weinberg assisted a student on a school-issued Chromebook to search for images and video to include in her group's business commercial.

business essentials such as developing prices and calculating profit margins, and they advertised their business using the online video editor WeVideo. After sketching out the scenes for their commercial on a storyboard, the students used their school-issued Chromebooks to search for images and video to include in it.

Combining math and science, fourth-graders also built multidimensional roller coaster carts out of household materials. Through a videoconference, Andy Campbell, distance learning coordinator from the North Central Ohio Educational Service Center, taught students about kinetic and potential energy and how energy can be transferred from one object to another. The students applied this knowledge to their roller coasters, which they engineered using toilet paper rolls, Popsicle sticks, plastic cups and tape. Taking the activity to their Chromebooks, they designed carts for their amusement park ride with Tinkercad, a 3-D design and modeling tool used to create multidimensional objects out of geometric shapes. They adjusted the shapes' dimensions and rotated the wheels to design carts that could effectively hold passengers.

In the fifth grade, Project Based Learning has broadened the horizon for studying social sciences. Applying the scientific method, students conducted experiments to determine whether children are better multitaskers than adults. They created blogs on KidBlog, a collaborative blog platform that allows for multimedia integration, where they described the problem for investigation, formulated their hypothesis, identified the materials needed, outlined the procedural steps, documented their observations, presented the data collected and shared their conclusion.

In another science-linked project that explored natural versus nonrenewable resources, fifth-graders conducted experiments to determine which type of environment is better for growing plants: soil or a hydroponic tank. Divided into two groups, one group planted spider silk plants in soil, while the other placed them in white sponges saturated with a nutrient-rich water solution inside a hydroponic tank. All students made hypotheses as to which environment would yield the healthier, larger plant, or if they would produce equal rates of growth.

"Initially it was kind of shocking for students to see a teacher from a different instructional area talk about another subject," Weinberg said of the integrative PBL method. "But students truly enjoy Project Based Learning because they discover that learning is not isolated in certain blocks, and that these projects are not only connected between subject areas, but with the real world as well."

While Project Based Learning is making advances in pedagogical technique that propel classroom learning into the 21st century, another learning model has been introduced at West Hempstead that's bringing the process of thinking to a higher level.

The model, which comes out of the Harvard University Project Zero study, is Visible Thinking, a research-based approach to developing students'

thinking dispositions while deepening their understanding of the topics they study. Introduced last school year, English as a New Language teachers explored strategies to scaffold learning for English language learners that would allow the students to identify and distill big ideas from reading, watching or listening to information through the use of thinking routines and protocols.

"Visible Thinking incorporates strategies that teachers can use to encourage students to think about and analyze any topic in multiple ways," said ENL Director Faith Tripp. "Our students are great thinkers and these strategies enable them to show their thinking processes in various forms."

Danielle Mammolito, technology, learning and instructional coach for the Massapequa School District, has been conducting extensive professional development for general education teachers on Visible Thinking. Seeing how successful these thinking strategies have been in helping students demonstrate their understanding of the curriculum, she hosts after-school workshops for K-12 teachers, especially those in the world language and English departments, to explore innovative thinking routines.

"The professional development our teachers receive helps our co-teachers speak the same language, understand what the routines are and learn how to apply them through various educational situations for the benefit of our English language learners," said Tripp.

Teachers are implementing numerous Visible Thinking routines at both the elementary and secondary levels.

Strategies such as Zoom-In may be used to introduce a new unit or topic. Only revealing a small section of an image, teachers use this thinking routine to gauge what students are inferring based on the picture. Slowly, the instructor exposes more of the image, prompting students to continue to revise what they are thinking as the image is fully displayed. With this type of strategy, teachers are traveling inside the minds of students to see how they perceive things, make decisions, revise their thinking after obtaining new information, and reflect on how this new information affected their thinking process.

In another thinking routine called Tug of War, students are given the opportunity to express their opinions using images. Teachers display a rope on the board with a central idea in the middle and two opposing viewpoints at either end of it. When prompted, students place a Post-it note with their name on the side of the rope with which they agree.

Additionally, Color, Symbol, Image allows English language learners to express their understanding of a topic without words. Students choose a color and symbol that best represent the topic of discussion and then draw a picture that represents what they think the topic is about. Engaging their peers in the project, classes host gallery walks where students display their trifold presentations that explain why they chose their specific colors, symbols and drawings and offer a window into different thinking perspectives on a



Chestnut Street kindergarten students discussed what they see, think, and wonder through a Zoom-In Thinking Routine.

given topic.

"Visible Thinking strategies are incredible for our English language learners," said Tripp. "They're classwide activities that level the playing field for all students, allowing everyone to participate in them and walk away with a new understanding of the topic."

With the huge success Visible Thinking routines have been for West Hempstead English language learners, ENL educators have been presenting the implementation of these strategies to other teachers and administrators in the State.

On Nov. 4, 2017, ENL teachers Nicholas DiBenedetto, and Madeline Valencia, alongside ENL Director Faith Tripp, presented "Visible Thinking Routines as a Vehicle for ELL Expression" at the New York State Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages 47th Annual Conference highlighting student success rate and implementation of these strategies in lessons across grades and disciplines.

Additionally, ENL teachers Michelle Phelan and Erin Holtkamp shared how they utilize technology to enhance co-teaching and build the home-school connection with teachers and parents at the annual "For Us, By Us" alumni conference at Molloy College on Nov. 18.

Also at the Molloy Conference, Tripp was honored with the 2017 Educator of Excellence Award for embodying the Four Pillars of the Molloy Mission (study, spiritually, service and community) through leadership in her career as well as through service to Molloy and the greater community.

The overarching vision of implementing Project Based Learning and Visible Thinking routines is to produce students who see how these creative strategies can influence their thinking in real-world settings.

"We're always challenging our students to revise their thinking," said Tripp. "We're providing amazing strategies for students to build background knowledge, establish a foundation and express their thinking."

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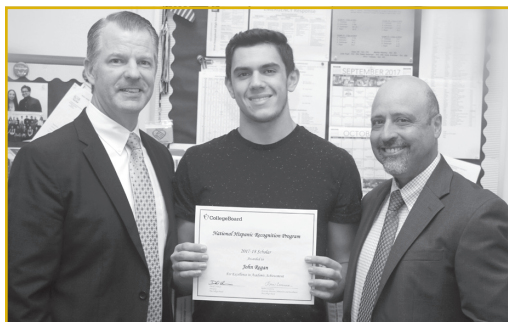
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POSTAL PATRON

ECRWSS

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:

THREE ACKNOWLEDGED FOR ACADEMIC AND ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS



The West Hempstead School District commends three of its high school seniors for their recent academic and athletic achievements. The accomplishments of these students are commensurate with their exceptional high school records and demonstrate their commitment to excellence.

Senior John Regan has been recognized as a 2017 National Hispanic Recognition Program Scholar based on his critical reading, mathematics and writing scores on the 2016 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test and GPA of 3.5 or higher. According to the College Board's website, the NHRP was established to honor about 5,000 of the highest-scoring entrants from among the 250,000 Hispanic/Latino juniors who take the test each year.

In addition, John was recognized as a school winner in the Wendy's High School Heisman program, an honor shared by his peer Rabiya Khan.

According to its website, the Wendy's



High School Heisman program was established in 1994 through a partnership between Wendy's founder Dave Thomas and the Heisman Memorial Trophy Trust to recognize and honor high school seniors who strive for excellence in the classroom, on the playing field and through community involvement.

John and Rabiya qualified for the competition by maintaining a 3.0 GPA or higher, serving as leaders in their school and community, and performing in one of the 43 school-sponsored sports recognized by the International Olympic Committee in the Summer and Winter Olympic Games or the National Federation of State High School Associations.

As school winners, both students received a certificate of distinction and a Wendy's High School Heisman patch. John was recognized as a linebacker on the high school football team, while Rabiya was awarded for varsity tennis.



Also recognized for his athletic prowess was senior Latrell Rawlins, who was presented with the Unsung Hero Award by the Long Island Association of Football Officials Foundation at the Nassau County High School Football Awards Dinner on Dec. 6.

As stated by its website, the LIAFO recognizes student-athletes who embody true sportsmanship and teamwork, and whose participation requires personal sacrifice with little recognition – but without whom there would be no team. Latrell was one of four students in the county to receive this award based on his love for the game, strong work ethic and willingness to help his team in any way he can.

The district congratulates John, Rabiya and Latrell for demonstrating exceptional character and excellence in the classroom, throughout the community and on the playing field.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Students who are legal residents of the West Hempstead School District, and who will be 5 years of age by December 1, 2018, are eligible to register for Kindergarten. Registration took place at the Chestnut Street School beginning January 16, 2018. If you missed registration, please call Mrs. Butler at 516-390-3150 to set up an appointment. The following documents are required:

- An original birth certificate or passport
- Proof of residency

Registración
Los estudiantes que son residentes legales del Distrito Escolar de West Hempstead y tendrán 5 años por Diciembre 1 del 2018, son elegible para registración del Kindergarten. Registración tomo lugar en la Escuela Chestnut Street comensando Enero 16 del 2018. Si usted perdió la registración, por favor llame a la Sra. Butler al 516-390-3150 y haga una cita.
Lo siguiente son documentos que se requiere:
• Partida de nacimiento original o pasaporte
• Prueba de residencia