



SCHOOLS' AND PARTNERS' GUIDE TO COMMUNITY CURRICULUM MAKING THROUGH ENQUIRY AND PROJECT BASED LEARNING



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SECTION 1

MAKING THE CASE FOR ENQUIRY AND PROJECT-BASED LEARNING (EPBL) THROUGH COMMUNITY CURRICULUM MAKING (CCM)

David Leat and Ulrike Thomas

It is fair to say that the main demand on schools is to hit exam targets and one might therefore see EPBL as a distraction, drawing time and resources away from a focus on student progress. However an equal or greater danger for students is that they have no intrinsic motivation to learn, leading to disengagement, skipping school, poor behavior or to compliance and dependency.

So engagement is a primary reason for pursuing EBPL. If you offer students some choice and autonomy, and the chance to work collaboratively the great majority will respond. They appreciate being treated as being capable and competent and they will learn to benefit from mistakes and critical feedback.

EBPL encourages schools to use the resources for education that exist in your community and locality. Many of you will be familiar with the African proverb that it takes a village to raise a child, capturing the sense that we have a collective responsibility for the education and care of the next generation. One can adapt this proverb for modern times and

appreciate that it takes a community, a village, town or city to raise a child. It is heartwarming that so many individuals and organisations want to contribute to the education of future generations, but often they cannot find the most effective way to do this.

Another vital reason to pursue EPBL is that it is a means by which schools can address 'closing the gap' and school improvement. The general picture across the country is that the gap between high and low attainers is stubbornly resistant to gap closing measures. Some schools are more successful than others but it is a tough nut to crack. EBPL brings a fresh angle because it takes students to new places, allows them to meet new people and do more things that take them out of the confines of the classroom. This gives them raw material

from which to construct more positive identities, overcome stereotypes and prejudices and inform their aspirations. It also helps them connect their learning to real world contexts, which is a part of creating authentic learning. It can also be seen as the basis for developing social and network capital. In a sense it is a way of providing some of what private schools provide.

...IT TAKES A
COMMUNITY,
A VILLAGE,
TOWN OR
CITY TO RAISE
A CHILD.



The Case for a Community Curriculum Making

Kim Cowie, Park View School, Chester-le-Street (now at Newcastle University)

Picture the scene, it is Monday afternoon and twenty 14 year olds are listening with rapt attention to a group of elderly men and women. Some are writing furiously while others are using their mobile phones to record what is being said. Back at school with the guidance of their teacher the students will spend the week crafting beautiful stories. The spelling and punctuation will be accurate, the presentation stunning. On Friday the students will revisit their new friends and present them with their Story. There will be tears on both sides and teachers and care workers will look on with pleasure as they see the generations collide in an exquisite display of affection and understanding.

This is CCM in action and is a real example taken from Park View School; I could give you many others. The students are Year 9, the teacher is Alison Moore. Alison has planned everything meticulously. She has talked to the care home manager and the residents. She has briefed the students and worked with them to plan how they will conduct their interviews and the importance of listening with respect and understanding and of course of being dressed smartly. She has discussed with the students how they might present their finished work and has helped them plan their return visit.

Alison has planned for all eventualities however she could not have anticipated how emotionally engaged the students would become and how their desire to represent the lives of the residents would drive their desire to ensure that they produced beautiful, meaningful and honest work. Nor could she have anticipated the emotions that would overwhelm both residents and students when the stories were presented framed and gift wrapped. There was laughter and joy but also tears and sadness for a life once lived but now gone. Rarely do young and old have the opportunity to share something so powerful.

Such an experience enriches the lives of both young and old and is at the very heart of why CCM is so important. If we wish our communities and our young people to grow and prosper to be compassionate and kind we must make this part of the way we organise our schools and plan our education. This is how we build social capital and never has that been so important. Building social capital is absolutely critical in our increasingly complex and chaotic world, a world in which young people and their families are faced with evermore challenging economic and social circumstances. At Park View 26% (and rising) of our

school population are Pupil Premium and increasing numbers of them are 'Looked After'. Yet hidden behind these statistics is a darker story, the families who do not qualify for Pupil Premium but are struggling to cope with the demands of daily life and the many young people and their carers facing the catastrophic fallout from declining mental health.

Ron Berger (The Ethics of Excellence) talks about the need for authentic audiences to inspire young people to create beautiful work, which is what Alison enabled. Keri Facer (Learning Futures) talks of the need for schools to really be the centre of their communities and Mick Waters (Thinking allowed on Schooling) tells us that it is social capital that will rescue children and their families from poverty not 'intervention and catch-up'. Waters passionately believes that schools should give young people the skills and the courage to network to challenge themselves to meet their aspirations. They need to be able to be able to present themselves with skill and confidence. They need to experience the richness of their cultural heritage, just as their 'better off' peers do. Money and connections may not buy happiness but it at least makes prosperity more likely.

I would like to say that the scene I painted in the opening paragraphs was the everyday story of Park View. It is not. You will find examples of such richness throughout the year as teachers fight to preserve the joy in learning, but in general such experiences take place at the end of the Summer Term in 'Enrichment Week'. They do not inform the mainstream curriculum which is increasingly constrained and restricted by a government hell bent on returning to the 1950's. The teaching profession must stand against this and CCM is a powerful method of reasserting our independence and our commitment to nurturing creative and compassionate young people. If we choose to accept this 'Impossible Mission' I have no doubt that together schools and their communities can build a fairer society in which all are valued and all can succeed. The case for 'Community Curriculum Making' has never been so strong.



SECTION 2

FIRST PRINCIPLES FOR SCHOOLS

If CCM is to be a deliberate process it is worth being clear about why you are doing it?

- Q.** What are your motives (broad) and/or objectives (narrower) in developing a community approach to curriculum?
- Q.** What is the headteachers' commitment to this – knows about it, passive committed, active committed, passionately committed
- Q.** Who will lead – both on SLT and in practical aspects?
- Q.** What if any aspect of the Ofsted inspection framework is addressed?
- Q.** What will it cost and where will the funds come from if needed, especially if the project grows a little or is to be repeated or sustained in subsequent years?
- Q.** What part can governors play? Might they be a source of support and involvement given their links and contacts? If yes, how best to get them on board?

Furthermore are you clear about the following, at least at the beginning?

1. How long will the project take?
2. Can it be cross-curricular? If you are in a secondary school setting could you work with other departments?
3. Which organisations/parents/community members can you draw on to help you deliver your project?
4. Will these organisations/ parents/community members be involved in planning the project? If not, should they be?
5. Do you need additional resources? If yes, is there funding/help that you can draw upon?
6. Are you comfortable/happy with the logistical arrangements?
7. What do you as a teacher want to learn during the experience – are you expecting to learn some new knowledge/skills to make the project sustainable?
8. Is this a one-off or will it be repeated?



In the book, *Enquiry and Project Based Learning: Students School and Society* edited by David Leat (Routledge, 2017), chapters 5 and 7 provide further useful guidance.

SECTION 3

FIRST PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Just as with schools it is important to ask ‘What are we/am I wanting to achieve?’ e.g.:

- An increase in interest/awareness of your specialism
- General altruism
- Demonstrating corporate/civic responsibility and raising profile
- A specific outcome either from the school or in partnership with the school
- It is your job to do outreach with schools

Furthermore are you clear about the following, at least at the beginning?

1. How long will the project take and what is your time and role commitment?
2. Who are you working with in the school and what are the roles and names of all the adults involved?
3. Are you involved in co-planning with the school? If not, should you be?
4. What are you responsible for and what role will you play – will you just provide resources or an opportunity, will you act as an expert to be quizzed/consulted, will you directly teach/instruct?
5. What should I/we do in case of any behavior issues?
6. Do the pupils need any special clothing or permissions and if yes can you provide guidance?
7. Is a risk assessment needed and if so who is responsible?
8. Have you had sufficient planning/communication time with the teacher(s)?
9. What work will be produced by the students and will you be providing feedback or evaluation at any point?
10. Are you comfortable/happy with the logistical arrangements?
11. How will you communicate with the school/teacher(s)?
12. What do you want the teachers to do and learn during the experience – are you expecting them to learn some of your knowledge/skills?
13. Is this a one-off or will it be repeated?



SECTION 4

BROKERAGE – INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

In business, a broker matches someone with a need or demand with an appropriate ‘other’ who can meet that need or demand or vice-versa – with varying amounts of donkey work to make sure that the two parties are on the same wavelength. This brokerage role is essential in CCM bringing together the very different worlds of school and the world beyond the school gates. Brokerage in CCM addresses three important questions:

- Q.** What people, places and resources from outside the school will benefit the project?
- Q.** What decisions need to be taken and action undertaken inside the school in order to make best use of those people, places and resources and give the project a reasonable chance of success?
- Q.** Thinking longer term, can the project sustained or developed in future years?

However there are further issues to address:

- The sheer practical difficulty of finding the right person to access outside resources and communicating with them effectively;
- Dealing with someone in a different organization, which has different purposes, language, structures, decision-making processes, rhythms, deadlines, timescales and resources;
- Negotiating expectations and roles – who will do what, when and how?

The other ‘side’ can seem like a different country. In the Broomley Bee Project, one of the community beekeeper volunteers reflected:

“Clearly I had a totally different one dimensional perspective on how school works and no-one with time or courage was willing to explain the system in school!”

But equally there are teachers who feel that they just don’t know who is ‘out there’, who can help with their projects. Brokers are therefore critical in CCM as they play a vital role in surmounting these issues.

Four types of broker are evident:

1. The internal school senior leader broker who gets the necessary support and decisions made in the senior leadership team;
2. The teacher or teacher assistant broker who does the practical work planning and organizing;
3. The external ‘organisational’ broker – such people occupy specialist roles in universities, large charities, government bodies and companies, and part of their work is specifically to work with schools;
4. The ‘floating’ broker – such people do not owe particular allegiance to any particular external organization and they have wide ranging networks that they draw upon.



Much of the internal brokerage is fairly obvious and routine – based on the standard question stems of Who? What? Where? Why? When? How? Established school procedures will also come into play such as risk assessment, parental permission etc.

However some of the internal brokerage is less obvious and the table below shows ways in which the school can make CCM a central tenet of their work.

JOINED UP THINKING	USING NETWORKS
<p>Joined up thinking implies that the project does as much work as possible for the school, gaining traction with school improvement plan priorities, linking with performance management and CPD priorities, making stronger links with parents, raising the profile of the school in the press, and offering Advice, Information and Guidance to pupils etc.</p>	<p>Using networks implies that the school uses the interests and contacts of the whole staff and even the contacts of those contacts. The C21st is tagged as the 'networked' century and there is enormous advantage in drawing down such resources. This can be as simple as staff who can contribute clothing items for a performance but go as far as who has an aunt who can get a class into a TV studio to learn about production techniques or who has a friend of a friend who is a university researcher working on genetics.</p>



You can read more about brokerage in Leat and Thomas 2016 article in Forum (see useful reading list at the end of the guide).



SECTION 5

FORMING LONG TERM CURRICULUM PARTNERSHIPS

Some of the criticisms of ‘projects’, especially by some partners, is that they are not sustained, there is minimal legacy and teachers do not learn as much as they might. There are benefits in long term relationships and work that is sustained and developed over years. Equally there is some downside to just repeating, exactly, what was done in previous years. The challenge is to maintain work as ‘fresh’ and motivating.

It is important to consider the following when developing partnerships:

- **Reciprocity – both parties benefit from engagement with each other and where possible the school and students do something useful for the partner in exchange for their resources, effort and input.**
- **There is a commitment towards an ongoing relationship from both sides – but it does not have to be forever – it is not a marriage.**
- **There is some co-planning, perhaps around Project Tuning** (see page 14)



At a very practical level there are some useful questions that are worth discussing between parties:

- What particular deadlines or constraints need to be factored in to working together over the course of a year?
- What did we learn from any previous curriculum work together, and/or how could it be improved or developed (but avoid scapegoating the other party)?
- Are there any wider implications for either the school or the partner organization, for the way in which they think and operate?
- Are any individuals showing signs of new (unexpected?) skills/talents or of developmental needs?

The two graphs overleaf show the questionnaire responses of a small sample of teachers already with some commitment to PBL with a local dimension. Table 1 shows how the teachers actually do involve people from the wider community in their projects and Table 2 shows how they would ideally like to involve them. Because of pressures of time the focus in present practice is on sorting logistical issues and clear communication channels, however it is also clear from the responses that the teachers sampled would prefer to do things very differently. Without exception the first two columns – ‘All the time’ and ‘Most of the time’ are considerably higher for ‘ideal’ practice than for ‘actual’ practice. It would appear that they want to work much more closely with community partners, sorting the logistics and communicating clearly, but also going deeper by planning together and learning some of the ‘skills’ that the partners bring. Other demands and lack of time get in the way. There is a very important agenda here for curriculum and teacher professional development.

Table 1: If you involve people from outside school on your projects, do you...? (actual)

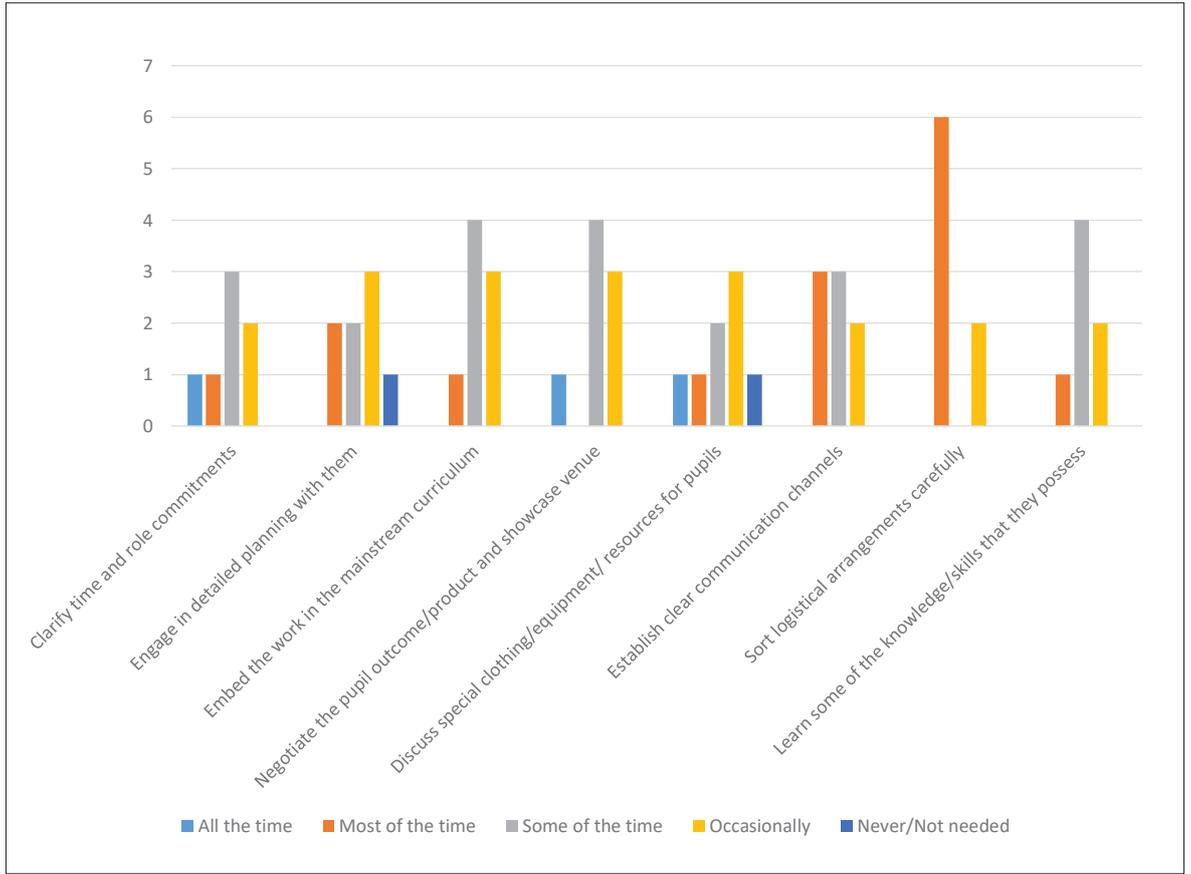
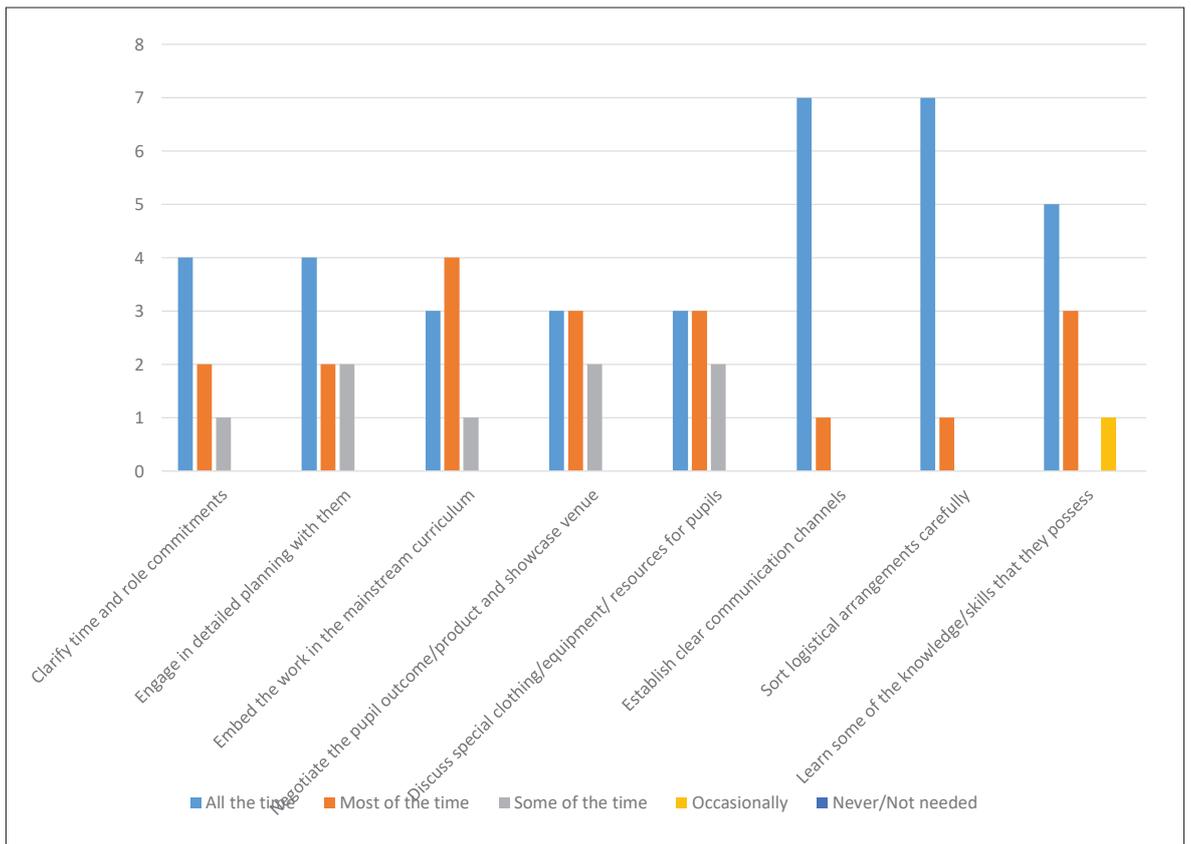


Table 2: If you involve people from outside school on your projects, do you...? (Ideal)



SECTION 6

PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION – DECIDING ON THE PROJECT TOPICS, QUESTIONS OR OBJECTIVES, THE PROJECT PRODUCT, THE AUDIENCE/CLIENT, AND THE PRESENTATION VENUE

In the book ‘Enquiry and Project Based Learning: Students, School and Society’ there is a chapter on the use of the locality by two primary schools in North Tyneside. One of them, in particular (Percy Main Primary School) has a principle of using the locality, environment and people to support doing curriculum projects. The table below shows the pattern of use across Years 1 to 6. This is a powerful way of analyzing the school curriculum, if you believe that relevance, engagement and developing identity are important.

Table 3: The Pattern of Use of the Locality, Environment and People by Percy Main Primary School

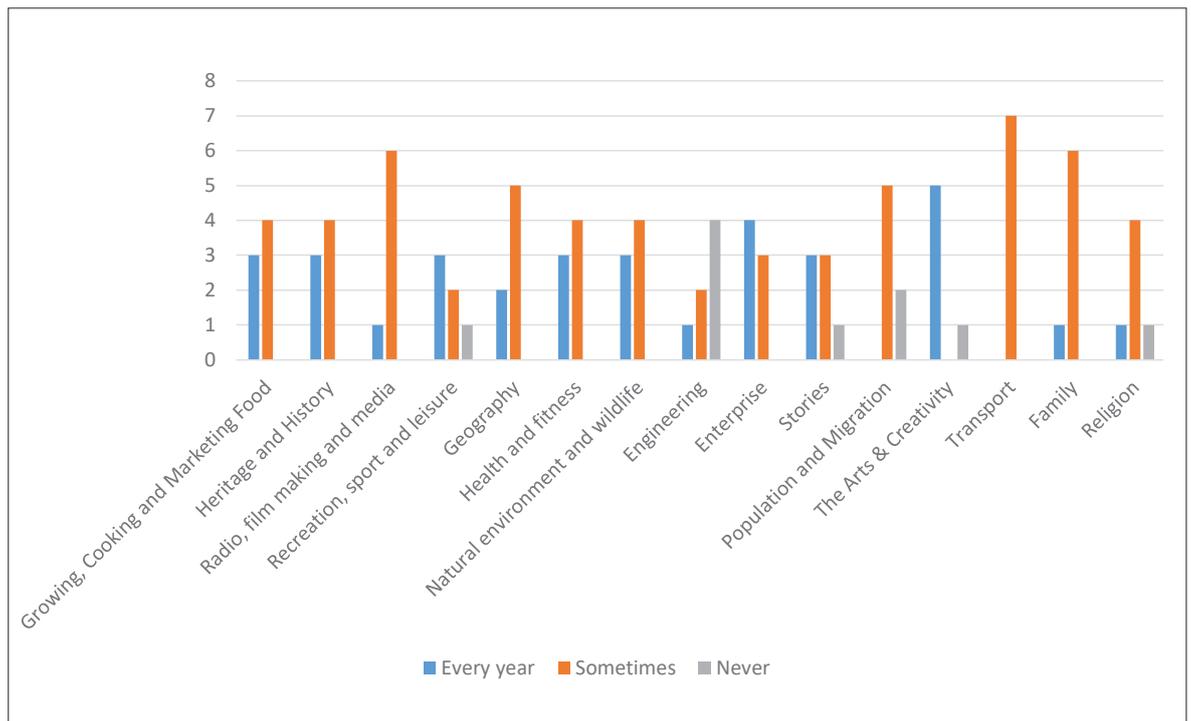
Year Group	School Grounds/ Enquiry Garden	Immediate Locality	Wider Tyneside Region	Beyond Tyneside or Visitors Coming to School
Year 1	School familiarisation and play	North Shields Fish Quay – local area Local Park – Toy Story	Newcastle Castle Keep – castles; Newcastle Chinatown – India and China	
Year 2	Wild West – campfires and panning for gold; Nocturnal animals; Den building; Rainforest enterprise – running a café for parents	Wallsend Park – Hedgehog houses	The Angel of the North Sculpture (Gateshead) Northumberlandia Landscape Sculpture	South Lakes Wildlife Park, Lake District, Cumbria – Pole to Pole The Forbidden Garden (N. Yorkshire) – Giants Down at the Bottom of the Garden
Year 3	Spiders’ Webs	Royal Quays, Wallsend, Thorn-ton’s Chocolate – chocolate The City Learning Centre – The Rise of the Machines; Segedunum Roman Fort	The Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle – Sculpture Workshop; Great North Museum, Newcastle – the Greeks	Maximus Roman Centurion – role playing as a Roman Legion
Year 4	The Egyptians – making shadufs and paper; Endangered animals and bug hunt for graph drawing		Great North Museum – Mummification workshop; Newcastle Discovery Museum – Britain in the 1950s	Suzie Jones – visiting music specialist on ‘Flying Down to Rio’ Neil Brown – film animator
Year 5	Space above and beyond – shadows, direction & planets Performing Shakespeare on school outdoor stage; Runic message trail; Maths measurement in the enquiry garden	Tidal River Tyne; Tynemouth Priory; St Mary’s Lighthouse	Tyne Bridge	
Year 6 – Much of the work is around crime and its consequences	Sustainability – using recycled materials and debate; Hazards – Outdoor Volcanoes and Tornadoes; Stone, Iron and Bronze Age	North Shields de-commissioned police station; Tynemouth Community Fire Station; Surfing on Tynemouth Beach funded by RNLI; North Shields Fish Quay – international slave trade; Leavers meal at North Shields Fish Quay	Tyneside Cinema (Newcastle) – interactive digital mystery; Visit Northumbria University Campus Seven Stories – National Collection of Children’s Literature	Northumbria University chemistry and forensics outreach – crime scenes; OASES – Outdoor Sustainability workshop on resource depletion; Parliamentary Outreach Service School Nurse - Relationship workshop

DECIDING ON A PROJECT

There is an immense amount of help in most localities to help make such decisions if you know where to find it – in universities, local authorities, businesses, public bodies such as archives and museum services, the National Trust, voluntary organisations, faith bodies, individuals etc. Below, in Table 3 are examples of topics that lend themselves to PBL because they chime with intrinsic motivation or they are locally visible. The Community Curriculum Making event held at Newcastle University involved 7 schools and it is interesting to see the relative popularity of the topics we polled on the basis of our local knowledge. Note the popularity of:

- **Growing and cooking;**
- **Heritage and history;**
- **Radio and film making;**
- **Geography;**
- **Transport;**
- **Family;**
- **Health and fitness;**
- **The environment;**
- **Stories.**

Table 4: Do you use any of the following as the basis for projects? (School Staff)



AN EXAMPLE PROJECT

The website of the project based learning specialists, High Tech High, has some intriguing archived projects: The Watershed, The Boneyard Project, The Wicked Soap Company, Projectile Motion, Actually it is Rocket Science, I AM San Diego, What's in our Water, Healthy me Project. The list has a healthy leaning towards STEM topics and different orientations from locality investigation, through to enterprise project, personal enquiry and science investigation.



The Boneyard Project description

(<http://www.hightechhigh.org/hthcv/project/the-boneyard-project/>) should spur many imaginations:

“In The Boneyard Project students learn about anatomy and physiology of small mammals and humans while considering ethical questions about utilizing animal products. In The Boneyard Project students explore the various perspectives surrounding the animal and pet industries. We begin by getting to know our classroom animals and unveiling who has what kind of pets at HTHCV. As we are gathering these data, we will also be discovering the anatomy and physiology of mammals and reptiles through in-class dissections. During this process we will be preparing these organisms for our flesh eating

beetles and field experiments by removing all organs. The beetles and wild insects will do what they do best – decompose deceased animal remains leaving behind only a bit of cartilage and bones. As this occurs, you will prepare lab drawings and photo representations of the dissections for presentation. Once the fleshy portions of the animals have decomposed, students will recover the remains and reconstruct the skeletons for display at Halloween and Dia de los Muertos exhibitions—labeling key features, major bones, and functions of each skeleton.”

COMMISSIONING

Our colleagues in Open Lab at Newcastle University have been working on how to use digital technology to help create projects, perhaps offered by someone in the community or perhaps desired by teachers or students in school. We will working on this with Open Lab. Ahmed Kharrufa puts it as follows:

Using the notion of commissioning in education is an idea that has a strong potential in bridging the gap between schools and their communities and in building stronger school-student-community partnerships. Commissioning is a very general term, but in the context of education, a digital commissioning platform can play a major role in building such partnerships with minimal coordination (human brokerage) to ensure scalability and sustainability. Key features of such the idea of commissioning include allowing any individual to express their ideas and needs and promote them through campaigns; providing means to express support for such campaigns and providing

tools to co-develop ideas from successful campaigns by the community of supporters. A commissioning platform can then be the space where ideas and needs are expressed, promoted and co-developed; and for organizations and individuals to identify the opportunities they can respond to.



PLANNING

1) Project Tuning

Project tuning is a planning technique used by High Tech High (<http://www.hightechhigh.org/>). The outline of a project is presented to a supportive group. High Tech High essentially involves other teachers, but including knowledgeable outsiders to the group adds considerable value. There is a series of stages or protocols that are used but the heart of the process is to both provide feedback and ideas that can stimulate thinking. It is a gentle process, but the real advantage over traditional planning is that it opens up the process and makes it a far more collaborative and community focused. It is astonishing what a few interested people can add.

Where relationships with outside partners are particularly strong teachers may open up and share their planning with those partners and even allow them to contribute, not least around specialized inputs and logistics.

2) Audience

As has been outlined earlier EPBL aims to provide a meaningful audience for projects. Just producing work for teachers to mark and for no other good reason can become very hollow; it is just part of the pointless hurdle race that education can become. A real audience introduces pressure, purpose and excitement and can generate real enthusiasm. Having an audience of local councilors or the MP can be too much to expect for all projects, so a long term master plan can be devised which reflects variety and feasibility. Suggested audiences:

- Teachers and other classes
- Parents and wider family
- The local community (as in a public event)
- A local voluntary organization or charity
- A business operating locally
- The local authority or local councilors
- A celebrity
- The internet

Similarly one needs to think of venues for the work to be presented or experienced.

Possibilities include:

- The school entrance hall or other large space in school (such as the dining hall or sports hall)
- The local library or museum
- A council venue (including parks)
- A business venue
- School grounds
- Local GP surgery or hospital
- A cinema, theatre, sport or music venue
- An empty shop
- School website

3) Planning your questions: Encouraging deep learning

Another chapter in the Enquiry and Project Based Learning: Students, School and Society book comes from two Australian headteachers from Melbourne, Brett Millott and Paul Kenna who have been using SOLES (Self Organised Learning Environments) as the basis for projects. They have honed their approach to planning SOLE projects which has become part of the induction process for new teachers coming to their schools. They are anxious to move teachers on from superficial or low level project questions which result in 'finding simple facts'. They seek to develop the capacity of their teachers to ask higher order questions which demand greater cognitive effort, and which Millott and Kenna present as a 'myth busting' approach where collective knowledge garnered from the internet and synthesised is used to test everyday 'common sense truths'.



The next step is to ask students to solve a problem using the knowledge and understanding derived from earlier stages, which requires further cognitive depth as they form opinions and solutions. The questions are chosen with regard to the format or medium of work required. In this Australian example writing persuasive texts is commonly used because of the demands of the national testing system.

Table 5: An example of the typical hierarchy of questions, which acts as a planning protocol or tool, taken from the chapter by Millott and Kenna.

Overarching Question	What are the environmental challenges facing society?
Collective Knowledge Questions	What are natural disasters? How do they affect humans, our environment and state? What is Global warming and what are its effects on the environment?
Forming an opinion	Sharing information and “layering of new knowledge” through presenting, conversations etc. allows children to formulate an opinion on a topic. (This happens naturally through the sharing and discussion process encouraging students to synthesise a viewpoint through dialogue. It tends to be an amalgam of their own viewpoints, researched knowledge and the shared views of other students.)
Deeper Question	Given the increase in natural disasters can the earth survive in another 50 years? (students are able to use evidence they have found.)
Problem Solving	What do we need to do to ensure the survival of the planet? What recommendations would you make? What will the earth look like in another 100 years if the environment continues to change?

4) Using Dimensions of EPBL as a Planning Tool

It is important when undertaking CCM or EPBL projects that the pedagogy should be considered thoroughly in order to ensure that students and teachers enter the shallow end of the pool, avoiding the plunge into the deep end. The dimensions of EPBL shown in Table 6 provide a very useful planning tool to analyse the characteristics of any particular project and therefore to help plan pathways of progression for classes and year groups.

Table 6: The Dimensions of EPBL

From	Dimension	To
Teacher	Control	Student
High	Scaffolding and/or Support	Low
Inside school	Audience	Outside school
Inside school	Source of resources	Outside school
Short (<week)	Duration	Long (whole term)
Single subject	Focus	Cross subject
Subject focused	Stimulus	Curiosity driven
Individual	Work mode	Collaborative
Transfer critical	Metacognitive orientation	Transfer incidental
Concrete	Final product	Abstract

An example project planned against the dimensions: Skype Seniors with Year 9

Angela is a German teacher in a large secondary school. She is taking part in a project called Skype Seniors project in which four native German speakers have been recruited to Skype with her Year 9 (aged 13-14 years) students. Once a week, for a period of four weeks, the German mediators take part in conversation sessions with small groups of students. Although Angela has specified a topic (media; which encompasses film, TV, music, the internet and mobile phones) and an end product (a 200 word GCSE essay in German), it is the students and mediators who determine the content and focus of the sessions. In a typical 45 minute lesson, the first half is spent with the students working in groups deciding what they will ask the mediators and looking up appropriate vocabulary. During the second half of the lesson the mediators are called over Skype and a 20-25 minute discussion ensues.



Table 7: An example from: Leat, Thomas and Reid 2014 p.107.

From	Dimensions				To
Control					
Teacher					Student
Scaffolding and/or Support					
High support					Low support
Audience					
Inside school					Outside school
Source of resources					
Inside school					Outside school
Duration					
Short (<week)					Long (whole term)
Focus					
Single subject					Cross subject
Stimulus					
Subject focused					Curiosity driven
Work mode					
Individual					Collaborative
Metacognitive orientation					
Transfer critical					Transfer incidental
Final product					
Concrete					Abstract

SECTION 7

ASSESSMENT OF EPBL

This is the Achilles heel of EPBL. Our current assessment system is geared towards attaching numbers to students, teachers and schools, as these numbers provide a metric through which to marketise education. In primary and secondary schools most teachers will rely on subject assessment frameworks as this is what they are held accountable for. EPBL provides the opportunity for students to develop on a very broad front, to learn about themselves and their capabilities as they go places, meet people and do/make things, and thus to develop positive and complex identities and aspirations. Such outcomes are not readily captured by any combination of numbers. One might argue that assessing EPBL using current metrics has the potential to undermine its very essence, yet there is equally the danger that if it is not recognized then it is not valued by the student.

It is realistic to conclude that, currently, there is no convincing, readily implementable framework for assessing EPBL. There are some promising starting points, but it will take a change of political will and vision, as well as some resource to develop a viable alternative. It is critical, however, that both researchers and schools continue to experiment in the spaces for innovation that do exist, even in an exam driven system. The innovators need to carry students, parents, further and higher education and employers with them in their work, so that a convincing case can be built for a system change.

PROMISING STARTING POINTS

Whilst this section is a little downbeat, there are good starting points for assessing wider outcomes, if the public discourse about assessment can be shifted. There is a brief outline of some of these below, but for a fuller review see Chapter 3 in EPBL: Students, School and Society.

EPQ Extended Project Qualification. The EPQ is a post-16 qualification which counts for half an A level in which individual students undertake a project of their own choice. The product is usually a report but significantly it can also be an event or an artefact, which is 'presented' to the assessors. The assessment process includes the keeping of a Production Log which records the following key information:

- planning review meeting between the learner and the supervisor following project approval;
- mid-project review with the supervisor;
- end-of-project review with the supervisor;
- summary and evaluation of the project;
- a record of the presentation;
- reflection on the complete project process.

The assessment criteria are project management (20%), use resources (40%), develop and realise (20%) and review (20%). As EPQ numbers are growing (c. 35,000 in 2016) it is guaranteed that there is some project assessment experience does exist in secondary schools.



DIGITAL PORTFOLIO/ E-PORTFOLIO

Digital portfolios are collections of artefacts/products, which together with commentary and testimony, can evidence of knowledge, skills, dispositions and learning. There are clear connections with EPQ assessment. Scalability and flexibility are marked characteristics of e-portfolios. Digital storage allows numerous files (audio, text, video or graphic files) to be uploaded and as appropriate linked to webpages. Scalability means that a portfolio can develop over time and be edited. It is conceivable that a digital portfolio can support an individual from primary school through to post-graduate study, providing a dynamic picture of their learning trajectory and inevitable changes in the self. The future of digital portfolios depends substantially on political decisions. Currently our educational systems are more interested in weighing and measuring students en masse than in understanding them as learning individuals.



CRITIQUE

If you are spending some considerable time on a community project it is important that the ultimate product is good.

The following is taken from the Innovation Unit's 'Work That Matters' document (see reading list):

CRITIQUE: HOW TO DO IT

The three ground rules of critique

These are the basic rules that students at High Tech High follow when they are holding critique sessions (teachers also use them when they are tuning a project). They were developed by Ron Berger:

1. Be kind

Presenting your work for critique puts you in an incredibly vulnerable position. For the critic, on the other hand, it's easy to get carried away when you're critiquing work, especially when you feel like you know exactly what a piece of work would benefit from, and inadvertently say very hurtful things.

Thus, this ground rule cannot be stressed enough.

2. Be specific

Even if you are being kind, you are not doing anybody any favours if you are vague. 'I think Melanie's writing is really good' does not cut it in a critique. 'I like the way Melanie uses lots of different verbs in her writing so that you feel like you're a part of the action' is much better.

3. Be helpful

Critique is not just about naming what is strong and weak in a piece of work, it is also about working out how to go about improving that work.



Open Badges are an interesting variant on digital portfolios (<https://openbadges.org/>)

'Work that Matters' can be found at :

[http://www.innovationunit.org/sites/default/files/Teacher's Guide to Project-based Learning.pdf](http://www.innovationunit.org/sites/default/files/Teacher's%20Guide%20to%20Project-based%20Learning.pdf)

SECTION 8

SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND PARTNERS

Many teachers find EPBL daunting as it is very different to the practice that they have been trained in. Commonly teachers are very much in the role of directing learning, choosing the topic, setting the tasks, objectives, time limits and success criteria. In EPBL they give up some of their control and pass it over to students (termed 'weak framing') and instead they have to respond more to students' work, questions and struggles. Planning as indicated earlier is rather different – trying to anticipate and prepare for eventualities or what might happen.

Q. The first question is how do teachers plan for EPBL, both in advance and dynamically in the classroom?

Q. The follow up question is: How can teachers be supported in developing their practice?

Experience and research suggests that there are some valuable active processes that teachers can engage with to help to develop new practices. Five of these are suggested below. The first three rely on professional collaboration, while the last two can be undertaken independently having opportunities to share ideas and dilemmas and successes is always worthwhile.

1. Collaborative planning and review; rather than working alone there is a benefit to teaming up. It may be that small planning and review teams work within subject groups or key stages, or that an EPBL professional learning community or working party is set up for interested colleagues.
2. Peer coaching; teachers can work in peer coaching pairs, perhaps drawing upon one participant's greater experience or knowledge to support the other participant whose practice is more emergent. It is also possible to work in coaching partnerships which are reciprocal, alternating roles over time.¹²
3. Lesson study; this is a form of teacher inquiry which relies on collaboration and focuses teachers' attention to specific pupils that they are currently teaching. It uses a cumulative and cyclical plan, do, review structure and draws teachers into conversations through which they consider plans for teaching, develop hypotheses about pupil learning and engagement, participate in inquiry-based lesson observations and experience meaningful reflection and evaluation. It is well suited to the development of new and pedagogic practices.³
4. Action research; teachers can engage in disciplined enquiry at a number of scales and levels, and sometimes this is framed as action research. Here teachers gather data or make an intervention based on an enquiry question, using a range of tools to collect information, and then evaluate the evidence gathered and generate strategies for action or modified enquiry questions for another cycle.
5. Self-study or DIY CPD; this includes reading, social media and other digital resources, attending courses, visiting other schools, networking and hearing 'experts'. A strong advantage of deliberate self-study is the conscious effort to engage with ideas and practices from beyond the teacher's own well known teaching context.⁴

1. http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/assets/Documents/Coaching_Collection_R_Lofthouse.pdf

2. http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/news/documents/5414_CfT_FINALWeb.pdf

3. <http://lessonstudy.co.uk/lesson-study-a-handbook/>

4. <https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/do-it-yourself-professional-development-diy-pd>

SECTION 9

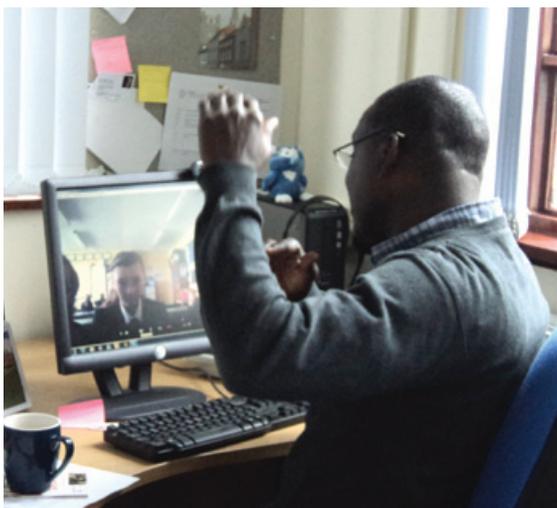
USING SKYPE

Skype is a powerful resource as it allows your students to connect to people outside the classroom, who they may have met on another occasion or be meeting for the first time remotely. It is a key component of Sugata Mitra's powerful ideas on the 'School in the Cloud' (website) and 'Skype Grannies'. Such people might include:

1. Pupils from other schools with whom they are twinned or connected in some way;
2. Experts related to the topic they are studying perhaps from museums, businesses, universities, learned or specialist societies or people from 'speaker banks';
3. Witnesses from events or eras, such as people who lived through the Second World War or the drought of 1976, worked in mines, were early pioneers for women's rights, were immigrants from a particular decade or country or people who live in particular regions or countries.
4. People who speak another language that the students are studying and who will speak talk to the students.



Suitable 'skypers' can be tracked down through personal contacts, Skype in the Classroom, voluntary organisations, businesses, specialist societies and universities.



There are some technical and logistical challenges in using Skype:

- Where do you find your Skypers?
- What devices are available or best to use?
- Where is wifi available?
- How many pupils will Skype at once and in what size groups?
- What preparation do they need?
- What safeguarding issues are there?
- How much do you involve the Skypers in the planning? How do you prepare them? How do you thank or reward them?
- Do you trust the students to monitor and regulate their own behavior and relationships?
- How much do you try to script the interaction?
- How do you integrate the Skyping into the activity of the whole class (unless the whole class are Skyping at once)?
- What spaces are most appropriate for the Skyping? (Noise, sunlight, distance from screen, interference)?

SECTION 10

SUSTAINABILITY

It is one thing to run a one-off project or inquiry and another to develop a curriculum in which CCM and EPBL are important principles. Below are a list of questions which provide a starting point for sustaining the approach:

1. Are there extra costs in any particular project and are they one-off or ongoing? If the latter how will this be paid for (fund raising, grants, partners, pupil premium)?
2. If extra resources (especially equipment) are required can it be borrowed?
3. If a project requires 'importing' specialist skills, can staff develop these skills, and if 'yes' how will this be done?
4. Do you need to change the way in which topics and projects are planned, perhaps making it a more open process involving larger groups of teachers, your project partners, parents and or other organisations? Do you need new protocols or templates?
5. What will progression look like in EPBL in your school?
6. What do you tell pupils about the approach, how much do you bring them on board in developing it?
7. How do you make sure that learning outcomes, such as writing and maths, which feature in tests, get sufficient attention?
8. Are there organisations that you want to develop ongoing relationships and partnerships with, because they can support you in keeping your CCM fresh and challenging – e.g. the local archive and museum service, wildlife trust, university department, faith organisation or charity?
9. How do you recruit and develop staff who can run with this approach and enjoy it?
10. How should a CCM/EPBL approach be reflected in the School Improvement Plan? Does it relate to any aspects of your last Ofsted report? Do you need to be collecting evidence about the management and impact of CCM?
11. What part can governors, parents or other schools you are linked with play?
12. Critically, does this approach really reflect what you believe is important in education, or is it just a fad?



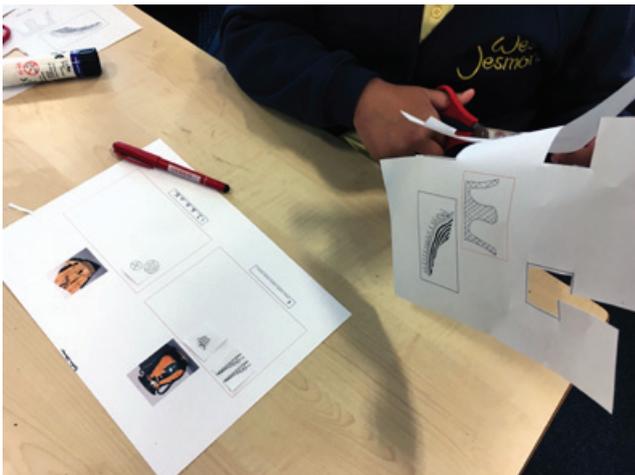
SECTION 11

PROGRESSION

If EPBL projects are a principal component of your curriculum how do you plan progression? Here are four suggestions:

1. The first is fairly obvious - whatever assessment of skills/competence framework you are using (e.g. Building Learning Power) you could expect students to progress and aim for some new level of expertise over successive projects.
2. You can use the dimensions framework (see page 15) so that students are aiming for greater independence, more control, in more inter-disciplinary and more truly collaborative projects. This requires that they are familiar with at least some of the dimensions, thus increasing their sense of control and choice.
3. The projects use an increasing range of beyond-school resources, including people and places and students should map this in some way in order to provide a graphic to represent their growing 'field' of awareness, knowledge and familiarity.
4. Students can begin to blur the boundaries between formal learning undertaken at school and informal learning occurring elsewhere. Portfolios have great potential here, but they are a somewhat inexact science, so informed trial-and-error will pay dividends. The Open Badges model may provide a starting point. See page 17.

Q. How do you plan for progression in EBPL? Or is it part of wider progression planning?



SECTION 12

EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

There are various reasons why you would want to evaluate some CCM activity:

1. The partner wants some data to feed back to funders about the impact/effectiveness
2. You want data for school improvement and Ofsted purposes, and possibly for the governors or for sponsors who have given money to the school
3. You want to do it again, only better next time
4. A teacher or trainee teacher uses EBPL as a focus for an award bearing assignment

How might you undertake your evaluation/research?

There are a number of approaches/designs with varying practicability:

1. Using an experimental design with an 'intervention' group and a control group;
2. A pre and post measurement design (mainly quantitative, but can have some qualitative);
3. Comparison with previous years outcomes (mixed methods, mainly quantitative);
4. An action research study looking at improving the practice of teachers and partners;
5. An ethnographic study, mainly using observation of the 'experience';
6. A case study (involving addressing how and why questions with a variety of data - triangulation);
7. A 'Theory of Change' evaluation

Some of the appealing methods include (depending on the question being asked and the design/approach):

- Video of students working and teachers and partners working with students;
- Journals/diaries from students, teachers and partners;
- Interviews and/or focus groups with students, teachers and partners (Theory of Change interviews are particularly useful with adults);
- Observation – either unstructured or including counts of selected behaviours or interactions (e.g. students asking questions or teachers 'scaffolding');
- Resources accessed by the students, either directly under their own steam, via teachers or via partners (we would include people as resources);
- Students' work;
- Any relevant test or examination results;
- Teachers' planning documents;
- Quantitative data using specialized instruments to measure, for example, self-esteem, self-concept, engagement, 'learning power'



See Action Research in the Classroom
(Baumfield, Hall and Wall, 2008, SAGE)

SECTION 13

USEFUL READING

(Those with an asterisk should be readily traceable on the internet)

Anderson-Butcher, D., et al. (2008). "Community Collaboration to Improve Schools: Introducing a New Model from Ohio." *Children & Schools* 30(3): 161-172.

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Berger, R. (2003). *An Ethic of Excellence - Building a Culture of Craftsmanship with Students.* Portsmouth, NH, Heinemann.

Boaler, J. (1997). *Experiencing school mathematics: teaching styles, sex and setting.* Buckingham, Open University Press.

Halbert, J. and L. Kaser (2015). "Learning to Be. A Perspective from British Columbia, Canada." *European Journal of Education* 50(2): 196-213.

*Ito, M., et al. (2013). *Connected Learning: An Agenda for Research and Design.* Irvine, CA, Digital Media and Learning Research Hub.

Lawson, H. and van Veen, D. (eds) (2016) *Developing Community Schools, Community Learning Centers, Extended-service Schools and Multi-service Schools,* London: Springer.

Leat, D. and Thomas, U. (2016) *Productive Pedagogies: narrowing the gap between schools and communities?* *Forum* 58(3): 371-384.

Leat, D, Thomas, U and Reid, A. (2014) *Reframing relationships between teachers, students and the curriculum- the phenomenon of hybridization in IBL in Blessinger, B and Carfona, J.M. (eds) Inquiry Based Learning for Faculty and Institutional Development , Emerald*

Locke, J. (1996). *Some Thoughts Concerning Education and of the Conduct of the Understanding.* R. W. G. N. Tarcov. Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Co.,

*McKnight, J. (May 2003). *Regenerating Community: The Recovery of a Space for Citizens,* The IPR Distinguished Public Policy Lecture Series, Northwestern University.

*Patton, A. and G. Robin (2012). *Work that matters - The teacher's guide to project based learning,* London, Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

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*Thomas, J. (2000). *A Review of Research on Problem-Based Learning.* San Rafael, California The Autodesk Foundation,

*Thomas, L. (2012). *The Area Based Curriculum in Peterborough - Learning about, by and for Peterborough* London, Royal Society of Arts.