

What will work for Noah Childers Laissez-Behîndo?: Scene 1

Jessica dashed into the science department meeting and listened as Jane explained the Science Safety Workshop this summer at Georgia Perimeter College.

Janet: City Schools of Decatur is in partnership with GPC to provide this training and the stipends will be paid through the grant. Teachers in Georgia have not had *any* safety training according to a survey and they also ranked safety as ‘very important’. Therefore, we feel this workshop is going to be very well received. The summer institute will incorporate real-life situations using Problem-Based Learning. I hope many of you will consider joining us this summer!

The meeting adjourned and teachers mingled for a few minutes....

Kevin: Well, I have completed most of the safety modules online and I really like working from home in my spare time, but I am going to Greenland this summer to do research with some scientists from Georgia Tech so I cannot make the summer workshop.

Angela: Hope you’ve been to REI for lots of warm clothes!

Noah: The safety part sounds good, but Problem Based Learning is just another fad. And one that just won’t work in our classrooms. How can you possibly expect students to learn all of the content we have to cover? How can you expect our students to know what questions to ask? Do you really think that they’ll identify ‘learning issues’ and do adequate research? What about AYP and No Child Left Behind?

Jessica: Well, I don’t know about *all of that*, but it does sound interesting. I’ve read a little bit about it. It was originally developed for med students, and it has been successful. In a research article I read recently out of Louisiana, an activity-based curriculum with PBL qualities had students scoring higher on the ITBS.

Noah: (agitated) Even so, I know the content and how much time it takes to cover it. I do not have any time to spend doing ‘extra things’.

Daryl: I read last week in an editorial in the AJC that parents should be given information on individual teacher’s success rates based on testing results. This is getting serious. I am not on board for any fads, I agree with you Noah.

Angela: I wonder, does PBL go along with GPS? If our students must pass - well, we better make sure we have *lots of strategies* that work!

Janet: OK, if PBL *is* effective then we should at least find out more about it! PBL sounds like it really engages students and my 7th period could use a good shot of engagement. I cannot get those students interested in anything. I really believe motivation is the key to higher test scores.

Debra: I used PBL last year and while it does engage some learners other students would rather you just give them the information they need to know, give them a test and be done with it.

Angela: I can see that. And what about student assessment? How do you assess what the students have learned? Are tests out the door with PBL? How do we explain that to parents?

Linda: Does using PBL mean we have to change everything? It seems like it might take a lot more class time like Noah said....time we do **not** have. I heard a presentation last year that said that each PBL unit was 3-7 class periods long! I think traditional methods like lectures can cover a lot more material and they've been working for a long time. I don't mind throwing in a few of these case things, but only after I'm certain they have the basics down. You really have to show me why this new approach is better!

Kevin: Well, I understand everyone's concerns, but let's not get too worked up about it. I've actually already had some PBL training and wrote a case. It was a case about a tornado entitled, The Vortex. It's on the cases online website put together by Emory University's PRISM program. The students really got into the mechanics of how a tornado forms and one of the products that they did for an assessment was a tornado safety plan. Overall, the case went really well and the safety plans they developed were really good. Although a few groups had problems collaborating, it went really well. I think I will develop some assessment rubrics for the group members to help ensure everyone participates equally.

Jessica: If students are investigating and producing safety plans it sounds like PBL is student-centered and teachers are more like facilitators. That strategic approach is more likely to lead to information being stored into long-term memory. We all know that short-term memory is limited. I've read lots of data on that.

Kevin: Yes, facilitation is big part as well as collaboration, motivation and self-directed learning. I think there have been some studies about students retaining information longer when it is learned from the PBL model.

Val: Ok...you over-achiever---left for Greenland yet? (Everybody laughed.)

Kevin: (undaunted as usual....heads toward the door) It's all very interesting isn't it? Let me know how the Safety Workshop goes!

What will work for Noah Childers Laissez-Behindo?: Learning Issues

What are the real issues?
What does Noah (N.C.L.B.) need to be convinced?

Teacher _____ **Concerns / Learning Issues**

Noah

Angela

Jessica

Daryl

Kevin

Linda

Janet

What will work for Noah Childers Laissez-Behindo?: Assessment

Which Teacher are YOU?

1. Which teacher uses the metacognitive process in teaching?
2. Which teacher is well-read?
3. Which teacher thinks it is just a fad?
4. Which teacher thinks is may be a fad...seems to go along...
5. Which teacher wants you to prove PBL is better?
6. Which teacher is concerned about student Motivation?
7. Which teacher sees that some students prefer traditional methods?
8. Which teacher is concerned about GPS alignment?
9. Which teacher are YOU?