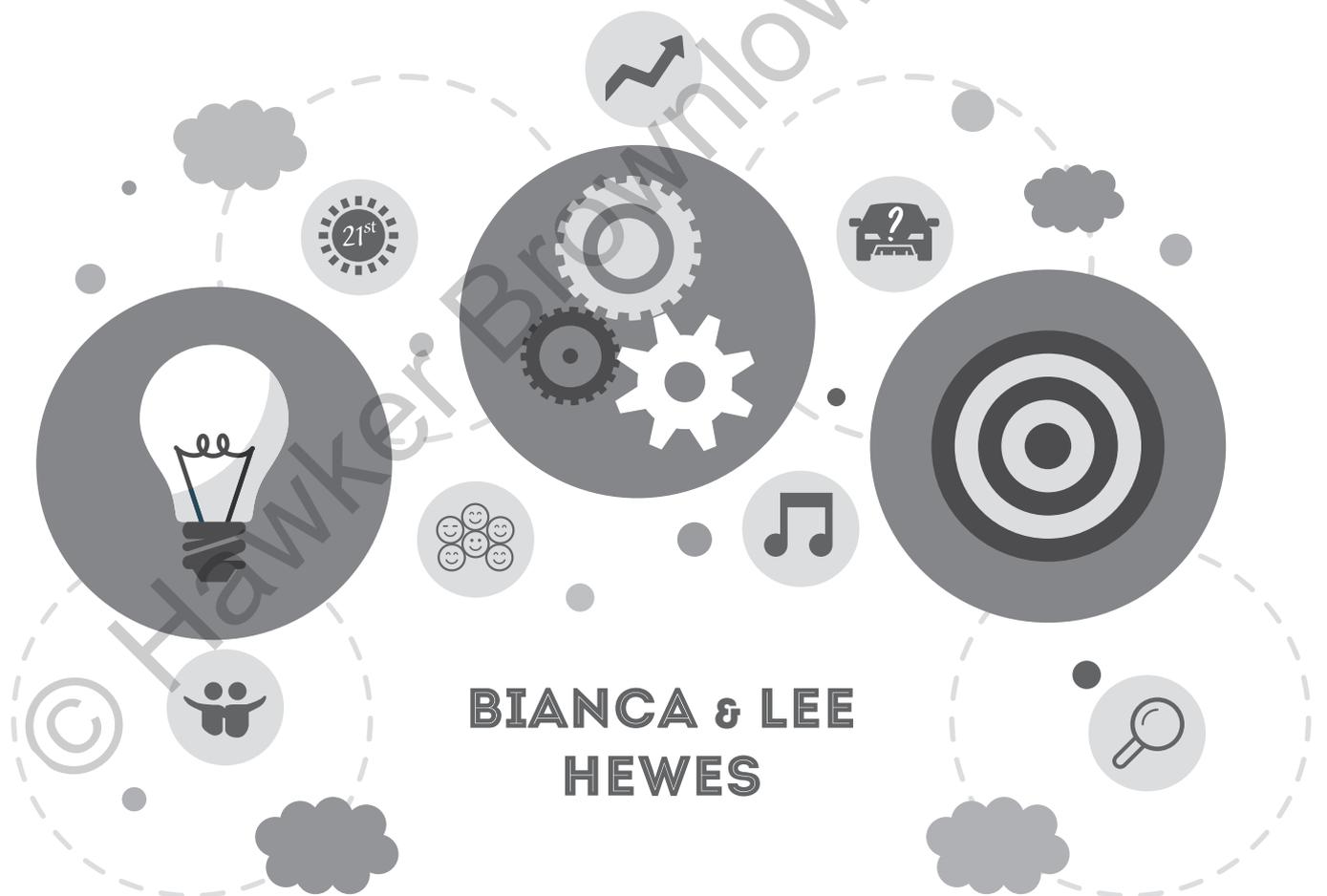


PROJECT BASED LEARNING FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

ARE HUMANS WILD AT HEART?

AND OTHER EPIC ENGLISH PROJECTS
FOR YEARS 9-10



BIANCA & LEE
HEWES

CONTENTS

How to Use This Book	v
Part One: The What, Why and How of Project Based Learning	1
Part Two: Sample Projects	17
Year 9	
Mad Blood.....	19
Mobile Learning.....	35
Speak Up.....	47
Teens Unite.....	61
Midnight Snacks	69
Year 10	
Emotional Excess	81
More Than Meets the Eye	99
Something Wicked	115
Wild At Heart.....	137
English Composition Project (ECP).....	153
Part Three: Additional Resources.....	159



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book has been designed to support you as you begin experimenting with Project Based Learning (PBL) in your English classroom. Of course, the methodology of PBL is relevant to areas other than English – it can be used in a range of subjects, with many projects actually integrating more than one subject across the curriculum. Trying out something new in the classroom is always a daunting experience because feedback on success or failure is immediate. The great thing about PBL is that it is creative for both the teacher and the student, and that means that experimentation, and sometimes failure, is a natural part of the process.

This book has been structured into three distinct parts, designed to help you feel supported in your PBL journey.

PART ONE: THE WHAT, WHY AND HOW OF PROJECT BASED LEARNING

The first part of the book provides you with some background information about the nature and purpose of PBL, as well as outlining key strategies to ensure a successful and enjoyable learning experience for you and your students. This section also includes a discussion of how assessment works in PBL, as well as the relationship between PBL and the Australian Curriculum's General Capabilities.

PART TWO: SAMPLE PROJECTS

The second part of the book provides you with a selection of sample projects suitable for students in Years 9 and 10. You will be pleasantly surprised that a lot of the activities in this section look familiar – that's because PBL is about taking the best teaching strategies and re-purposing them. The difference with PBL is that it empowers students to see a purpose for their learning beyond the classroom and to feel confident that they know where they are headed while they move through the project process.

Each project includes the following:

- ✓ Driving question
- ✓ Project outline
- ✓ Summary of learning experiences
- ✓ Literacy focus
- ✓ Specific mode(s) and text form(s)
- ✓ 21st-century skills
- ✓ Assessment strategies
- ✓ A range of resources to support learning



For both Years 9 and 10, there are two very detailed projects. We have given you a week-by-week outline of how the projects can be run with your students, as well as providing useful resources to support implementation of your first projects. Once you have implemented a couple of projects, and you begin to feel more confident with PBL, the remaining projects will act as loose guides. These projects are much less detailed, allowing you more scope to adapt and develop them to suit your students' needs and interests.

NOTE: It is essential that you adapt the given projects to make them meet the needs and interests of your students. Central to effective PBL is student ownership of learning and this can only be achieved if students feel that the project is relevant to their experiences and context. What may be considered significant and relevant to students on Sydney's northern beaches may have no relevance to students from Broome, Western Australia.

PART THREE: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The third part of the book is full of extra resources to help you design and run your own engaging projects for your English classes.

NOTE: Throughout this book you will see the icons below. These will help you to navigate the projects and easily identify the key content and elements of each project.



**DRIVING
QUESTION**



DISCOVER



CREATE



SHARE



ASSESSMENT



**21ST CENTURY
SKILLS**



**FORMATIVE
ASSESSMENT**

PROJECT BASED LEARNING AND THE GENERAL CAPABILITIES

NOTE: While the term ‘General Capabilities’ is specific to our context as Australian teachers (it comes from our national curriculum), the capabilities themselves are relevant to every teacher around the world as they are essential skills that all students must master to be successful in the 21st century.

The Australian Curriculum clearly articulates an awareness of the need to change our perceptions of learners and our practice as teachers. This is articulated through the General Capabilities and the Cross-Curriculum Priorities. The image below presents an overview of the General Capabilities. The central text is our goal as educators for our students – for each to become a ‘successful learner, confident and creative individual and active and informed citizen’. It is our intention to show how each of the general capabilities aligns with the key elements of PBL that were identified by the Buck Institute for Education. These 8 essentials for PBL are: Voice and Choice; Significant Content; In-depth Inquiry; Public Audience; Revision & Reflection; Driving Question; Need to Know and 21st-Century Skills. Where possible we give examples of how each capability can be engaged in the PBL English classroom. It is our belief that PBL is a methodology that provides students with the opportunity to strengthen, develop and demonstrate each of these capabilities.



Adapted from: www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/GeneralCapabilities/Overview/general-capabilities-in-the-australian-curriculum

LITERACY

Literacy is the need to know for all young people. Being literate opens the door to the other capabilities. Without being literate, it's very difficult to contribute and participate meaningfully in society. It's not impossible; it's just very difficult. Remember as well that literacy includes visual literacy and critical literacy. During PBL, literacy is developed through both explicit instruction and through more constructivist, constructionist and collaborative learning strategies.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM TRAGEDY?

GROUP PERFORMANCE OF A SCENE FROM *ROMEO AND JULIET*

1. In your project team, negotiate which scene from the play you feel BEST communicates an important life lesson to the audience. This lesson can be about anything, because our argument is that tragedy helps us to learn new things about ourselves, others or the world. It's up to you and your team members to decide what it is we learn from *Romeo and Juliet* and choose a scene that best reflects this.
2. Your scene only needs to run for 3–5 minutes. Have a look in your copy of *Romeo and Juliet* to find your scene. You may need to condense your scene (this means make it shorter by cutting out a character or some words). Do you want to speak the Shakespearean lines or the modern English ones? Why?
3. Does everyone have to act? Yes. This means you need to find a scene where there are enough characters OR you swap characters in the middle – you'll have to work out how to do this without ruining the drama.
4. You will need to match actions to the words – you can only do this by getting on your feet and acting it out. Costumes and props are essential elements of drama – bring them and use them well.
5. As a team you need to write one paragraph explaining why you chose your scene and how it helps to answer the driving question, 'What can we learn from tragedy?'
6. REHEARSE, REHEARSE, REHEARSE.

PLAN PROJECT TEAMS

This is a project where it is a good idea to ensure quite mixed teams. If you are running this project early in the school year, you may not know your students well enough to identify who has these skills. In this case, you may like to have students complete a self-assessment or a skills inventory prior to the project. The data from this assessment will help you with forming teams. Each team for this project will need to have:

- a confident public speaker, or two
- a confident technology user – to edit the YouTube video
- someone with really good ideas and strong opinions
- a team leader who will ensure all team members are on task.

We would suggest teams be no bigger than four. With a project like this, it might even be preferable to have teams of three. This will give each student the potential to contribute meaningfully to this project.

CREATE SPACE FOR A PROJECT WALL

Your project wall needs to be highly visible. If you don't have a home-room, you might like to seek permission from the school executive to use an external space, such as a wall outside of a classroom that you use for that class. Another alternative is to have a digital project wall. There are some great web tools to create these, such as Weebly and Glogster. These sites allow you to create interactive project walls, where students can click on the project outline and see it in greater detail, or access additional resources like scaffolds or checklists. Things to include on this project's wall:

- project outline
- project calendar
- key terms
- need to know
- project title
- project's driving question

As with all project walls, you will add to this wall as students progress through the project. If a team comes up with a great idea or creates something great, celebrate that by posting it to the project wall. Remember that this wall is a visual representation of student learning, so keep it bright, up to date and engaging.



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

CONTACT EXPERTS/ROCK STARS

The strength of this project rests on the quality of the experts that you involve. Selecting an expert in advance is essential. Poetry is a difficult form for most students, however this project is designed to make connections between traditional poetry and contemporary music. This is by no means an original approach to teaching poetry, yet it is a powerful approach. Try your best to involve experts from the music industry to speak with your students about the relationship between music and poetry. Another option is to have a radio host or a producer come to critique students' podcasts. I once had Craig Schuftan (a radio producer from popular youth radio station Triple J) come and listen to my student's podcasts. His feedback was invaluable and my students still speak about his visit. You may also wish to get a poetry expert in to speak to students. This may be a local poet or an academic from a nearby university.

MODIFY PROJECT OUTLINE

A project outline has been given as a suggestion. You may like to use this outline as it is, but it is likely that you will need to modify it to match the needs of your specific students and context. Remember that PBL is all about engaging students through making content significant to their needs and interests – perhaps you will have a different driving question (what about punk or hip hop instead of emo music?) or you will add images of popular bands or musicians to make it more appealing? You will also need to modify the project outline to indicate due dates for formative and summative assessment.

ORGANISE PROJECT PACKETS

This is an important organisation strategy that we use a lot in PBL. For this project, students will be working in small teams. A project packet is essentially a small folder or document wallet given to each team that contains all of the materials essential for students to be successful with the project. These remain in the classroom and are accessed by students each lesson.

PLAN PROJECT TEAMS

Planning teams is inherently difficult, as you must consider the personality as well as the skill level of each student in your class. For this project, it is best to select a mixed team, taking into consideration the following skills: critical thinking, creativity, ICT skills and public speaking. Try to balance the teams to ensure that you have even numbers of outgoing and reserved students.

CREATE SPACE FOR A PROJECT WALL

This project wall will need to be updated regularly so students can see their understanding grow. Start your project wall with the title of the project 'Emotional Excess'. In equally large writing, put up your project's driving question – students need to see this as it will drive them through the project and inspire them to think critically. You will also need an A3 colour printout of the project outline. You may like to laminate this; we often do. Leave space for a project calendar (or put up a blank one and have a student fill it in as you negotiate due dates etc.), the 'need to know' list of questions and a good amount of space for 'key terms'. Remember that these need to be

blank at the beginning of the project, as students will add this information during the ‘discover’ stage of learning. Use as much colour as you can, because it is important that students are attracted to it, as it is a visible record of their learning. You might even like to nominate a student to be responsible for adding new information to the ‘key terms’ or ‘need to know’ spaces.

LAUNCH YOUR PROJECT

HOOK LESSON

There are so many possibilities for how to hook your students’ interest in this project. The first thing to consider is what the main conceptual focus of the project is – in this instance it could be either the emotional excess evident in poetry and emo music. If you choose punk music you might look at rebellion, or if you choose hip hop you might focus on injustice and discrimination. Another approach may focus on poetry as the most important element of the project. Finally, you might decide to focus on the type of product to be created, in this instance a podcast. Below is an outline of one way to approach the hook lesson for this project.

Have students watch a range of music videos of songs that obviously fit into the ‘emo’ genre or that have highly emotive lyrics and clips. Some that you might show are ‘Old Scars/Future Hearts’ by All Time Low, ‘Can You Feel my Heart?’ by Bring Me the Horizon, ‘Welcome to the Black Parade’ by My Chemical Romance or ‘Cry’ by The Used.

As students watch they can read the lyrics to the songs as well (all available online). Ask students to brainstorm as many single words to describe the songs – write these on the board. Ask students to make connections between the songs – drawing out the idea that all are highly emotive and personal. Put students in small teams and give each team the term ‘emo’. Get them to complete one of the following activities:

- 5-minute brain-dump (everything they know about emo)
- 5-minute Internet research on emo
- 5-minute star bursting: who/what/when/why/where of emo
- draw pictures of an ‘emo’ and annotate them

Teams present these to class and explain/justify what they have included in their visual/written definitions of emo.

POSE DRIVING QUESTION

The lesson after the ‘hook lesson’ is very, very important. This is the lesson where students are given access to the project’s driving question for the first time. This project’s driving question is: *Why do emos write poetry?*

Of course, if you’d like to use another driving question, you certainly can.

Once you pose this question to the students (we often put it up on the whiteboard or the interactive whiteboard), get them to immediately write down their own, un-mediated personal response to it. This will become their ‘hypothesis’, which will be tested and reshaped as they work through the ‘discover’ learning stage.

YEAR 10

4. WILD AT HEART

PROJECT AT A GLANCE



DRIVING QUESTION: Are humans wild at heart?



DISCOVER: Students will research Freud's structural model of the mind (id, ego, superego), and the language forms and features of both texts, as well as discovering how to write a personal essay.



CREATE: Students will individually compose a personal essay answering the driving question.



SHARE: The class will publish an anthology of their personal essays using Blurb or a similar online book publisher. The published book will go on display at the school or local library.



ASSESSMENT: Students will be assessed on their personal essay – the plan, draft and final product.



21ST-CENTURY SKILLS: critical thinking, ethical understanding

LITERACY: grammar – sentence structure, passive/active voice; spelling – nominalisations; punctuation – ellipses, semicolons

MODES: reading, writing, viewing

TYPES OF TEXT: informative (personal essay) and imaginative (picture book and film)

LANGUAGE FEATURES OF TEXTS: personal essay structure, voice, rhetorical devices, themes, visual techniques (layout, texture, modality, colour, gaze, vectors, salience, symbols, shots, angles)

READING/COMPREHENSION: making connections and questioning

TEXTS: *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak; *Where the Wild Things Are* by Spike Jonze.