

Project Based Learning with High Functioning Teenagers on the Autism Spectrum

Melissa Metzler, M. Ed.

Lisa Buonora MS, CCC/SLP

Project Based Learning

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 (Buck Institute for Education).

Group

Our Project Based Learning group consisted of 11 eighth grade middle school students who participate in the Autistic Support program.



PHILADELPHIA ZOO
UNLESS
Project

Together we can save them.

Project

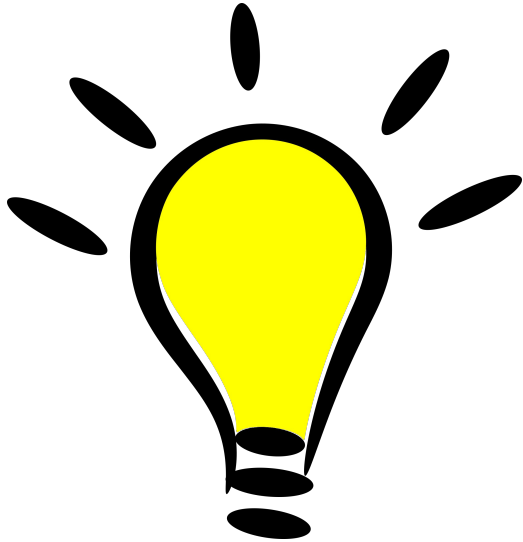
Goals

- Identify a meaningful challenge
- Ongoing inquiry
- Authentic, real world application
- Student input
- Reflection
- Final product

Target Skills

- Social problem solving
- Peer negotiation and compromise
- Functional communication skills
- Cooperative learning
- Self-advocacy
- Self-awareness

Team Bright Idea



Develop an energy conservation plan by conducting a community light bulb swap.

Create an art installation as part of community outreach.

Outcome

- Peer engagement within the school community
- Interaction with members of the community
- Improved planning and organizing
- Ability to set and adhere to deadlines
- Incorporation of technology into group activities

Student Responses

I have learned to work as a group more than most projects I do as well as how to organize and plan ahead of time. Sometimes I'm less proactive and more of a procrastinator and lately I have been doing a lot of work ahead of time and I am glad about it. Also, I have learned what's expected when doing a big project and to take it serious, but I also had a lot of fun during this project. The Unless Project also taught me more about the environment, how I can take care of it, and how I can improve energy savings for my own family. Overall this project has been a huge help for me.

I have learned about how to communicate with others in real life and online. I have also learned about deadlines and responsibilities. I am very thankful for this experience because it showed me that everything won't get done for me in life.

From this project, which was very hard in doing some of the stuff, I have gained a greater sense of calmness when things get tight. I have also helped my skill in communication. This is also helped me in using google slides and communication tools available from Google. This is helping my skills to work on projects that have a tight deadline. In all, this project was fun and 10/10, would recommend to do the project again if I had the chance to do it again.

Questions

