

## How your School Librarian Can Help with Project-Based Learning

If you've been reluctant to try project/problem-based learning or had a bad experience with it, here are **5 ways your School Librarian can be an invaluable PBL partner**:

1. We can show each student the **best problem-solving model** to guide them through the project/problem/design/challenge they've chosen.  
All PSMs have 4 basic phases: plan, aggregate materials, create a product, and analyze outcome. Some have more steps, some fewer, and all develop in students a problem-solving mindset. Since each PSM has its benefits and flaws, a School Librarian, experienced in teaching these models, can determine the most suitable process for the project a teacher has in mind, can present it in a manner that supports student inquiry, and will scaffold the learning so students master each step.
2. We can show students the **best ways to develop meaningful questions**.  
Students rarely have an opportunity to plan a research assignment, so they may not be adept at creating meaningful questions for PBL. School Librarians have **brainstorming tools** to help students formulate questions as they begin their projects. We can also show students how good questions help them sift through resources for specific information—saving them time—and how to analyze the value of that information to create a quality product or outcome.
3. We can show each student the **best information resources for their needs**.  
Your school library has thousands of non-fiction books, along with dozens of different online services. Imagine the confusion for students trying to determine what to use for their information need. A School Librarian knows all the resources available to students, and more importantly, knows how to match the most useful **print, audio, video, digital, or web-based resources with** the needs of each student's project. We are the ultimate curators of information resources!
4. We can show students all the **best search strategies** for those sources.  
Even before the Internet, School Librarians taught students how to **generate keywords** to search an Index or Table of Contents in books. Our purpose has not changed; teaching students to generate keywords is essential for searching online, whether for text, graphic, audio or video materials. We've also mastered **ways to fine-tune a search** in online subscription services and search engines, such as Google. We can help each student customize their search for whatever their own project requires.
5. We can show students the **best way to gather information ethically and proficiently**.  
School Librarians teach students about Academic Honesty and note-taking methods for the ethical use of information. They also know a range of digital and online apps to assist students in gathering and organizing their information, some of which are excellent for presenting their final project/product.

Teachers, you will gain confidence to do Project-based Learning by collaborating with your School Librarian. Now is a perfect time to visit with your School Librarian about planning PBL lessons for higher student engagement and achievement!