



TEAM BEE

REPORT

PROJECT 3:
VIRTUAL LEARNING
PROPOSAL.

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Part 1



OUR PREVIOUS WORK AT ITHACA HIGH SCHOOL

We began this year with both an abstract yet tangible goal: to use design thinking to integrate transmedia knowledge into project-based learning. As we continued through the class, our broad, abstract idea became doable with concrete goals, such as assisting the teachers and students of particular classes at Ithaca High School (IHS). After two visits to IHS and two projects reflecting on our fieldwork and the material we had learned, we have been forced to transition into virtual learning. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it unfortunately became unrealistic to

continue our fieldwork, with neither Cornell nor Ithaca High School classes meeting in person. It resulted in us going back to the drawing board and using design thinking to come up with another abstract idea to lead to concrete goals and progress in our drive for improving the public rural school system. In this report we will reflect on and showcase our work done thus far, and explore ways in which we will change our goals to accommodate virtual learning. Although we cannot meet with IHS anymore, we will use our previous experiences to propose new virtual learning projects.

Part 1

Before we moved to virtual learning, Ithaca High School was the collaborative space where we tested and applied our abstract goal. At Ithaca High School, the teachers were interested in finding alternatives to traditional high school learning evaluations (essays and tests). After establishing that simple tests are inefficient when quantifying a student's intelligence, the teachers decided to move to a system called project-based learning. Our job was to assist the teachers and help the students through this transition, with the goal to be as hands on as possible. We worked with both the students and teachers on a personal level to observe and help with project based learning. Simultaneously, we used various forms of media to engage in our own collaborative projects and report on our fieldwork.



On February 5th, our group met with two teachers on our first visit to Ithaca High School. The first teacher we met with was Margaux who gave us an enthusiastic overview of her class's research project. One aspect of this project was the creation of a PechaKucha. A PechaKucha is a "fixed-duration presentation format that features twenty images shown for 20 seconds each" (1). Margaux was excited by the new learning opportunities that would come from this medium as well as project based learning as a whole.

Our group was really impressed with Margaux's eagerness, but we were met with a logistical problem: Margaux's class met early in the morning and did not fit with our own schedules. We tried to coordinate specific times in which we could meet with Margaux's class specifically, but this unfortunately proved to be unrealistic. Although we were unable to continue working with Margaux's class, this initial meeting was crucial in our relationship with the faculty of Ithaca High because it showed us the teachers' desire to engage their students by embracing innovation with project based learning.

(1) Wagstaff, S. (2012, September 27). The {silence} project: Some adventures in Remediation. Enculturation. Retrieved from <http://enculturation.net/essays-into-silence-noise-and-john-cage>

Part 1

The second teacher we met with during this field visit was Colleen. Her class was given a presentation on PechaKuchas and then asked to brainstorm ideas. We were fortunate enough to pair up with the students, with numbers so even that we were practically giving one-on-one help. We began by bonding with the students, and then dove into what they wanted to get from their project. Because we each worked with different students, we had different experiences during this brainstorming process. Some of the students we worked with struggled to find a topic or were intimidated by the new medium of Pechakucha, while others were overly ambitious to begin work and needed encouragement to do proper research. Despite not being able to visit again until the PechaKuchas were completed, we were able to help the students prepare to independently complete their projects. Our group left this visit feeling optimistic about the individual projects through our work with Colleen's students, and the success of project-based learning as a whole through our conversation with Margaux.

Our report on this first field visit consisted of two parts, a written report, and our own PechaKucha. The written report was a summary and reflection of our team's trip, while we dove more into our personal interactions with the students in our PechaKucha. This allowed us to address the unique difficulties that we each faced and then reflect on them as a whole. The report served as an outline of both the work we had done, and the direction that we hoped for it to continue.

In order to collaboratively create the PechaKucha, we designed the visual component together on a video call. We decided to mix photos from our trip to Ithaca High School with simple, visually striking, images from the internet. We assigned specific slides to each member of the team and then wrote our scripts independently. After describing the ways that concepts design thinking and project-based learning applied to our fieldwork, we expressed our hopes for the project as a whole.



Part 1

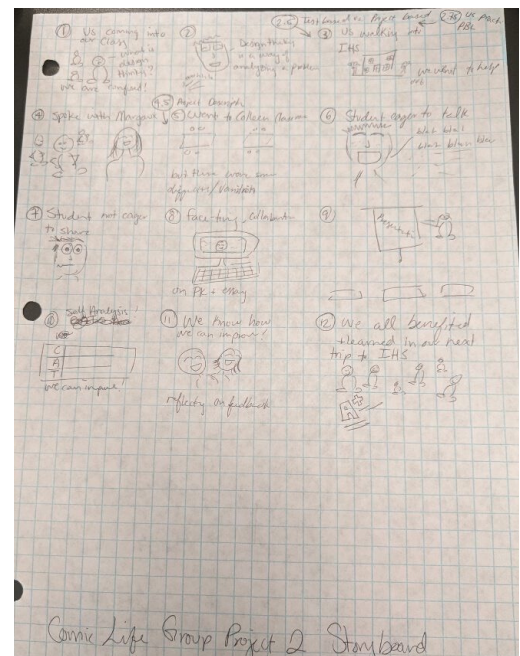
Our team entered this first field visit confused on how to apply the concepts we had been learning in class. Being thrown into the student's project allowed us to observe the manifestation of project based learning in a classroom while simultaneously being a part of it. Although it was a bit uncomfortable at first, seeing these abstract concepts take the form offered clarity and understanding. Furthermore, having a physical experience to refer to in our first project provided us an outline for writing our report and creating our PechaKucha.



In our second visit, we ended up working with Colleen's class again since working separately with Margaux's class proved to be too difficult. The students had completed the PechaKucha stage of the project, having already created and presented them, and were now beginning the research paper portion of their projects. We split up and worked with individual students once again. However, on this visit, we were met with more difficulties. Some students were working on new topics for their papers, and others were less inclined to work with us. Because the project as a whole was now well underway, students were at varying levels of progress. One student needed help researching a new topic, while others had already begun writing, leaving us very little room to help. This resulted in a good portion of time spent wandering around the classroom, desperately looking for a student to help. Despite this, we were still able to connect with the students and have more hands on experience with our own project. Additionally, we also were able to get some feedback on the student's project based learning experience so far after creating PechaKuchas.

Part 1

Our report on this visit was in the form of an info comic. We improved our transmedia literacy by learning to use the program Comic Life in class, and used this to create our second project. We began this process by splitting our team members into roles and creating a storyboard and a script. The storyboard consisted of rough sketches of our team's progress and our development over the large scale project so far, allowing us to visualize and outline our entire experience in our class. After editing our storyboard, we decided on the key panels and chose them for our comic. This was the beginning of our transition into becoming creators. Rather than directly report our work, this second project encouraged us to use our own creativity as well as focus more on aesthetics. After we had an idea for the panelling of our comic, we inserted the script using direct narration interspersed with dialogue. Although our second trip to Ithaca High School was possibly less profound, our experience caused us to reflect on our project as a whole. Our comic traced the beginning of the semester all the way to hypothetical hopes that we had for the conclusion of the students' project-based learning. We also viewed our work through a broader perspective, addressing the possible opinions of other stakeholders—like parents, and other faculty members—in the student's education.



Part 2



VIRTUAL LEARNING

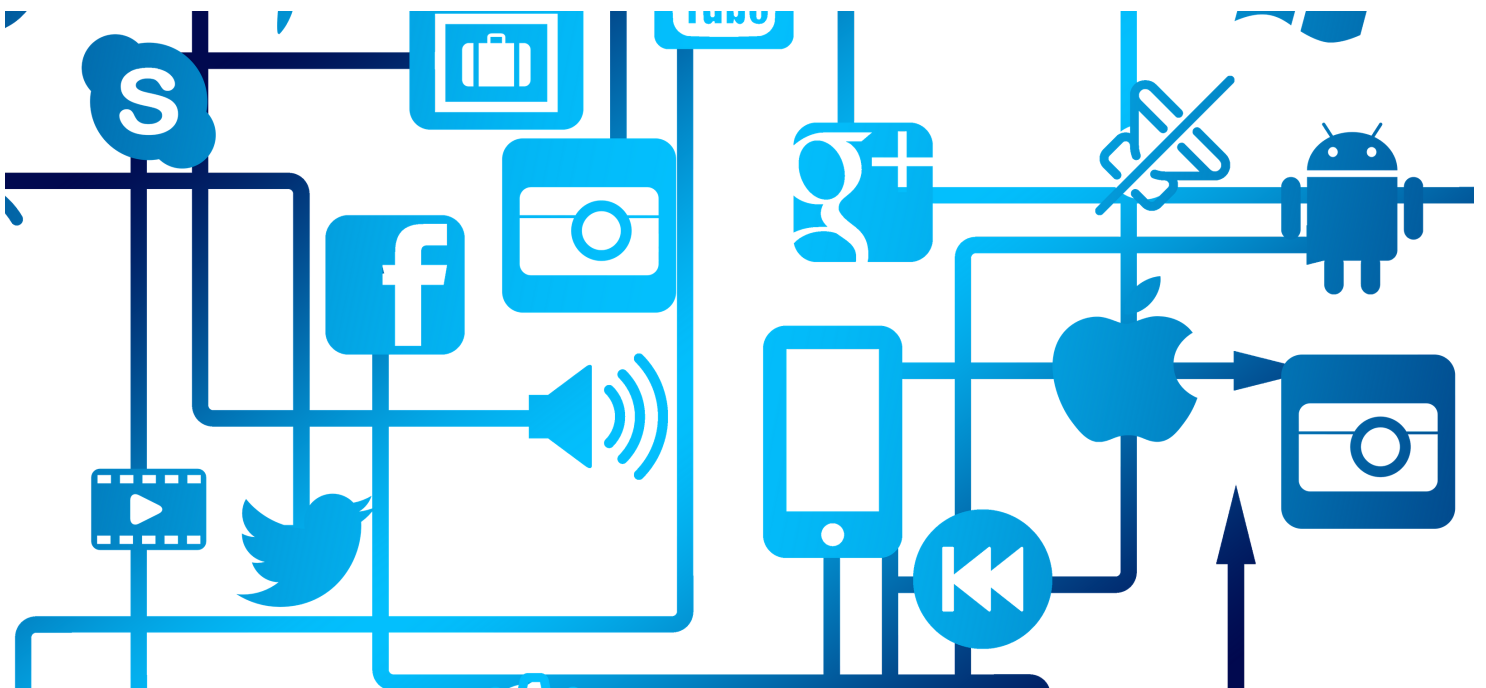
As the coronavirus pandemic has become a global phenomenon, peoples' lives everywhere have changed. In particular, the education industry has been forced to take a turn towards what people are now calling "the new normal" by becoming entirely virtual. Changing the education system entirely opens up a new set of unforeseen problems including financing new technology for students, organising a way to meet, education for how to proceed with virtual learning, virtual learning initiatives or differently-abled students, and much

more. We will continue in Part 2 by suggesting virtual learning projects and means for teaching the teachers how to proceed in this new era.

Part 2

THE TRANSITION TO VIRTUAL LEARNING

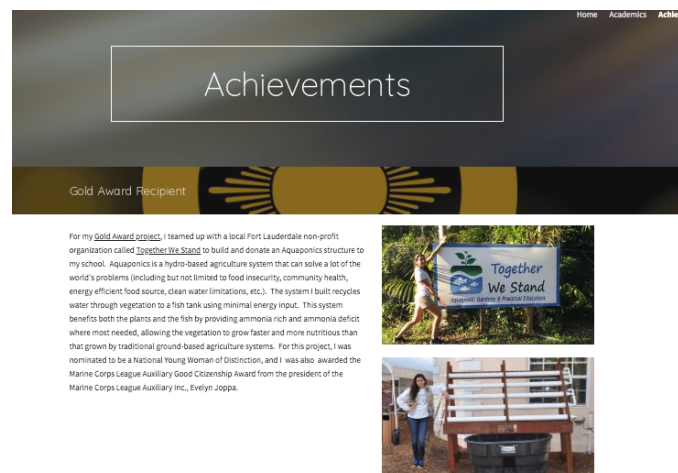
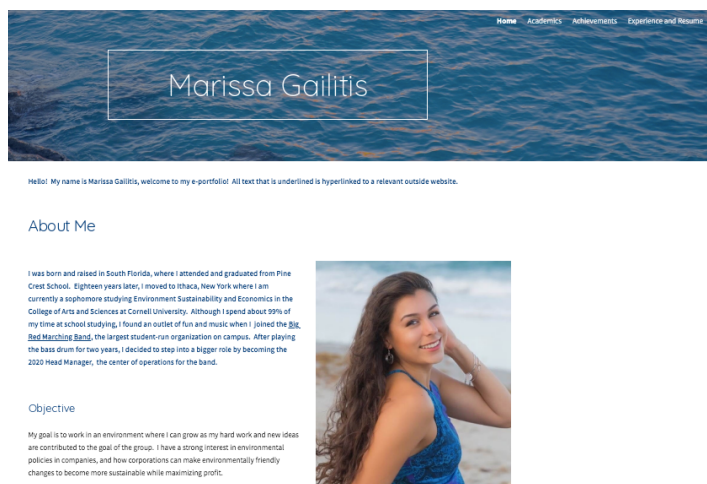
In order to move to virtual learning, it is important to note that the education system needs to start from scratch. Starting at the drawing board and drafting up new ideas is the only way this will work. Traditional lectures may still be effective, but the standard testing system, not as much. How do you assign a timed multiple choice exam to students, and expect them to not use other resources to their advantage? They have been trained to analyze every situation to best succeed for themselves, and now there is an expectation for them to not use the resources readily and easily available to them. There are certainly software downloads that are available that attempt to tackle this issue, but the fact of the matter is we need a new system; instead of guilt-tripping the students into not cheating, find another way. Project Based Learning (PBL) is a much more effective transitioning piece into virtual learning. Focusing on each student's strengths and putting an emphasis on both creativity and understanding, PBL can be transitioned to the virtual world a little bit easier. Project Based Learning includes a wide variety of pedagogies, including but not limited to PechaKucha, rap/songwriting, dancing a project, picture representation, and much more. Although these projects are often focused on a physical creation, meant to be delivered in person, it is much easier to continue through the "create" route than finding a way to virtually recreate the "standard" school system. We propose that instead of recreating the standard system, education institutions must redefine the standard educational system.



Part 2

PROJECT PROPOSALS

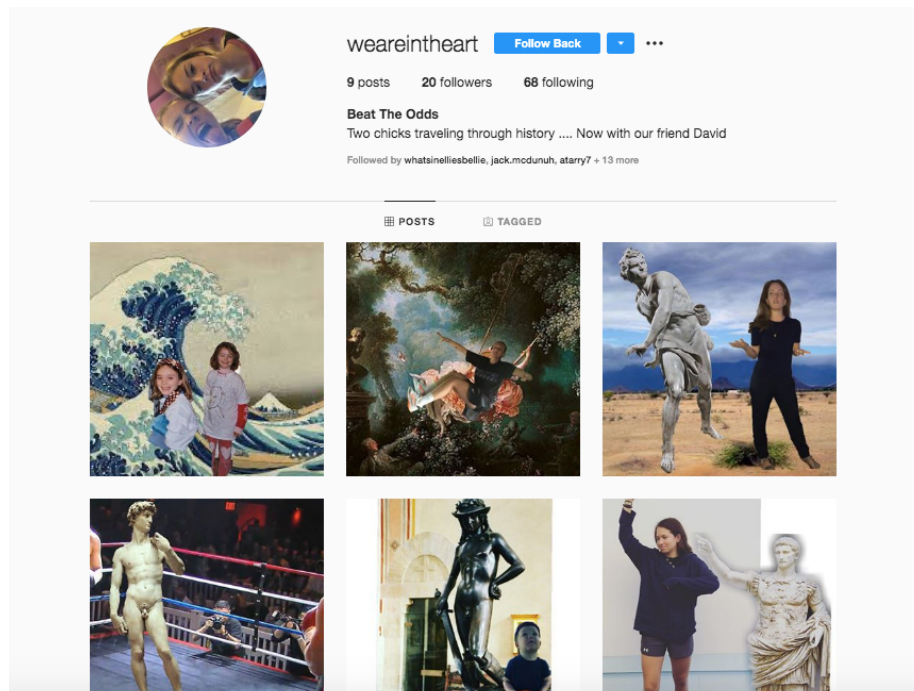
Our team has come up with a variety of projects that teachers can choose to use to help them transition into the new virtual learning system. As the key idea of Project Based Learning is to create, we encourage teachers to not only use these proposed ideas, but also build off of them to find a pedagogy that uniquely works for each individual student. The first proposed idea is the creation of an eportfolio. An eportfolio can be used for a variety of things, and is therefore very helpful in the transition to Virtual Learning. The ability to redefine the purpose of the eportfolio allows it to be adaptable to each situation and each student as needed. The eportfolio will assist students improve their career development strategies and also allow them an outlet to showcase their work to their parents, the rest of the class, and their teacher. Through Google Sites (or other similar means), students can create a site for themselves. They can have multiple tabs on their site, each featuring a different project or aspect about the student. On the first tab, or the home tab, have the student write a bio about themselves, along with listing some of their skills or objectives for the future. This tab introduces the student and helps them learn how to showcase themselves to future employers. Each additional tab on the page can represent different projects that the student has worked on. In those tabs, the project may be included, depending on the type of project, as well as a description, procedure, and any additional information desired.



Above is an example of a college student's eportfolio. Instead of showcasing different projects in the other tabs, she showcases other information she feels employers may be interested in. Before students publish their eportfolios, go into settings to make sure that the publication settings meet the schools regulations.

Part 2

Another way Project Based Learning can be transitioned to Virtual Learning is through media projects. Chances are, depending on the age of the students, they have social media. Use what students know and are comfortable with to design a project they will excel in and be excited about. For example, below are pictures from an instagram made by an Art History student to showcase what she has learned about certain paintings and their associated genres.

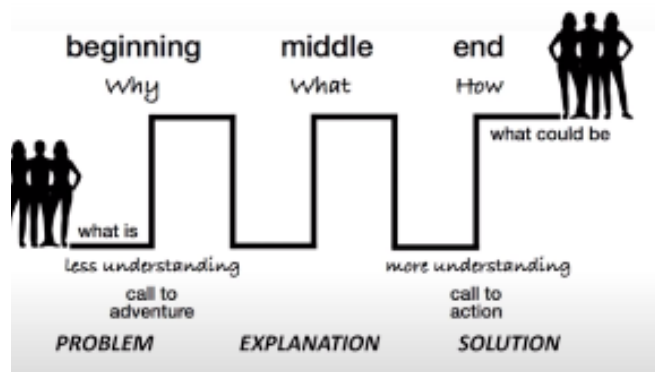


Although our team loves instagram, today's high schoolers tend to use an app called Tiktok more frequently. Our next proposed project idea is aimed towards social media to have students showcase their knowledge through summary or reenactment. Have students make a tiktok, a fifteen second fun video that can have edited video, audio layover, and additional text to summarize a subject or topic of choice in a fun and creative way that they are comfortable using. This project can also be further developed in literature, language, history, or arts related classes. Have the students to a tiktok representation of a historical event, book, play, or opera. Let the students have fun with this project! They can do a modern interpretation, a musical interpretation, or even just a summary. Many teenagers are very good at designing these videos, give them a chance to have fun with them in an academic setting.

Part 2

EVALUATING VIRTUAL PROJECTS

Students of all ages have shown time and time again that when they are passionate about a project or topic, it will be a success. This can be difficult for the teacher though, since there are so many types or varieties of projects that can be used in both Project Based Learning and Virtual Learning. How do you find a standard way to evaluate the qualitative in a quantitative manner? CAT is an analyzing tool that can be of much benefit, especially when grading these types of projects. CAT is an acronym for concept, aesthetic, and technical, and can be used to evaluate a wide range of projects. Use the concept heading to evaluate the academic material and concepts shown, as well as the interpretive manner it was conveyed. Aesthetic allows the teacher to evaluate how well it was done in terms of how pleasing it is to the eye. Were there nice costumes? Was there music in the background? The technical aspect helps analyze how well the students used technology, or other means to create the project. When analyzing the technicalities, pay attention to the visual or sound quality (if applicable), the way in which the file was uploaded or sent, and if there were any technical difficulties. See our group's How To videos, to see how we used CAT to analyze certain



Conclusion

Although it is frustrating to have to approach our goals of implementing Project-Based Learning from a completely new perspective, the transition to virtual learning offers new possibilities and new lessons to learn. Throughout our experience with design thinking and PBL, we have learned the importance of failing quickly. This allows for faster improvement and increased productivity. Although this failure has occurred on a greater scale and is unexpected, it will encourage us all to reconsider our understanding of our goals, and force us to be innovative with our solutions.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about our group's initiative for instilling Project-Based Learning at Ithaca High School, and our goal to improve Virtual Learning for all teachers!

Sincerely,
Team Bee

