



# New Project-Based Learning Electives 2016

## Information For Parents and Students

In 2016, HSPA will change the approach and structure of the 100 hour electives in Year 9 and the Year 8 'mini-elective'.

These electives will adopt a **project-based learning (PBL) approach** to teaching and learning. PBL is also sometimes referred to as problem-based learning, passion-based learning or challenge-based learning.

### Why The New Approach?

We want to provide real-world opportunities for our students to develop the necessary employability and personal skills needed to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We are committed to ensuring that our curriculum remains current and creative, and responds to the changing needs of our students and their future employers. We also want to decrease the number of assessments for our students and also provide meaningful time for creativity, critical and creative thinking, problem solving and innovation. See page 3 for more information.

### What Are These 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills?

The [Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young People](#) identifies essential skills for 21st century learners – in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), thinking, creativity, teamwork and communication. It describes individuals who can manage their own wellbeing, relate well to others, make informed decisions about their lives, become citizens who behave with ethical integrity, relate to and communicate across cultures, work for the common good and act with responsibility at local, regional and global levels.

The Australian Curriculum and NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) refer to these essential skills as General Capabilities. They are:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

### What Does PBL Actually Look Like?

PBL is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to a complex question, problem, area of interest or challenge. Elements of PBL include:

- Significant content
- 21st century competencies
- In-depth Inquiry
- Driving question
- Need to Know
- Voice and choice
- Critique and revision
- Public audience



## What About Assessment And Reporting?

Students will be assessed according to evidence demonstrated around the General Capabilities. Evidence may take the form of a portfolio, teacher observation, 'on the job' assessment, presentation, quality of final product, peer or expert review, interview or a combination of these. Students will receive a report each semester that indicates the level at which they are demonstrating the relevant General Capabilities. The General Capabilities selected will depend on the course and project. Students will be able to use their PBL report to support applications for future work or further education

## What Courses Will Be Offered?

Elective booklets will be uploaded to the website (Downloads) during the July school holidays. Students will receive a hard copy of the booklet in Term 3, week 1. This booklet will also contain directions on how to select elective preferences online. At least one new course will be offered, the internationally acclaimed Big History, a multi-media and cross-curricula course which "examines our past, explains our present, and imagines our future."

## Will The Z Electives Be Credentialed On My Child's Record of School Achievement (ROSA)?

For most courses, no, but this is not needed for a ROSA (this has actually been the case for many students over some years now at HSPA). Many of the new PBL courses will be school-developed courses, and will not follow a traditional BOSTES syllabus. All BOSTES and DEC required hours are still met through the other two Stage 5 electives, and there is no impact on a student's HSC or ATAR. And remember, a ROSA is only given to eligible students who leave school before completing the HSC.

## Where Can I Go For More Information about PBL?

Buck Institution of Education

[http://bie.org/about/why\\_pbl](http://bie.org/about/why_pbl)

High Tech High

<https://www.hightechhigh.org/pbl/>

Edutopia

<http://www.edutopia.org/project-based-learning>

Australian Curriculum / General Capabilities

<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/generalcapabilities/overview/general-capabilities-in-the-australian-curriculum>

BOSTES

<http://news.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/index.cfm/2012/11/12/Learning-across-the-curriculum>

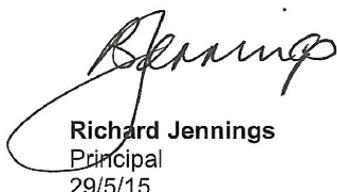
Big History

<https://www.bighistoryproject.com/home>

Northern Beaches Christian School / Sydney Centre for Innovation in Learning

<http://scil.com.au/>

*I am very excited about the move toward project based learning and the benefits for our students. It's an exciting journey! Do not hesitate to contact the school should you have any questions.*



**Richard Jennings**  
Principal  
29/5/15

## Why Project Based Learning (PBL)?

Today's students, more than ever, sometimes find learning at school lacks real-world application, connectedness and meaning. In PBL, students are active, not passive; a project engages their hearts and minds, and provides real world relevance for learning.

After completing a project, students remember what they learn and retain it longer than is often the case with traditional instruction. Because of this, students who gain content knowledge with PBL are better able to apply what they know and can do to new situations. In the 21st century workplace, success requires more than basic knowledge and skills. In PBL, students not only understand content more deeply but also learn how to take responsibility and build confidence, solve problems, work collaboratively, communicate ideas, and be creative innovators.

The Australian Curriculum emphasises real world application of knowledge and skills, and the development of the 21st century competencies such as critical thinking, communication in a variety of media, and collaboration. PBL provides an effective way to address such standards. Modern technology – which students use so much in their lives – is a perfect fit with PBL.

With technology, teachers and students can connect with experts, partners, and audiences around the world, and use tech tools to find resources and information, create products, and collaborate more effectively.

PBL allows teachers to work more closely with active, engaged students doing high quality, meaningful work, and in many cases to rediscover the joy of learning alongside their students.

Current models of PBL are not like some past examples of “doing projects” in which student learning outcomes were not clear. More rigorous and effective models of PBL have been refined and tested in recent years in a variety of settings, subjects, and grade levels.

## What is Project Based Learning (PBL)?

**Project Based Learning** is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to a complex question, problem, or challenge. Essential Elements of PBL include:

- **Significant Content.** At its core, the project is focused on teaching students important knowledge and skills, derived from standards and key concepts at the heart of academic subjects.
- **21st century competencies.** Students build competencies valuable for today's world, such as problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity/innovation, which are explicitly taught and assessed.
- **In Depth Inquiry.** Students are engaged in an extended, rigorous process of asking questions, using resources, and developing answers.
- **Driving Question.** Project work is focused by an open-ended question that students understand and find intriguing, which captures their task or frames their exploration.
- **Need to Know.** Students see the need to gain knowledge, understand concepts, and apply skills in order to answer the Driving Question and create project products, beginning with an Entry Event that generates interest and curiosity.
- **Voice and Choice.** Students are allowed to make some choices about the products to be created, how they work, and how they use their time, guided by the teacher and depending on age level and PBL experience.
- **Critique and Revision.** The project includes processes for students to give and receive feedback on the quality of their work, leading them to make revisions or conduct further inquiry.
- **Public Audience.** Students present their work to other people, beyond their classmates and teacher.