

# Project Scaffolding



*How can teachers ensure their students will succeed in complex project work? Part of the answer lies in providing them with the time, training, and tools needed to complete their assigned tasks. In our training, this type of support is referred to as “scaffolding.” The descriptions and examples below help flesh out this important PBL concept.*

## What is Project “Scaffolding”?

One of the keys to the success of any project is the “scaffolding” that teachers provide for students as the project is implemented. Like real scaffolds that support people who work on buildings high above the ground, “project scaffolding” refers to the various types of support that teachers provide for students during the risky business of project work. Essentially, through scaffolding teachers provide the time, tools, and training students need in order to succeed in the project. As you design scaffolding for projects in your classroom, consider how you might provide the following types of support for students

## Types of Project Scaffolding

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
<b>Structure</b>	Critical organizing features of the project that determine who does what and when	<input type="checkbox"/> Students split into project teams or groups <input type="checkbox"/> Each team investigates a different health topic but all create a public service video
<b>Content</b>	Any classroom activity that covers the foundational topics, concepts, and standards that students need to know for the project	<input type="checkbox"/> Interactive lecture on force and motion <input type="checkbox"/> Reading and discussion on the of WWII on local history
<b>Training</b>	Explicit skill-building for students in group work and all required production areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Modeling of key steps in a lab experiment <input type="checkbox"/> Practice oral presentation videotaped and reviewed for feedback <input type="checkbox"/> Explicit group communication training
<b>Expertise</b>	Professional-level training and consultation provided by outside experts or adults in the community	<input type="checkbox"/> Guest artist teaches students how to draw political cartoons <input type="checkbox"/> Biologist trains students in water sampling techniques
<b>Oversight</b>	Structured times for teachers to meet, motivate, and mentor student teams	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher informally interviews each student team during project work days <input type="checkbox"/> Project teams give progress report to teacher half way through project
<b>Documents</b>	Handouts to help explain and organize project	<input type="checkbox"/> Project descriptors and calendars <input type="checkbox"/> Project rubrics, deadlines, check sheets <input type="checkbox"/> Handouts on “presentation tips”
<b>Tools</b>	The technological resources necessary to produce required products	<input type="checkbox"/> Computers, software, printers, internet access <input type="checkbox"/> Display boards, scissors, glue, paper
<b>Time</b>	In-class opportunities for students to meet, research, produce, exhibit, and evaluate	<input type="checkbox"/> ½ hour of project time each day <input type="checkbox"/> Designated “project days” – extended periods of time for student project work