Using Project Based Learning Approach to Teach Educational Technology

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Until recently, Technology for Elementary Education (EDT3470), a required course for all pre-service, elementary education students at Western Michigan University (WMU), focused on individual assignments using different software programs (such as PowerPoint, Inspiration, Excel, and Dreamweaver). Instructors of EDT3470 became concerned that the assignments were not meaningful to the students, which in turn led the instructors to wonder whether students were adequately learning how to integrate these technology tools into their future teaching practices. So began the restructuring of this course. A decision was made to adopt Project Based Learning (PBL) as the unifying pedagogical approach to frame the use of technology tools. The weekly assignments were reframed as components of larger PBL units that groups of 2 or 3 students would develop over the semester. This session will present the specific goals, assignments, lessons learned, and the revisions that have contributed to refining EDT3470 into a course that students have said to be “highly engaging, multidisciplinary, and fun.”