# Real Questions, Real Answers: Unpacking PBL and Inquiry

Problem-based learning (PBL) and inquiry-based learning (IBL) are two popular educational approaches that have been shown to improve student engagement and learning outcomes. But what exactly are these approaches, and how can you use them in your classroom?

#### **Problem-Based Learning**

PBL is a teaching method in which students work in groups to solve a realworld problem. The problem is typically complex and requires students to use a variety of skills and knowledge to find a solution. PBL is often used in STEM classes, but it can be used in any subject area.



#### Project Based Learning: Real Questions. Real Answers. How to Unpack PBL and Inquiry by Ross Cooper

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There are many benefits to using PBL in the classroom. PBL can help students:

- Develop critical thinking skills
- Improve problem-solving skills
- Enhance communication and collaboration skills
- Gain a deeper understanding of the content
- Become more engaged in their learning

If you're interested in using PBL in your classroom, there are a few things you need to do:

- Choose a problem that is relevant to the content you're teaching.
- Make sure the problem is complex enough to challenge students but not so complex that they can't solve it.
- Provide students with the resources they need to solve the problem.
- Give students time to work on the problem in groups.
- Debrief the problem with students once they've solved it.

#### Inquiry-Based Learning

IBL is a teaching method in which students ask questions and investigate topics that interest them. IBL is often used in science and social studies classes, but it can be used in any subject area.

There are many benefits to using IBL in the classroom. IBL can help students:

Develop critical thinking skills

- Improve problem-solving skills
- Enhance communication and collaboration skills
- Gain a deeper understanding of the content
- Become more engaged in their learning

If you're interested in using IBL in your classroom, there are a few things you need to do:

- Create a classroom environment that is conducive to inquiry.
- Encourage students to ask questions and investigate topics that interest them.
- Provide students with the resources they need to conduct their investigations.
- Give students time to work on their investigations.
- Debrief the investigations with students once they're complete.

#### **Comparing PBL and IBL**

PBL and IBL are both effective teaching methods that can improve student engagement and learning outcomes. However, there are some key differences between the two approaches.

|       | PBL                         | IBL                              |
|-------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Focus | Solving real-world problems | Investigating topics of interest |

| Student role    | Active participants in the learning process         | More independent learners  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Teacher<br>role | Facilitator and guide                               | Mentor and advisor   |
| Assessment      | Based on the quality of the solution to the problem | Based on the quality of the investigation and the student's understanding of the content |

Ultimately, the best teaching method for you and your students will depend on your specific needs and goals. However, both PBL and IBL are effective approaches that can help students develop the skills they need to succeed in school and beyond.

PBL and IBL are two powerful teaching methods that can help students develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, communication and collaboration skills, and a deeper understanding of the content. If you're looking for ways to improve student engagement and learning outcomes, I encourage you to consider using PBL or IBL in your classroom.

Here are some additional resources that you may find helpful:

- Problem-Based Learning: A Guide for Educators
- Inquiry-Based Learning: A Guide for Educators
- 10 Essential Elements of Inquiry-Based Learning

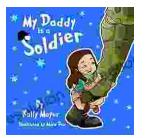
I hope this article has been helpful. Please feel free to leave a comment below if you have any questions.



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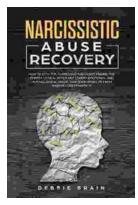
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