

CLIENT PROJECT: CHECKLIST

BLURRING THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN SCHOOL AND REAL LIFE

“Ever since I facilitated my first Client Project, I have always looked forward to seeing how students mature and rise up to meet whatever challenge that awaits them. I am excited that you want to try out this process in your ecosystem. So far, I hope you have found value in the pack and have enjoyed going through the videos.

I invite you to use this quick at a glance checklist as a reference to ensure that you do not miss out on any of the key ingredients! It’s really very simple to execute, and here are some things that I keep in mind during the process. **Please feel free to innovate, translate and implement the way you want. And, I would love to know how you have done it. Do Share your experience with us”.**

- *Deepa Avashia*

BEFORE

- Think of a topic or concept in the curriculum that lends itself well to an **application-based project**.
- Identify a client** who has a project that is appropriate for your students.
- Meet with the client to discuss and clarify the exact **scope of the task** they will assign to the students, and the **timeline** along with a **mind-map** by which the need of the client will be met.
- Align** the objectives of the client with the **learning objectives** of the curriculum.
- Let the client **hook the project** to the students.
- Invite the client to meet the students and brief them. Make sure that the way in which the client **reveals** the project to the student helps to further build **anticipation and excitement!**
- Have a discussion with the students to set the **tone and context**:
 - **Introduce** any new students to the idea of Client Projects.
 - Do the **‘Feel’** of the previous Client Projects done by them.
 - Put down the **bright spots and hot spots** of the same.
 - Give them **background information** about the client and the broad nature of the task ahead – *make sure not to disclose what the actual task will be yet!*
 - Get students **excited** about doing a Client Project, and remind them of the importance to **balance** this task with other academic tasks that need to be completed in the same time.

DURING

- The Client Project begins when the client meets the children and gives them a **brief about the task** that is to be completed.
- The students need to be very clear about the brief – **discuss their understanding** of the brief with them and, if necessary, schedule another meeting with the client to **clarify the task**.
- Help the students **articulate** what the **deliverables** are and decide the **timeline**. Different **roles and responsibilities** can also be allocated at this stage of planning.
- The students then **deep-dive** into understanding the user and their requirements. This can be through **interviews** of different stakeholders, **site visits and surveys**, conducting **market research**, **visiting experts**, or looking at **analogous situations**.
- Once the ground reality is clear, students can **ideate potential solutions** that will best serve the client. It is important to make sure that students take time to think of a wide variety of potential solutions before jumping and selecting the one to action.
- **Prototypes** are created based on these solutions. These prototypes could be a foam or cardboard mockup or a sketch; the key point is that students are looking to get feedback as quickly as possible.
- These prototypes are first **shared internally** within the school to other teachers and stakeholders so that the students can get **feedback and refine** further before showing the prototype to the client.
- The prototype is then shared with the client/users to get their feedback. It is important to keep in mind that this feedback is not about changing the prototype, but an opportunity to understand the user better and that *'working with the user is always more productive than working for the user.'*
- The students have the choice to refine the prototype based on the feedback received, and present it again to the client. This is an **iterative process** and can be continued as long as needed for the students and the client to be satisfied.
- Throughout this process, a team of **documenters** can collect photos, videos and other evidence of the stages in the process.

AFTER

- Closing the Loop with the students: **Celebrate the journey** of the client project, articulating all the different things that students have learnt in this process, as well as the academic content to which **real-life connections** have been made.

- It is very important to help students reflect particularly on the **different roles** that they adopted throughout the process, and get them to ask themselves what they learned from that role. Whether it be managing the project as a whole, taking the lead on the market research, or even physically creating the product itself, it is important that students **see value in each person's role**.
- An event can be organized where students share their **experiences and learnings** through the Client Project process with other members of the school ecosystem as well as the public.

SOME IMPORTANT TIPS

- There will be certain situations and client projects where the students will not be able to achieve what they wanted and their idea or prototype might be **rejected** by the client. It is hugely important that as a teacher you are prepared to let this happen, as reacting to this failure can often be the most **important learning moment** from a client Project. The key then is then how you can help the students **see this feedback positively**, understand the reasons behind it, and work again to create something that will be valued!
- A good idea in the older grades can be to **split the class** into two or three groups as soon as they get the brief from the client, so that each group of students is essentially **pitching to the client** and only one will be chosen. This helps to bring in the sense of **real-world pressure** that accompanies pitching to a real-world client!
- Last but not the least, in case you are working with a **new teacher**, please make sure you **introduce** him/her to the process and make him/her excited about the project as well.