

CPD DISSEMINATION SESSION

Project-Based Learning

A three-day journey into PBL, my own produced units, and the case for whole-school implementation

OVERVIEW

What this session covers

01

The CPD Journey

Three days of course learning: PBL theory, active-learning models, and why our current assessment system hides real ability.

02

Frameworks in Practice

Genius Hour, Wonder Day, PBL Light / Sprint — lightweight models alongside full PBL.

03

My Produced Units

Two ready-to-run PBL units I designed during the course, with driving questions, activities and outcomes.

04

The Case for PBL

Evidence, benefits, honest challenges, and a proposal for how we introduce this in school.

DAY ONE

Foundations of PBL & Active Learning

How people really learn — and why our exam system doesn't show it



How leaders actually learn

70%

through experience

20%

through resources / others

10%

through formal education

Research shared on the course: this is how CEOs report they learned the skills that mattered most in their careers.

Students also bring different types of intelligence:

Logical

Emotional

Spatial

Naturalistic

Kinesthetic

A system that hides real ability

1

Knows it, can't show it

Some students retain everything but struggle to put it on paper. In an exam they look below average — while actually being brilliant.

2

Shows it, doesn't keep it

Others write and study well for the exam and look brilliant on the day — but ask them a week later and they remember little. They are below average in practice.

“Our system is not showing reality — it is just giving us the numbers we want to see.”

Four forms of active learning

1

Problem-Based

Start from a real problem and work out why it exists before acting.

2

Task-Based

Break the work into concrete, assignable tasks with clear steps.

3

Competency-Based

Build the specific skills/competence a solution requires.

4

Project-Based

Bring it together into a driving question, activity and outcome.

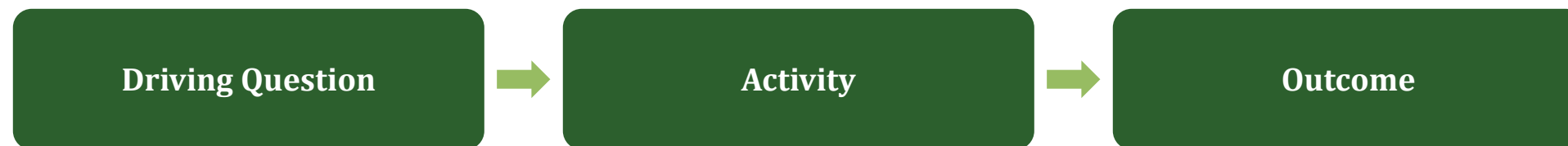
The flow: identify a problem → research it → build competence → address it through a task/project. If there's no problem, go directly to competence-building.

DAY TWO

PBL in Practice: A Worked Case Study

Reducing Food Waste in School — from driving question to outcome

The PBL structure applied



DRIVING QUESTION

“What processes should we be adopting in school to reduce food waste?”

Activity design:

- Class subdivided into small groups, each proposing a process for reducing food waste
- Group A — define food wastage and to what extent food is wasted on school premises
- Group B — research which/what type of food is being wasted
- Group C — research what other countries/schools are doing about it

Task-based learning: the audit

1 Task 1 — Food Waste Audit

- Teams cover different locations: cafeteria, lunch stop / yard
- Students monitor and collect data on liquid and solid food thrown away, taking notes
- Tip: also collect data on WHY food is thrown away
- Anonymous surveys ask students why they discard food (e.g. break too short, dislike the menu)

2 Task 2 — Analysis

- Analyse the data collected during the audit
- Produce bar charts, graphs and mapping to visualise findings
- Findings feed directly into the guidelines produced in the outcome stage



From data to real-world outcome



Clear guidelines

Printed guidelines in corridors and classrooms on how to dispose of food correctly.



Explainer videos

Videos running at the entrance and corridors, showing the benefits of disposing of food correctly.



A mascot

A mascot created to give the project more impact and recognition among students.

This is exactly what PBL is meant to produce: a tangible, visible, school-wide outcome — not just a grade in a book.

DAY THREE

Lighter Models & Real Challenges

Genius Hour, Wonder Day, PBL Light — plus an honest look at what gets in the way



Lighter entry points into PBL

Genius Hour

A week exploring a self-chosen passion or interest.

- Students choose their own question
- Work independently or in groups
- Research and explore independently
- Share findings with a short presentation

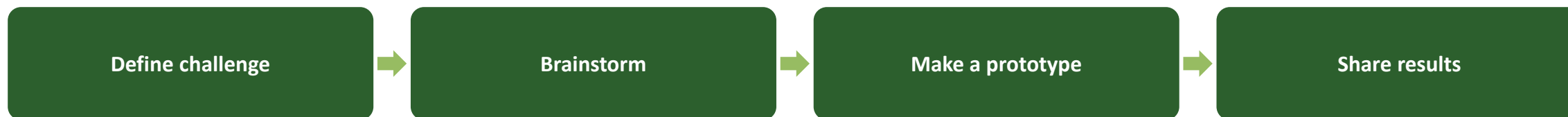
Wonder Day

Explore and present a personal 'wonder' about a topic — sparks curiosity through open questions.

- 'I wonder...' questions, may relate to a subject
- Students choose what to explore
- Research and discuss
- Share findings at the end

PBL Light: a low-barrier starting point

Option A — Sprint



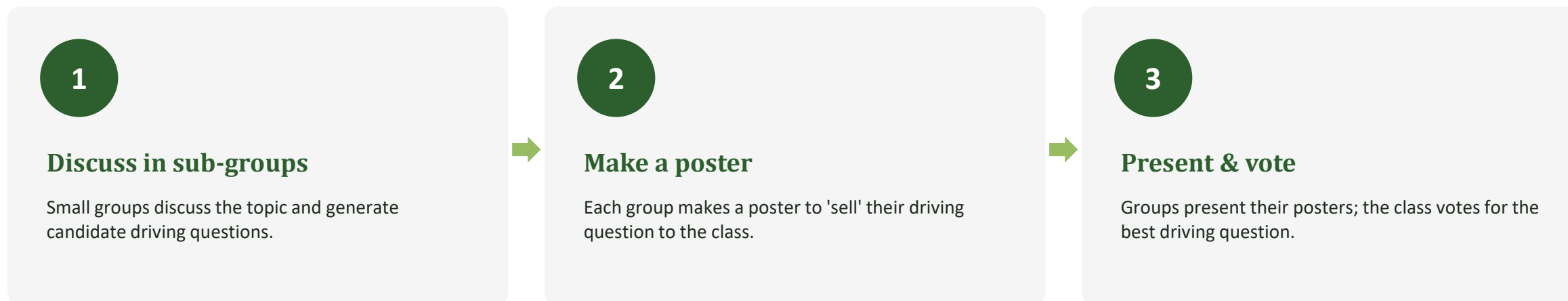
Option B — Festival Poster

Design a poster for a festival — a lighter, single-artefact alternative to a full sprint.

Why it matters for dissemination:

These 'light' formats let any teacher trial PBL thinking in a single lesson or week — no need to commit to a full multi-week unit to get started.

Building & selecting a driving question



PBL — Real challenges we identified as a group:

Time constraints

Classroom management

Teacher confidence

Planning overload

Assessment pressure

Student readiness

MY PRODUCED UNITS

Two Ready-to-Run PBL Units

Designed during the course, ready for classroom piloting

Reducing Food Waste in School

DRIVING QUESTION

What processes should we be adopting in school to reduce food waste?

Activity

- Groups each propose a process for reducing food waste
- Define extent of food wastage on school premises
- Research what food is wasted, and what other schools/countries do

Task (Audit)

- Teams monitor cafeteria & lunch yard
- Log liquid/solid food discarded
- Anonymous surveys on WHY food is thrown away

Outcome

- Printed disposal guidelines for corridors/classrooms
- Explainer videos at entrances/corridors
- A mascot to give the project visibility

Malta's Future Economy & Workforce

CONTEXT

Our students are leaving the country to work abroad. Malta's job market needs high-quality jobs to keep talent at home, reduce population pressure, and improve standard of living.

Candidate driving question (developed in sub-groups):

"What would you like the economy — in money terms and standard of living — to be in the future, when compared to cheap labour and increasing population? What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of the changes projected?"

Cost of living

Standard of living

Population change

Labour market

Youth emigration

Suitable for Social Studies / PSCD / Economics-adjacent subjects; scalable to a full-term project.

THE PROPOSAL

Why We Should Implement PBL

The evidence, the benefits, and how we manage the risks

Four arguments for implementation

1

It matches how people really learn

If 70% of learning happens through experience, a curriculum built mostly on lectures and exams under-invests in the channel that matters most.

2

It reveals ability the exam system hides

PBL surfaces the 'knows it but can't write it' student and tests retention over weeks, not one sitting — giving a truer picture of learning.

3

It reaches every type of intelligence

Logical, emotional, spatial, naturalistic and kinesthetic learners all get an entry point — not just those who test well.

4

It produces real, visible outcomes

Our food-waste unit shows PBL can end in guidelines, videos and a mascot that genuinely change school life — not just a mark in a book.



Addressing the challenges honestly

Time constraints

Start with PBL Light (Sprint / poster) — a single lesson or week, not a full term.

Classroom management

Use structured group roles (as in the food-waste audit) so groups self-manage tasks.

Teacher confidence

Pilot with the two ready-made units in this deck before designing new ones.

Planning overload

Share and reuse units across staff — dissemination sessions like this one build a shared bank.

Assessment pressure

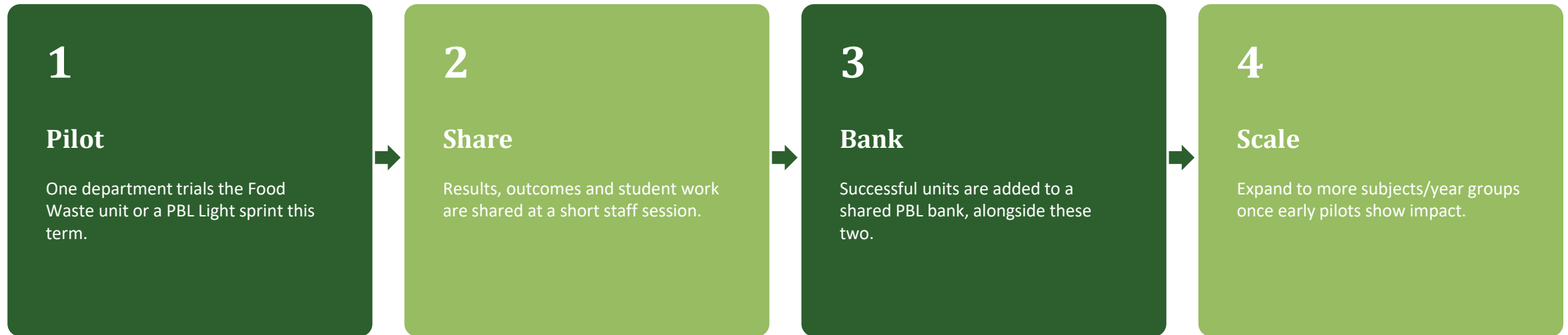
Pair PBL outcomes with light-touch rubrics that value process, not just a final product.

Student readiness

Introduce via Genius Hour / Wonder Day first, to build independent-research habits gradually.

PROPOSAL

Suggested next steps



Goal: keep our students' curiosity, and their real ability, visible — not hidden by a system built for numbers instead of learning.

Thank you

Questions & discussion welcome
