Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title:	Project Based Learning Un-Conference	**Name:**	Michael D. Hamernick
Other Team Members:	Laura Watters		
Program:	Vadnais Heights Program		
Trip Dates:	11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001	**Location Visited:**	Coon Rapids, MN

Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 01

Project Summary: We are teachers at an alternative learning center and for many years we have each taught our own subject areas (science and language arts) in our respective rooms with little cross-curricular collaboration. We had been organizing an occasional camping trip or activity here and there where we weaved the two subjects together, but we have felt for a long time that we wanted to create a multi-curricular class that focused more on student interests. Our goal became to join forces to find a way to create a learning environment that was more "real-world" and relevant than we could provide on our own. We decided to start our journey by attending a conference (or un-conference as they called it) that focused on creating project-based learning in alternative schools.

We spent three days listening, learning and questioning along side some of the most progressive and creative teachers and administrators in the field of project-based learning; most of which had gathered to show support for one another, bounce ideas off of each other and model their practice for those of us who were there to get a taste of something new. It was a rejuvenating experience for teachers like us who were looking for something new to bring back to our schools to improve the student learning experience.

Career Impact: *Allowed us to network with other alternative education teachers who are already using project-based learning in their schools.
*Explored relevant, "real-world" learning techniques to improve student learning.
*Clarified our role as facilitators of learning and allowed us to imagine and entertain the possibilities.
*Accomplished our goal to begin the process of bringing project-based learning back to our school to pilot a co-curricular class.

Classroom/Community Impact: *Accommodates different approaches to learning by truly differentiating the learning experience according to individual student interest.
*Makes content more meaningful, exciting and relevant.
*Develops higher-order thinking skills and life skills by allowing students to dig more deeply into the subject matter and make connections to their lives.
*Improves student confidence, social skills, collaborative skills and critical thinking.
*Provides a professional collaborative environment for teachers.

Open Response: *Developing a streamlined record-keeping system for student projects; to track progress and fulfillment of state standards.
*Planning science and language arts units to introduce students to project-based learning.
*Re-working daily schedule to include larger time blocks for students to work on projects and teachers to collaborate.
*Convincing teachers from other subject areas to join us by modeling a project-learning pilot class.

Quote: "I only wish we'd looked into this earlier. This is going to be great!" - Mike H

Photos:

Laura and Mike admiring the technology.

Laura taking copious notes.

Mike investigating the record-keeping system (and rocking the free swag).

Laura listening intently during a break-out session.

Mike and Laura check the itinerary.

Casual conversation.

Reviewing our notes for later. Did we miss anything?

The host facility - Northwest Passage High School.