



Washington State University

College of Education, Sport and Human Sciences

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Will defend their dissertation on

Date: April 22, 2026

Time: 1:10 P.M.

Pullman Campus – Cleveland Hall, Room 353

Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend

Title:

THE ART OF GUIDED LEARNING: PBL, PjBL, AND ASSESSMENT

Chair: Kira Carbonneau

Abstract:

This study examines how instructors describe the decision-making and facilitation processes they enact while teaching with PBL and PjBL. Although these pedagogies are characterized as student-centered, less is known about how instructors sustain student ownership while guiding learning. Informed by constructivist and situated perspectives, this qualitative narrative study drew on interviews with 10 higher education instructors who had experience using PBL or PjBL in their teaching. The findings indicate that student-centered facilitation was understood not as instructor withdrawal, but as active, situated instructional work. Participants described student-centered facilitation as beginning in course design, where instructors built structures that could hold inquiry, collaboration, and uncertainty, and continuing through moment-to-moment judgments about how to keep learning moving without taking over the work itself. Student-centered facilitation emerged as a process of designing for inquiry, monitoring student thinking as it developed, and adjusting support in ways shaped by group dynamics, and contextual conditions. Overall, the study offers a more fine-grained account into how instructors make these pedagogies workable in practice in student-centered learning environments.