Sarrina Wood, Flint Hill School (VA) posted a new comment on the thread Final Self-Reflection for Inter-Disciplinary & PBL Cohort Course:

PBL OESIS Fall 2018 Cohort Final Reflection

After taking this course on PBL, I feel like I was really walked through the entire process of creating lessons that spark creativity in my students.  I’m in the beginning stages of my dystopian unit, and, yes, my students are still writing an essay and working on literary analysis, but they already grasp the enduring understanding of the unit: that what is a utopia for someone might be a dystopia for someone else.  They have made connections to utopias/dystopias in the real world (most notably Communist Russia, North Korea, and Nazi Germany) and talked about how so-called utopias only work for some people. I feel like I have learned the key importance of PBL: most importantly, how the teacher MUST do the project first, that a project calendar is essential, and transparency with the students is vital.  I feel like I’m made a solid unit, not a dessert project, and my students’ engagement is already top notch. :-)

As far as the structure of the course, I liked the Canvas platform and found it easy to use.  The only thing I did NOT like was finding my Google docs to upload; when searching for the file, it would always say “Unknown Folder” so I had to click every single one until I found what I needed to upload.  Nothing crazy inconvenient but a slight drawback. I liked the modules because the videos from Jeff were so engaging and concise--yet jam packed with information! They made the course seem less cumbersome. I also felt like going to Boston and meeting with Jeff, Tara, and the cohort was absolutely essential and inspiring.  Jeff and Tara, you have been awesome in your comments--you are so helpful and encouraging. I think I made great connections and have fantastic resources as I continue on this path of PBL. I also loved seeing what the others in the cohort were designing--there is a lot of interesting work happening in so many schools!

I would definitely recommend this course to anyone interested in PBL.  As someone who went to the Napa Buck Institute PBL conference, I feel like this helped me go from an introduction in PBL to a full dive.  The Napa Conference was phenomenal in explaining PBL to me, and I got a crash course, but this course truly walked me through developing and implementing PBL.  I have a full plan for a full unit now: exemplars, a calendar, a grading rubric--the whole nine yards. Additionally, I have colleagues who are doing the unit with me and are so excited to use the ready-to-use materials.  This course has also given me the confidence to design more units on my own by following this format and mindset. This was truly a valuable experience.