

Project Management for Education & Educators
By Walter Ginevri & Bernie Trilling
(A book review by R. Max Wideman, FPMI)

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Introduction

This is an unusual book in that it is two books in one, printed back to back. The idea is to promote the confluence of project management with education and vice versa. This is done by establishing one part of the publication as a "Learning Guide for Project Managers" led by Walter Ginevri, and the other part is a "Learning Guide for Educators" led by Bernie Trilling. To get from one guide to the other, you actually have to turn the book over.

This is obviously quite a novel approach in that wherever you take this publication the two books always go together. At the same time, it allows both authors to fully focus on their respective audiences without interference from one another. And since the two audiences are both well established and quite different, it is just as well.

As Jim Snyder¹ explains in his foreword to the first part of the book:²

"I have long held a strong opinion that the only way for project management to reach its full potential in driving solutions to world problems was to create a generation of project-oriented people to solve project-oriented problems. [And] the only way to achieve that objective would be to fully integrate project management skills into our K-12 educational programs. That means we must first have project-oriented educators . . ."

And there in lies the first major problem – each domain has its own professional terminology. Not only that, but longer established professions are very protective of their fields. Consequently, project managers who attempt to introduce the world of project management into the traditional classroom are deemed to be trespassing beyond their proper bounds.

So the authors of this book must be given serious credit for making the effort to bridge that gap.

About the authors

Walter Ginevri, PMI Fellow, is an active member of the Project Management Institute's Education Foundation (PMIF US) the organization that he joined in 2006. As he observes: "[T]hanks to that decision, I've been able to understand the deep essence of project management, to change progressively many of my convictions, to make my profession more exciting and motivating, to become a better professional and an open-minded citizen of the global world.

Bernie Trilling has considerable expertise in leading and supporting education transformation – where all students have opportunities to grow the 21st century skills now so essential for success in learning, work, community and family life. And further to encourage students to find, explore, and deepen their unique mix of interests and passions into lifelong learning pursuits, with supportive recognition for their contributions to creating a better world.

Book Structure

As noted earlier, this publication is two in books one. The first is a *Learning Guide for Project Managers* with contents set out in seven chapters, plus a learning sampler as follows:

1. Bringing Project Management to schools, Educators, and Students
 2. Project Management as Learning, Work, and Life Skills
 3. School Projects Versus Business Projects
 4. Project Management and Time Management
 5. Agile and Adaptive Project Management
 6. Educators as Project Managers
 7. The Future of Project Management in Education
- Project Bridges to 21st Century Learning

This last section of 25 pages, describes three real-life learning projects that can be done in schools around the globe, where a professional project manager and a teacher (or teachers) work together to provide 21st century learning for students.³ The three examples are graded from youngest to oldest students with each presenting a Project Introduction, a Project Description and Project Cycle Activities by Phase.

This part of the publication has 99 pages including introductory sections. There is no Glossary in this part, but there is a Glossary at the end of the second part of the publication, as you will see below.

The second part of the publication,⁴ *Learning Guide for Educators*, also has its contents set out in seven chapters with two additional sections as follows:

1. Bringing Project Management into Classrooms and Homes
 2. Project Management as Learning, Work, and Life Skills
 3. Project Based Learning (PBL) and Project Management (PM)
 4. The Timeless Time Management Challenge
 5. Agile and Adaptive Learning Project Methods
 6. Evaluating Projects – Products, Process, and Learning Progress
 7. The Future of Project Management in Education
- Project Bridges to 21st Century Learning
Project Learning Resources

This *Project Bridges* section also features three real-life learning projects done in schools in a graded manner similar to that described in the *Learning Guide for the Project Managers* part of the publication. The section on *Project Learning Resources* is the largest - 31 pages, and covers important topics such as *Key Learning Project Components Review*; *21st Century Skills Descriptions*; and *Educational Research on Project Learning*. It also has a list of *Recommended Resources and Guides*.

Finally, there is a short Glossary of 50 of the most common professional project management terms and their definitions together with their respective "learning project terms" (where appropriate substitute words are suggested).

This part of the publication has 112 pages.

What we liked

This publication is unique in its concept, being two books in one. It is well written in a good-sized font on quality semi-glossy paper suited to the heavy use that can be expected in an educational environment. It also has good page margins where instructor's can add personal reference notes. The content is attractively laid out and supported by frequent bullet lists, tables, figures, illustrations and pictures making the contents easy to understand and consume. In short, both sections of the publication are light easy reading – as they should be considering the intended audiences.

In each of the two parts of the publication there are introductory sections that are almost identical, except for modifications necessary to suit their respective audiences. As an example, in the *Learning Guide for Project Managers* there is a *Project Manager Preface* that starts off stating:⁵

"The book you are holding, Project Management for Education ("PM4Ed" for short), is actually two books in one: a *Project Manager Guide* and an *Educator Guide* to bring the benefits of the powerful, practical principles and practices of project management to the world of education.

By flipping this book over, you can switch between the two guides to explore how both project managers and educators are increasingly striving towards the same goal – to help all students become more successful 21st century learners, well prepared for future work, citizenship, family, and community life.

PM4Ed aims to help build indispensable bridges between project management and education, to support the evolving transformation of education to equip all students with the essential skills to help tackle our world's "glocal" (global and local) problems. And also help to empower all learners to successfully manage their personal, social, and life changes."

All of this is well and good. However, in an introduction: *Project Manager Foreword*, Jim Snyder⁶ reminds us of a serious challenge:

" I have long held a strong opinion that the only way for project management to reach its full potential in driving solutions to world problems was to create a generation of project-oriented people to solve project-oriented problems. The only way to achieve that would be to fully integrate project management skills into our K-12 educational programs. That means that we must first have project-oriented educators — and this might be just a small problem! After all, business/industry and education are two very different worlds."

In other words, even though both parties are speaking (say) English, the vocabularies of each of project versus business tend to be quite different when it comes to the working technicalities. So, communication, that is the understanding and appreciation of each other together, is the stumbling block. For me, this comes as no surprise as I have long since felt that the subject of Project Communications Management has always been the weakest of all the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) chapters.

Therefore it is heart warming to see that this publication's authors have attempted to address this very issue by including a *Life, Learning, and Professional Project Glossary* at the end of the *Learning Guide for Educators* part of the publication.

Finally, it would be remiss not to mention the excellent practical, working student projects that are included and designed for each of the two types of student audiences. In each case, there are three of

each type that are also graded to suit three progressive student levels.

There is no doubt that this publication provides a valuable tool for bringing project managers and educators together for educational purposes. The objective of the two authors is to solve the essential desire to bring project management more firmly, not only into the future work place, but also into the classroom as a general life skill. This publication presents itself as a reliable and realistic book for doing so.

Downside

In this review, we admit that we have rather focused on the *Learning Guide for Project Managers*, rather than on the *Learning Guide for Educators*. In this we ask for forgiveness because project management is much more within our comfort zone and, in any case, this is being written for a project management web site. Having said that, we are nevertheless just as enthusiastic about this latter part of the publication.

Nevertheless, we have also read it critically from the perspective of an "outsider". For example, in an introduction titled "Educator Author Page", author Bernie Trilling reported in part:⁷

"Around 2005 I had the good fortune to meet Jim Snyder, one of the inspirational founders of the Project Management Institute . . . he saw ever so clearly that unless project approaches were cultivated early in schools, both the future pipeline into the project management profession, and the skills increasingly required for success in future learning, work and life, would be sadly lacking.

"Back then project based learning (PBL) was just starting to catch on in a big way in education . . . But there was one catch – for PBL to adopt project management methods, a 'translation' of technical business-based project management language and concepts was needed before all that expertise and those deep treasure troves of hard-earned project wisdom could be adopted for use in classrooms and schools."

Bernie Trilling then goes on to describe how this challenge was being met with the support of PMI's Educational Foundation (PMIEF) and their extraordinarily supportive staff and the formation of a Project Learning Partnership.⁸ However, apparently it was several years later before the objectives really took off. The rest of the description describes how the work of PMIEF has developed since then.

This description, together with the next article *Educator Introduction*, which introduces *The Five Ps of Project Management for Education*,⁹ strikes us as distinctly US centric, with optimistic statements based on US-sourced experience. For example, we might question the statement: "These essential 21st century skills and mindsets are rapidly rising to the top of many nations' lists of priority education goals for all students."¹⁰ Or again, the statement that "Projects have become a basic unit of work and life in the 21st century"¹¹ seems to be highly optimistic – even three years after this book was first published.

Fortunately, the rest of the *Learning Guide for Educators* is much more down to earth when it comes to advice on implementing what the book recommends.

Summary

Perhaps the best way to wrap up this review is by quoting author Bernie Trilling's concluding thoughts

and feelings as follows:¹²

"At the time, I thought all it would take was a little adapting of the language and methods of project management¹³ . . . Little did I know the depth of the challenges involved (for both project management professionals and educators). That is in taking a highly developed business and technical language and a set of well-honed and deep project methodologies and translating them for education audiences. Especially, since such audiences rarely knew much about the project management profession, and had little, if any, exposure to project management methods in their entire education career!

Let us hope that this publication will be actively used to create the desired *Bridge to 21st Century Learning*.

R. Max Wideman
Fellow, PMI

PS For those who would like to understand the concept better, there is an excellent example on line in a short video at: <https://pmief.org/library/impact-stories-and-videos/walter-ginevri> . Although this material is now some four years old, nevertheless, it is highly recommended as an introduction to this field.

¹ Jim Snyder is one of the Project Management Institute's original founding members back in the 1960s.

² Project Management for Education by Walter Ginevry & Bernie Trilling. Foreword, p vii

³ *Learning Guide for Project Managers* p61

⁴ i.e., on the reverse side

⁵ Ibid, p xi

⁶ Ibid, p vii. *Jim Snyder* is one of the founders of the Project Management Institute (PMI) back in the 1960s. He also claims to be a Lifetime Innovator.

⁷ *Learning Guide for Educators: Educator Preface*, p xiii

⁸ Ibid, p xiii

⁹ Ibid, pp xviii – p xx. For those who may not know, *The Five Ps of Project Management for Education* are: People, Process Performance, Products and (Learning) Progress. Each of these 5P categories are explained by bullet lists of very lofty goals and readers are told to expect to see these explored in greater detail in the rest of the book.

¹⁰ Ibid, p xvii. It would be nice to see this statement substantiated.

¹¹ Ibid, p1

¹² Ibid, p54

¹³ Ibid, i.e., to create *The Bridge to 21st Century Learning*