

Parking Lot

National Family Engagement Summit 2025

By *Jorge Valenzuela*

Session: From Passion to Purpose: Empowering Students with Project Based Learning+

This session helps teachers enhance the quality of project-based learning (PBL) by offering a research-backed framework and strategies for creating authentic student experiences, including the integration of generative AI tools. These approaches aim to elevate both academic and essential life skills, focusing on helping students align their interests with academic content. Additionally, this session equips educators with practical strategies for fostering student partnerships, building rapport, and cultivating a positive classroom culture.

Important Note: *This training reinforces principles and provides tools from the book [‘Project Based Learning+’](#) by Dr. Jorge Valenzuela.*

5 Steps to Help Kids Connect Passion to Purpose

STEP 1
Understand the causes of happiness & stress

STEP 2
Consider your passions & interests

STEP 3
Set goals & use manifestation to accomplish them

STEP 4
Apply the 10,000 Rule to build expertise

STEP 5
Find purpose & fulfillment by serving others

Valenzuela, 2023

ELONG LEARNING *Defined*

Project-Based Learning+
SECOND EDITION
Enhancing Academic Learning and Essential Life Skills
Jorge Valenzuela
Foreword by Yaritza Villalba
CORWIN

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Participant Outcome 1: Learn to create meaningful learning partnerships by building strong connections.

Article, Video, and Activity Tool

- [Building Relationships With Students on Positive Words and High Expectations](#)
- [Building Connections With Empathy Maps](#)
- [Empathy Map Template, Kid Version](#)

Participant Outcome 2: Discover skills to guide students in connecting their passions and interests to purpose.

Article:

- [Using Life Skills to Guide Students From Passion to Purpose](#)

Student Handouts:

- [Passion to Purpose 5-Step Organizer](#)
- [Student Interest Exploration Form](#)

FREE eBook: [Connecting Passion to Purpose](#) for Adults

Participant Outcome 3: Explore how PBL empowers students to align their passions with academic learning.

Video:

- [STEM Pathways Project Video](#)

Articles:

- [A Simple, Effective Framework for PBL](#)
- [Building Confident Educators](#)

Books:

- [Project Based Learning+](#)

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Email: info@lifelonglearningdefined.com

Learn More About My Journey: [ODU Feature Story](#)

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About the Speaker

Jorge Valenzuela, PhD, is a respected education and performance coach, author, and speaker at Lifelong Learning Defined. He began his career in information technology and education and is known for blending science with soul—drawing from his backgrounds in computer science, classroom teaching, family life, and instructional leadership.

At Richmond City Public Schools in Virginia, he led the STEM career pathways program and helped all 50 schools achieve full accreditation by 2010—a systems-level success that shapes his approach today.

A [PhD graduate](#) and [teacher](#) of Old Dominion University, his research on computational thinking informs his [Instructional Innovation+](#), [PBL+](#), and [Blueprint for Emotionally Intelligent Leadership](#) frameworks. He is also a published researcher and host of the [Lifelong Learning Defined](#) podcast.

