

KEY QUESTIONS

- ▶ What is a meaningful task? Why is it worth giving up “space” in my jam-packed curricula to do this?
- ▶ How do I create a meaningful task? Where does the inspiration come from?
- ▶ How much support do I give to students when pursuing a meaningful task?

RESEARCH FINDINGS THAT SUPPORT MEANINGFUL TASKS

▶ “Most schools have a propensity to cover lots of content *before* allowing students to use that content in authentic situations. This approach, based on a climb-the-ladder, step-by-step model of cognition, may be well intentioned, but it reveals a fundamentally flawed conception of learning. Research in cognitive psychology (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2001) challenges the notion that students must learn all the important facts and basic skills *before* they can address the key concepts of a subject or apply the skills in more complex and authentic ways. And all we need to do is look at how people learn sports, art, or their first language to recognize that this view is flawed.”
— Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe

I.E. HOW WOULD YOU COMPLETE THESE SENTENCES?

- By the end of the year, learners should be (better) able, on their own, to effectively use all the 'content' learned this year, to...

I.E. CONTENT IS A 'TOOL'...



TOWARD WHAT END?



WE LEARN BOTH BY BREAKING DOWN THE PARTS AND EXPERIENCING THE WHOLE

- ▶ Young children practice dribbling the ball and passing but also play the game.
- ▶ Novice chefs hone their knife skills while chopping an onion so they can create finished dishes.
- ▶ Novice knitters learn to knit and purl as they make a scarf.

WHAT IF WE FOCUSED ON THE PRACTICE WITHOUT EXPERIENCING THE VALUE OF IT?



- ▶ Joyless
- ▶ Rigid
- ▶ Relentless
- ▶ Extrinsically motivated
- ▶ Content-coverage and test prep oriented

NINE PERVASIVE MYTHS

- ▶ Impact both student and teacher
- ▶ Borne out of habits, misconceptions about how people learn
- ▶ Reinforced based on established practices and policies



NINE PERVASIVE MYTHS

- ▶ Myth #1: The rules of this classroom and subject area are determined by each teacher.
- ▶ Myth #2: What the teacher wants me to say is more important than what I want to say.
- ▶ Myth #3: The point of an assignment is to get it done so that it's off the to-do list.
- ▶ Myth #4: If I make a mistake, my job is only to replace it with the right answer.
- ▶ Myth #5: I feel proud of myself only if I receive a good grade.

NINE PERVASIVE MYTHS

- ▶ Myth #6: Speed is synonymous with intelligence.
- ▶ Myth #7: If I get too far behind, I will never catch up.
- ▶ Myth #8: The way I want to be seen by my classmates affects the way I conduct myself as a learner.
- ▶ Myth #9: What I'm learning in school doesn't have much to do with my life, but it isn't supposed to — it's school.

IMPACT ON OUR STUDENTS

Compliant



Disengaged



"I didn't feel answers were necessary. All the questions seemed rhetorical."

IMPACT OF DISENGAGEMENT

- ▶ Two out of three respondents (67% in each year) are bored at least every day in class in high school.
- ▶ Approximately half of the students (51% in 2007, 50% in 2008) are bored every day.
- ▶ Approximately one out of every six students (16% in 2007, 17% in 2008) are bored in every class.
- ▶ Only 2% in each year report never being bored.

E. Yazzie-Mintz (2009). Engaging the Voices of Students



TRAPPED IN A FISHBOWL



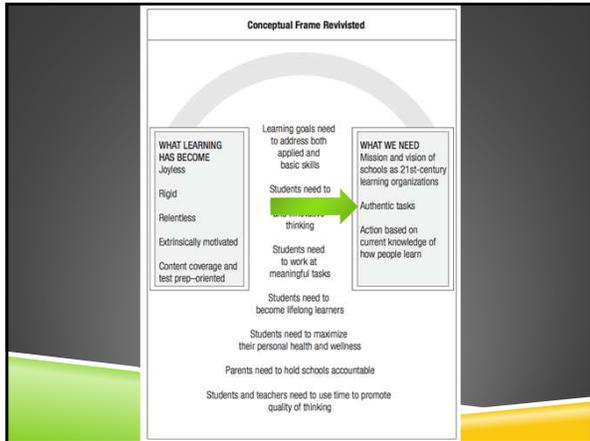
- ▶ The constant search for the “next big thing” that will drive school improvement continues to take leaders farther away from the true source of the problem. School staff need to look inward to restore the relationship between the learners and the learning organization.



WHAT LEARNING CAN BECOME

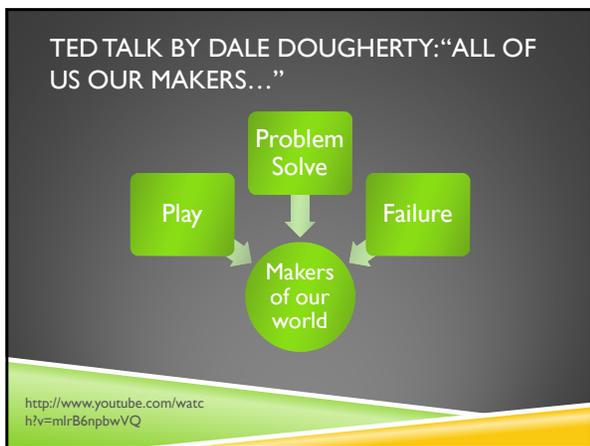
- ▶ Joyful
- ▶ Engaged
- ▶ Creative
- ▶ Intrinsically motivated
- ▶ Focused on real-world, meaningful application





WHAT IS A MEANINGFUL TASK?

- ▶ Authentic or “real world”
- ▶ Personally relevant
- ▶ Significantly challenging
- ▶ Worthwhile



SET OF MEANINGFUL TASKS TO FRAME WORLD HISTORY

- ▶ The design of a tour of the world's most holy sites
- ▶ The writing of a Bill of Rights for use in Afghanistan, Iraq, and new democracies
- ▶ Report on Latin America to the Secretary of State: Policy analysis and background report on a Latin American country. What should be our current policy, and how effective has recent policy with that country been?
- ▶ Collect and analyze media reports from the Internet on other countries' views of US policies in the Middle East. Do we understand the issues?
- ▶ Provide a briefing on the AIDS crisis in Africa and how American policy has helped as well as hurt the situation
- ▶ Take part in a model UN on the issue of terrorism: you will be part of a group of 2-3, representing a country, and you will try to pass a Security Council resolution
- ▶ Russia: friend or foe? Provide the Foreign Relations Committee with a briefing on the current state of Russia, the last century of American-Russian relations, and future worries and possibilities
- ▶ India and outsourcing: to what extent is the global economy a good thing for America? India? India's neighbors?



MEANINGFUL TASK: GRAPHIC DESIGN

You and your partner(s) are a team of graphic designers hired by a beverage company to create a soda can label that will get the attention of American consumers. Using Adobe Photoshop, design your label to aim at the specific market you are trying to attract. Your label must be eye-catching — using the elements and principles of design, be clear and readable, and contain all pertinent consumer labeling information.



MEANINGFUL TASK: CHEMISTRY

- ▶ You are a researcher hired by a group of expert mountain climbers. Hypoxia is the set of symptoms (headache, fatigue, nausea) that comes from a lack of oxygen in body tissues. It is often felt by mountain climbers as they ascend altitude quickly. Sherpas, long-time residents of high altitudes, seem to feel no hypoxic discomfort. Why might that be? Your group wants to know, and to benefit from the knowledge. Design a series of experiments that would test the difference in hypoxic symptoms between mountain climbers and Sherpas. Explain, using chemical equilibrium, why high altitude causes hypoxia in the climbers. How can Sherpas avoid these symptoms? How can you test for these possibilities? What would a positive test look like? What inherent errors would you have to be aware of?



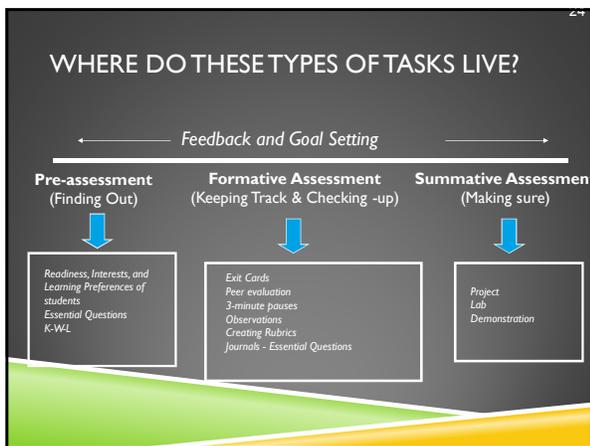
MEANINGFUL TASK: HEALTH / LANGUAGE ARTS

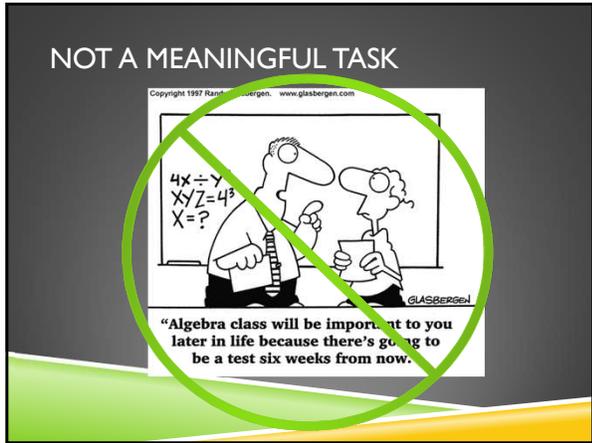
- ▶ Keep a food diary of the lunches they eat in the school cafeteria for the week.
- ▶ Using their knowledge of "My Plate" <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> students will determine the most healthful and least healthful options offered in the cafeteria. Write a persuasive letter to the cafeteria manager about how to create more balanced offerings by suggesting alternatives.

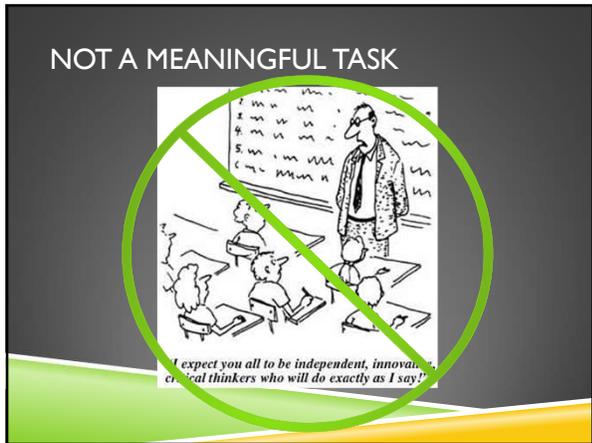
MEANINGFUL TASK: GEOGRAPHY, HIGH SCHOOL

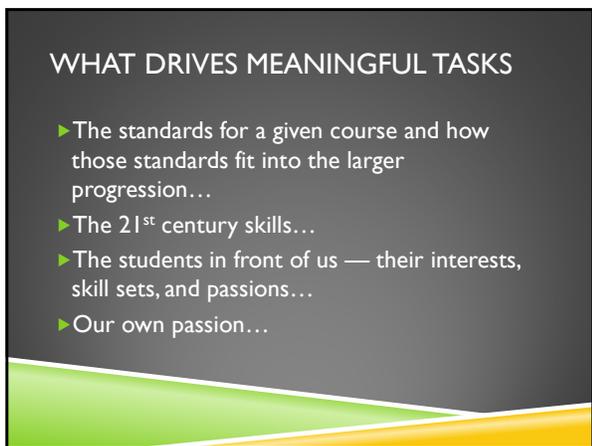
BIGMART is a chain of very large department stores. The owners of BIGMART have asked you, a geographer, for advice. They want to know if Whilkton, Illinois will eventually be large enough to support a BIGMART store. Currently, there aren't enough people living in Whilkton and the surrounding area to make the investment in building a BIGMART store worth while. But, if the population of Whilkton is likely to grow by as much as 10 percent in the next 5 to 10 years, then the owner will go ahead with plans to build a store.

Your task is to obtain enough geographical information about Whilkton to predict whether the population of Whilkton is going to increase by 10 percent in the next 5 to 10 years. In the space below, identify the geographical information you would need to obtain in order to formulate a reasonable prediction.









COMMON CORE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (SPEAKING AND LISTENING)

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Comprehension and Collaboration

- ▶ 1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- ▶ 2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- ▶ 3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- ▶ 4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- ▶ 5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
- ▶ 6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

21ST CENTURY SKILLS

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▶ Problem solving	▶ Collaboration
▶ Critical thinking	▶ Communication
▶ Creative thinking	▶ Initiative and self-direction
▶ Social responsibility	
▶ Information literacy	

A MEANINGFUL TASK CREATED BY A MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL (CC + 21STCENTURY + PASSION)

▶ Students conduct an interview in order to elicit information from the subject to achieve a desired result (i.e. deepen knowledge, determine guilt, make decisions). This task requires extensive preparation in order to develop appropriate questions and questioning techniques that will serve as the foundation of the interview. In addition, students are expected to demonstrate effective listening/observational skills and agility through the spontaneous creation of questions based on the responses they are receiving during the experience. After the interview, the student analyzes the information provided to effect the desired result.

WHAT RESPONSES DO STUDENTS HAVE TO MEANINGFUL WORK?

- ▶ a) enthusiasm
- ▶ b) panic
- ▶ c) curiosity
- ▶ d) frustration
- ▶ e) all of the above

STUDENTS RESPONSE TO MEANINGFUL TASKS



STUDENTS RESPONSE TO MEANINGFUL TASKS



NINE PERVASIVE MYTHS

- ▶ Myth# 4: If I make a mistake, my job is to replace it with the right answer.
- ▶ Revised statement #4: Failure is an unavoidable part of learning that requires the courage to persevere and the determination to make sense of the flaws.

GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH FAILURE

- ▶ Failure, frustration and disappointment is a natural part of learning
- ▶ Feedback and revision is key to further the learning
- ▶ Deliberate practice on the parts that are difficult

FROM HOW WE DECIDE (2009)

- ▶ “Unless you experience the unpleasant symptoms of being wrong, your brain will never revise its models. Before your neurons can succeed, they must repeatedly fail. There are no shortcuts for this painstaking process.”
— Jonah Lehrer

FROM INTERVIEW WITH ELEANOR DUCKWORTH (UNBOXED SERIES, HIGH TECH HIGH)

▶ “I came to realize that the virtues of knowing were very overrated. The work you have to do if you don’t know is far more valuable than just snapping off an answer for something you already know.”

www.hightechhigh.org

NEED TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE CULTURE OF “THE RIGHT ANSWER”



▶ Doesn’t prepare students to think deeply, broadly, and flexibly which is necessary for contemporary employment and citizenship

LEARNING TO DEAL WITH FAILURE

▶ Michael Jordan: I’ve missed over 9,000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times I’ve been trusted to take the game-winning shot... and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.

▶ Albert Einstein: I think and think for months and years. Ninety-nine times, the conclusion is false. The hundredth time I am right.

▶ Pablo Picasso: I am always doing things I can’t do; that’s how I get to do them.

▶ Mickey Mantle: “During my 18 years I came to bat almost 10,000 times. I struck out about 1,700 times and walked maybe 1,800 times. You figure a ballplayer will average about 500 at bats a season. That means I played seven years without ever hitting the ball.”

INCENTIVIZING FAILURE

- ▶ Encourage work early but firm deadlines
- ▶ Create consistent revision policies
- ▶ Score work both on concept as well as execution
- ▶ Enlist students in seeing the problems and misunderstandings in one another's work

WHEN STUDENTS STRUGGLE ON A GIVEN TASK, WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE?

- ▶ a) Give every student enough assistance so that they can do it.
- ▶ b) Acknowledge that they are struggling, but refuse to provide assistance.
- ▶ c) Try to differentiate between those students who make an attempt and can't do it from those students who don't even try to do it. Then, help students in the first category.
- ▶ d) Be clear that it is their opportunity to demonstrate what they know, are able to do, and understand, not yours. But remind them of the revision, retake options.

HIGH COST OF ERASE AND REPLACE MENTALITY

- ▶ Teaches them not to struggle
 - ▶ The teacher will rescue them.
 - ▶ The teacher will move on.
 - ▶ The teacher will give them a bad grade but they can recover.
 - ▶ The teacher will give them a bad grade and they can't recover. They become resigned what that they "don't do..."

BUSY WORK VS. MEANINGFUL TASK

- ▶ Myth #3: The point of an assignment is to get it done so that it's off the to-do list.
- ▶ Revised statement #3: The most powerful problems are the ones with no obvious solution paths; they help me learn more deeply about the subject and myself.

FAKE WORLD OF SCHOOL VS. REAL WORLD

- ▶ Myth #9: What I'm learning in school doesn't have much to do with my life, but it isn't supposed to —it's school.
- ▶ Revised statement #9: The work I do in school opens up the doors to the real world.

THE POWER OF MOTIVATION



- Worthy: Value in short term and long term
- Challenging: Rigorous due to complexity, unfamiliarity, application
- Possible: "Just right" task

WORTHY OF THE ATTEMPT Worthy

- ▶ Short term benefit
 - ▶ What is the power of learning this new rule, genre, strategy right now?
 - ▶ Designing learning activities and summative tasks to demonstrate that power
- ▶ Long-term benefit
 - ▶ How is this power related to the world outside of school?
 - ▶ Keep answering the question: "Why do I have to learn this?" by design

INSPIRE WRITING ACHIEVEMENT Worthy

- ▶ "A key theme in what teens said motivated them to write was one of relevance. Teens said that they wanted to be doing things that mattered socially, in their lives, and had an impact." —Writing, Technology and Teens (2008)



A MEANINGFUL TASK CREATED IN CARROLLTON-FARMERS BRANCH, TX

- ▶ Reconciliation of an awful "moment" with a positive collective identity. *Students select something "awful" that happened in their own national, cultural, or family heritage – a series of events, incident, policy, or decision that they don't respect, understand, or forgive. Students must first report what happened and then describe how those actions made them feel ashamed. Students then outline the steps toward reconciliation (either actual or desired) to preserve the positive connection to the collective identity.*

INSTRUCTIONAL MOVES Worthy

- ▶ Show the authenticity of the challenge through video clips, texts, photos, current events and/or problems
- ▶ Provide students with models of quality work and how work progresses over time
- ▶ Give timely and regular feedback without overstepping on their ownership of learning
 - ▶ Questioning
 - ▶ Criteria from rubric or scoring checklist

CHALLENGING: RIGOR OF THE TASK Challenging

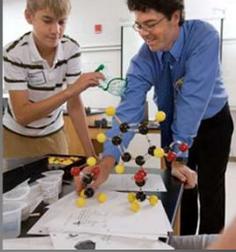
- ▶ Requires deep thinking and analysis — no obvious solution path or right answer
- ▶ Requires creating a generalization and then testing it out
- ▶ Requires measuring against criteria to determine its success
- ▶ Requires multiple attempts to get it right

HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE WHAT EXPECTED ON A MEANINGFUL TASK? Challenging

- ▶ a) Through modeling
- ▶ b) Through a set of criteria, rubric or scoring tool
- ▶ c) Through a detailed set of directions
- ▶ d) Through coaching and dialogue based on what students are doing
- ▶ e) All of the above

POWER OF MODELING Challenging

- ▶ Shows several examples of quality
 - ▶ Teacher generated
 - ▶ Student created
- ▶ Goal is to show the thought processes behind improvement that led to the finished result



RUBRIC DEVELOPMENT Challenging

- ▶ Establish criteria of what quality work looks like in language that students can understand
- ▶ Goal is to create descriptive language that identifies what they did (not what they didn't)



SHORT ANSWER RUBRIC: CRITERIA ON KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT Challenging

4	3	2	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence/examples included directly and powerfully support the response (insightful connections and/or detailed explanation) • Meets the requirements of the assignment (NOTE: if doesn't meet the requirements but it is still direct and powerful, give the student a "3" but explain why) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence/examples included support the response • Meets the requirements of the assignment (NOTE: this can specify the number of facts or details, key vocabulary, explanation of procedural steps) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides evidence/examples with limited or no explanation OR • Provides evidence/examples with explanation but at least one is inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence/examples are not included OR • Evidence/examples are made up or wildly inaccurate

SELF-REFLECTION FOR A KINDERGARTEN TASK: COLLABORATION CRITERIA

Challenging

We came up with a way to get to our location.			
We used positional words to describe the directions (across, right, left, behind)			
We tested our directions out on each other.			

POWER OF GOAL SETTING

Challenging

- ▶ Objectively defined
- ▶ Intelligible for the individual
- ▶ Within their grasp
 - ▶ Small win rather than a big leap
 - ▶ Substantial probability for success

USING MISTAKES AND CONFUSION AS A TEACHABLE MOMENT

Challenging

- ▶ How would this mistake happen?
- ▶ How would you advise the student who made that mistake?
- ▶ Emphasis on the “how” of learning
- ▶ The right answer is not an end point

INSTRUCTIONAL MOVES

Challenging

- ▶ Function as a coach, not as a lecturer
- ▶ Demonstrate you are on their side but will not do the work for them



POSSIBLE: INCREMENTAL GOALS

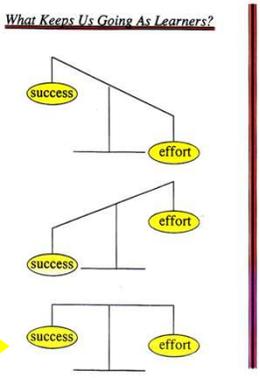
Possible

- ▶ Personalizing the task so that every child can do it
 - ▶ Focus on differentiating the content, process, or product
 - ▶ Focus on using past performance to determine goals for a particular student (through conferencing and goal-setting)

What Keeps Us Going As Learners?

Possible

All learners need a balanced success to effort ratio



We Need to Keep the Scales Balanced for Each Individual

What Keeps Us Going As Learners?

Struggling Learners:
Heavy Effort
Little Success

success effort

success effort

success effort

We Need to Keep the Scales Balanced for Each Individual

Possible

What Keeps Us Going As Learners?

Advanced Learners:
Great Success,
Little Effort

success effort

success effort

success effort

We Need to Keep the Scales Balanced for Each Individual

Possible

CONCEPT OF FLOW — MIHALY CSIKSZENTMIHALYI

- ▶ To achieve a flow state, a balance must be struck between the challenge of the task and the skill of the performer. If the task is too easy or too difficult, flow cannot occur. Both skill level and challenge level must be matched and high; if skill and challenge are low and matched, then apathy results.

COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT Possible

- ▶ Who is in front of me?
- ▶ What is it that you need?
- ▶ How can I design work specifically for you to help you reach the learning goal?

MEANINGFUL TASK IN A YOGA CLASS

- ▶ Entire class goes through a series of 26 poses. The instructor uses language to describe what the pose is intended to do, uses direction to communicate how to make it easier or more challenging, and uses physical modifications for students who need to be more gentle or go deeper in the pose.

GETTING IT TO SCALE

- ▶ Harnessing both individual and collaborative ways to make school more interesting, accessible, powerful, and authentic to students
- ▶ IF we focus on creating meaningful tasks and show the value of the content and skill development in service of creating THEN students will be more focused during deliberate practice so it will transfer both on application and on "test" day.

WORKING SMARTER NOT HARDER: PAY ATTENTION TO THE VERBS IN THE STANDARDS

GOAL TYPE	ACTION VERBS
ACQUISITION	define • cite • select • describe • know • relate • recognize • identify • sort • list • arrange • group • state • recall • recite • label • record • restate • summarize • calculate • discern • memorize • notice • paraphrase • plug in • outline
MEANING	analyze • compare • contrast • critique • defend • evaluate • explain • generalize • interpret • support • justify • prove • test • translate • verify • synthesize • illustrate • dissect • detect • classify • examine • investigate
TRANSFER	• apply • use • demonstrate • construct • model • show • create • design • innovate • perform effectively • solve • troubleshoot • experiment with • build • dramatize • employ • operate

SO IF THE STANDARD IS...

- ▶ Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ▶ Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- ▶ Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

From Common Core: College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards

... THEN THE MEANINGFUL TASK MIGHT BE...

▶ Dear Romeo. She's not worth it. Write an email to Romeo (or Juliet) that gives him (or her) perspective on the all-consuming emotion he/she experiences and how it will pass. The goal of the letter is to persuade him/her about what true love really looks and feels like and that the phase they are in is not permanent. The basis of the appeal should be a combination of evidence from Romeo and Juliet as well as examples from the student's own personal experiences or prior knowledge.

WORKING SMARTER NOT HARDER

- ▶ Idea #2 – creating a continuum for 21st century skills
- ▶ Unpacking what each skill means and how that informs task design



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CRAFTING A 21ST CENTURY CONTINUUM

- ▶ “Heavyweight team” that represents range of teachers, administrators, Board members, employers within the local community
- ▶ Define each skill
- ▶ Describe the skill as it progresses over time

Want a sample?
www.vbschools.com

SAMPLE CONTINUUM: INFORMATION LITERACY (OCM BOCES)

Information and media literacy
Access and evaluate information and sources critically; apply information to complete the task in an ethical and legal manner

NOVICE	EMERGING	PROFICIENT	EXEMPLARY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accesses, identifies and reports sources to complete a task without consideration of its relevance, bias, appropriateness, or attribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accesses and identifies sources and asks questions to identify missing information before applying that information with some consideration of relevance, bias, appropriateness or attribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accesses and evaluates sources in order to determine its relevance, bias, appropriateness • Uses that knowledge to seek information and alternate points of view • Organizes information to draw inferences and conclusions with appropriate attribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accesses and evaluates sources based on accuracy, authority, and point of view • Resolves conflicting evidence or clarifies reasons for differing interpretations of information and ideas • Organizes information to draw inferences and conclusions with appropriate attribution

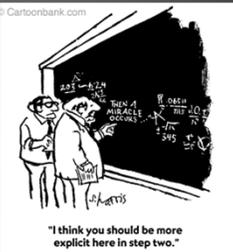
SAMPLE CONTINUUM: CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION (OCM BOCES)

Creativity / Innovation
Develops ideas, solutions, and connections to create something novel for an aesthetic or practical purpose.

NOVICE	EMERGING	PROFICIENT	EXEMPLARY
Identifies an idea/approach within a given structure to address a problem or complete a task that mimics an existing idea/approach.	Uses knowledge of existing structures to develop an idea, question, format or product to solve an existing need/problem and/or evoke an aesthetic response.	Generates or extends an idea, question, format or product using content and structural knowledge to solve an existing need/problem and/or evokes an aesthetic response.	Creates a novel or unique idea, question, format or product using extensive content and structural knowledge that makes new associations to solve an existing or anticipated need/problem and/or evokes an aesthetic response.

WORK SMARTER NOT HARDER: MEANINGFUL TASKS WITHIN AND ACROSS DISCIPLINES

▶ Idea #3: Creating a range of authentic tasks as well as definitions to identify and inspire teacher development



"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC AUTHENTIC TASKS FROM MILFORD, CT: SCIENCE

- ▶ Constructed response
- ▶ Data analysis
- ▶ Open-ended lab report (some parameters)
- ▶ Wide open lab report (no parameters)
- ▶ Research synthesis
- ▶ Position statement
- ▶ Demonstration

**SUBJECT-SPECIFIC AUTHENTIC TASKS
FROM RICHLAND 2, SOUTH CAROLINA**

- ▶ Simulations
- ▶ Research
- ▶ Production of persuasive text
- ▶ Analysis of persuasive text
- ▶ Problem / solution
- ▶ Debate/exchange of viewpoints
- ▶ Visual model / illustration
- ▶ Correspondence

**MULTIDISCIPLINARY TASKS FROM
NEWPORT NEWS, VA**

- ▶ Problem / Solution
- ▶ Inquiry / Investigation
- ▶ Source / Comparative Analysis
- ▶ Debate / Panel / Role Play
- ▶ Modeling / Simulation
- ▶ Correspondence / Interviews
- ▶ Persuasive Statement
- ▶ Portfolio / Reflection

MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERFORMANCE TASKS

- ▶ Problem/Solution- Identifies and defines a problem and generates a possible solutions (or solution paths), evaluates the viability of each solution, and offers a recommendation.
- ▶ Inquiry/Investigation- Systematically develop questions and pursue an explanation/pattern based on, but not limited to, known information.
- ▶ Source/Comparative Analysis- Analyze data, information, artifacts, and/or textual evidence to develop an explanation, interpretation, and/or determine impact.
- ▶ Critique/Self-Analysis- Evaluate a given text, performance, or problem based on established criteria
- ▶ Debate, Panel, Role Play- Present and participate in a debate, panel, or role play to provide information, gain insight and/or promote a particular point of view

MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERFORMANCE TASKS

- ▶ Performance / Product - Generate a performance/product using visual, multimedia, sound, writing, and /or speech to demonstrate understanding and/or communicate creative intent
- ▶ Modeling/Simulation- Given a model or set of criteria/data/experiences, create representations to illustrate/predict outcomes or to deepen understanding
- ▶ Correspondence/Interviews- Appropriately communicates and/or responds to an idea, point of view, concern, request or proposal to an audience to achieve a desired result
- ▶ Persuasive statement- Develop an argument/artifact using supporting information and persuasive techniques to promote a particular point of view and/or cause action
- ▶ Portfolio/Reflection- Collect work over time to demonstrate mastery in one or more modes of expression/College, Career, Citizen-Ready skills, reflect on growth, and/or set goals

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WORKING SMARTER NOT HARDER: USE TOOLS TO LOCATE MEANINGFUL TASKS

- ▶ Idea #4: Look to state and provincial websites to “liberate,” tweak, or get inspiration for meaningful tasks.



LOOKING TO STATES AND PROVINCES FOR INSPIRATION

- ▶ Examples of tasks and rubrics on state and provincial websites that can be adopted, tweaked, or give design inspiration
- ▶ Ask yourself when perusing tasks...
 - ▶ Does it measure what matters?
 - ▶ Does it making me want to start playing around with the task already?

MEANINGFUL TASK FROM ONTARIO CURRICULUM EXEMPLARS (HISTORY)

▶ A television producer is making a documentary about the impact of technological developments and economic conditions on the lives of individual Canadians during a particular period in the twentieth century. As part of her research, the producer is trying to locate first-person accounts of this period. You are to assume a role of a Canadian and write a character profile as well as three journal entries to demonstrate how you have been affected by technological developments and economic conditions.

MODEL PERFORMANCE TASK ON GEOMETRIC TRANSFORMATIONS

▶ You are working for Dynamic Designs, Inc. The following accounts have requested new artwork. *Sonic Skateboard Co.* needs a new design for their deck, *Pineapple Computer* needs a new screensaver, and *Jet Tees* is developing a new line of graphic t-shirts. Since you are the senior designer, you may choose which design to develop. Each company requires a repetitive design. You have chosen to use composite transformations (of at least two types). The company requires a precise mathematical description in order to program the design into their manufacturing software. Please include a complete professional drawing on a Cartesian plane with the location of the pre-image clearly marked. If you choose to use graphing technology, be sure to format the diagram with axes on. Your boss is offering you a bonus if you create a model product for the client.

State of Delaware:
http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosites/staff/ci/content_areas/math.shtml

MEANINGFUL TASK FOR GRADE 5 HISTORY

▶ *Legacy* is a new TV infomercial series that helps Canadians stay informed about issues of importance to our country. *Legacy* is preparing to do a series of spotlights on Canada's natural resources. They are inviting students to audition for a chance to join their production team. To prepare for your audition you will need to:

- ▶ Select one of Canada's natural resources and do some background research on the following:
 - ▶ How do we use this natural resource? Why is this natural resource important to our quality of life?
 - ▶ Is this resource something that other countries want to purchase? If so, how do we benefit from selling this resource? What are some issues about selling this resource?
 - ▶ What environmental concerns are associated with gathering and using this resource? How are these concerns being addressed?
- ▶ Select a Canadian community where the resource is prevalent as the focus for the following questions:
 - ▶ How did the resource impact the beginning of the community?
 - ▶ How does the development of the resource impact the ability of the community to thrive?
 - ▶ What are the implications of resource development and use on the future of this community?
- ▶ Your presentation should organize and share information in ways that prompt viewers to think critically about how Canadians use, exchange and conserve natural resources.

Alberta Assessment Consortium:
www.aac.ab.ca

MODEL PERFORMANCE TASK ON SEEING STRUCTURE OF EXPRESSIONS (ALGEBRA)

- ▶ Your neighbors just started a college fund last year for their daughter. An amount of \$100 was deposited in a savings account on January 1st each of the years 2010, 2011, 2012, and so on to 2019, with annual yield of 3%. What will be the balance in the savings account on January 1, 2020? How much more should they contribute if they want to pay for a four-year state college/university for her?

Adapted from State of Ohio:
<http://education.ohio.gov>

HOW STUDENTS GET BETTER AT MEANINGFUL TASKS

- ▶ Keep showing them how the “big picture” ties into the strategies and choices they make
- ▶ Discuss the notion of fixed mindset vs. growth mindset
- ▶ Use rubrics to give them an opportunity to revise both before the work is due and once they get it back

THE MINDSET OF A LEARNER

FIXED MINDSET

- ▶ Believe that your qualities are carved in stone.
- ▶ Urgency to prove yourself over and over.... Every situation calls for a confirmation of their intelligence, personality and character.

GROWTH MINDSET

- ▶ Believe that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts.
- ▶ Everyone can change and grow through application and experience.

Carol Dweck (2008)

ADOPTING A "GROWTH MINDSET"

- ▶ "Clearly, people with the growth mindset thrive when they're stretching themselves. When do people with the fixed mindset thrive? When things are safely within their grasp. If things get too challenging—when they're not feeling smart or talented—they lose interest."

Carol Dweck (2008)

CULTIVATING A GROWTH MINDSET

- ▶ "People may start with different temperaments and different aptitudes, but it is clear that experience, training, and personal effort takes them the rest of the way."



From Geoff Colvin: [Talent is Overrated](#)

CHRIS ROCK AS A MASTER COMEDIAN

- ▶ Plays lots of small gigs to test out material
- ▶ Hones jokes based on audience response — powerful feedback loop
- ▶ Continues to challenge himself through warm ups, in between performances

DELIBERATE PRACTICE IN THE CLASSROOM

- ▶ Requires collaboration, analysis and reflection
- ▶ Requires background knowledge about how “the greats” are made
- ▶ Requires modeling of precise skills to promote the larger disciplines of being a scientist, poet, historian, mathematician...

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE PREVENTING MORE PREVALENT USAGE OF MEANINGFUL TASKS?

- ▶ a) time to create them
- ▶ b) inspiration
- ▶ c) time to fit it in to the unit/course schedule
- ▶ d) getting students to own the work?

TAP INTO YOUR OWN PASSIONS FOR INSPIRATION

- ▶ What places, texts, ideas are fascinating to you?
- ▶ How do you translate that into a meaningful task?



HIGH TECH HIGH PERFORMANCE TASK ON RESILIENCE (GRADE 8)

► During the Resilience Café Project, 8th graders learned about resilient heroes from the past and present, and explored together what it means to be resilient. Students identified specific attributes to celebrate and communicate through their work. They connected a resilient historical figure, a resilient community member and their own personal story of resilience through writing and by creating an art piece full of symbolism. They honored their resilient community members by inviting them to a night of celebration through music, spoken word, poetry and artwork.

High Tech High:
<http://www.hightechhigh.org>

GRADE 1 MATHEMATICS PERFORMANCE TASK

► The TV show *Sesame Street* is developing a new math section to their program. The producers have asked you to develop an episode based on any number of your choice between 5 and 20. Children aged 3 to 5 will be watching this episode. Your presentation to the producers must include

- at least 4 different ways of representing the number you chose (with manipulatives, using words, using digits, using examples found in your environment, dividing the number into smaller parts etc.),
- a demonstration of how to count in different ways using this number (by ones, backwards, jumping by 2s or 5s etc.)
- an explanation of why you have chosen this number. *Why is this number important or significant?* You can present your number in a book or a poster format.

► You can use models, manipulatives, drawings, songs, skits etc. in your presentation. You will present your episode to the producers of *Sesame Street*, who may want to film your presentation.

Alberta Assessment Consortium:
www.aac.ab.ca

STUDENT SELF-REFLECTION (GR. 1)

Student _____ Date _____

After finishing the task, complete this student self-reflection:

Criteria	YES 😊	NOT YET 👉
I can explain why I chose this number.		
I can explain how I accomplished this task.		
I can find the number I chose in the environment.		
I can represent the number I chose in various ways.		

Alberta Assessment Consortium: www.aac.ab.ca

LEARNING IS A VOLUNTARY ENDEAVOR

- ▶ Need to give a meaningful task to show “Why we are learning this”
 - ▶ Does not replace skill development...
 - ▶ Does not replace emphasis on practice...
 - ▶ Does not replace tests...
- ▶ Justifies the value of the deliberate practice

WORKING SMARTER NOT HARDER: DIGITAL PORTFOLIOS

- ▶ Idea #4: Creating a repository for student work so that students can:
 - ▶ showcase accomplishments
 - ▶ engage in reflection
 - ▶ set future goals based on current performance



HIGH TECH HIGH INTERDISCIPLINARY PERFORMANCE TASK (GRADE 10)

▶ Student write up in his digital portfolio:
For this project we learned the elements of satire from its classic roots in Greek theatre to its more modern applications in mediums such as Saturday Night Live skits and modern political cartoons. Keeping the intellectual and outrageous manner Jonathan Swift’s “A Modern Proposal” in mind, we were to produce short, satirical sketches on a controversial issue in science today. We were also to produce two editorials, presenting two different sides of our issue as well as a final position paper presenting both sides as well as our general opinion. Our skit was about water quality in plastic bottles. It was ran with with a news reporter interviewing celebrities, the common people, and a water company CEO.

High Tech High: <http://www.hightechhigh.org>

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO CONTINUE OUR DIALOGUE TOGETHER...

- ▶ Email: zmuda@competentclassroom.com
- ▶ Website: www.competentclassroom.com
- ▶ Twitter: [compclass](https://twitter.com/compclass)
- ▶ Read my blog on ASCD EdGE
- ▶ Most recent publication: *Breaking Free from Myths about Teaching and Learning* (ASCD, 2010)
- ▶ Come see me at the Teaching and Learning Conference in Vegas; Annual Conference in Philadelphia

THANKS...

- ▶ for your engagement, open-mindedness and deep thinking!