

The Leadership and Learning Center®

Authentic Performance Tasks: Strategies to Improve Learning



Classroom Practice

School Improvement Summit

Steve Ventura • June 3-5, 2014

There is a down side when students have down time, and every teacher knows what this is – when students are not engaged they are less likely to learn.

**real learning
for
real life**

The rule of thumb is simple. As you plan your lesson, think: no down time. At all times, all students must be doing something significant toward the instructional goal, even during any full group discussions.

Here are some instances where down time happens:

- The teacher is asking specific “popcorn” type questions of one student at a time in a whole-group setting – what are the other students doing?
- Students are at the board working a problem or writing an answer – what are the other students doing?
- The teacher is introducing a new topic, method or concept of which students may not have much prior knowledge – are all students equally engaged?

What is an engaging classroom scenario and how do I create more opportunities for authentic performance assessments?



REFLECTION

What kind authentic assessments are you using?

How will you or do you apply these practices in your school(s) or classroom(s)?

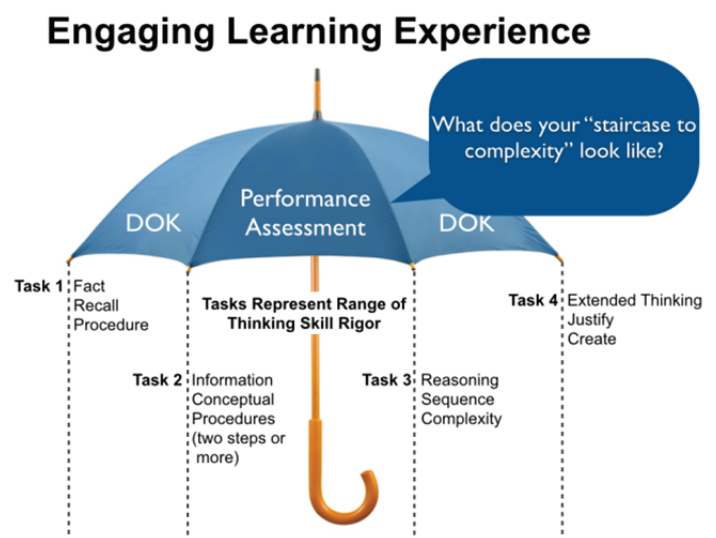
Engaging Learning Experiences: The Key to Quality School Improvement

Authentic performance tasks require students to use skills, strategies, and knowledge learned while completing a real-world task that an adult would need to perform in his personal or professional life. It requires the student to explain, apply, or synthesize their knowledge to show true understanding through a multiple step process/project. The project is a quality piece that presents justifiable information or answers that can be used for further learning, investigation or research. It is outlined with clear task objectives, and has a rubric or other document that guides the completion of work and is used for the final evaluation of the project. Some authentic assessment projects could be:

- Data Collection and Analysis to solve a real-world problem
- Using historical events to present solutions in order to solve a present world problem.
- Pretending to be another person (maybe historical) in order to explain how one feels, thinks or perceives life.
- Investigating a hypothesis by running a number of scientific experiments.
- Architectural building or diorama reproductions

The best assessments always teach students and teachers alike the kind of work that most matters; they are enabling and forward-looking, not just reflective of prior teaching. When students know beforehand what will be expected, they can perform their best.

In real life we often do know what is expected and we prepare accordingly. In authentic performance assessments, when we give students a rubric and defined expectations, they can rise to the occasion. If the assessment is properly designed, it will allow students time to think through and study the issues and not just regurgitate classroom information. It will allow the struggling student time to learn and the quick to remember to apply.





DISCUSSION

Affective Assessments and Confidence Inventories

Language Arts Confidence Inventory

Directions: This inventory was designed to inform your teacher about the confidence that you and your classmates have in speaking and writing. Its purpose is to help your teacher do a better job. Please look at each activity and then imagine that you had to carry out that activity. For each activity, indicate the level of confidence you would have in your ability to do it. Circle only one response for each activity. An example is provided below.

VC = Very Confident

LC = A Little Confident

FC = Fairly Confident

NC = Not Confident

Activities

Your Response

Suppose you were asked to...

How confident would you be?

Operate a film projector in a theater

VC FC **LC** NC

Do not write your name on this inventory. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Please respond honestly.

Activities	Your Response
Suppose you were asked to...	How confident would you be?
1. write a friendly letter to an English-speaking but unknown student in another country	VC FC LC NC
2. give a 5-minute speech to your classmates about a recent vacation.	VC FC LC NC
3. compose an original <i>narrative</i> essay of 500-700 words.	VC FC LC NC
4. compose an original <i>persuasive</i> essay of 500-700 words.	VC FC LC NC
5. explain to a classmate how an oral report should be organized.	VC FC LC NC
6. use a computer to compose a short written report.	VC FC LC NC
7. answer a teacher's question aloud in class when you know the answer.	VC FC LC NC
8. disagree aloud, politely but firmly, with a classmate about an issue that the class is studying.	VC FC LC NC
9. write a short essay of 500 words with no errors in spelling, punctuation, or usage.	VC FC LC NC
10. give a two-minute impromptu speech in front of the class, without any preparation.	VC FC LC NC

Adapted from: Test Better, Teach Better: The Instructional Role of Assessment. W. James Popham



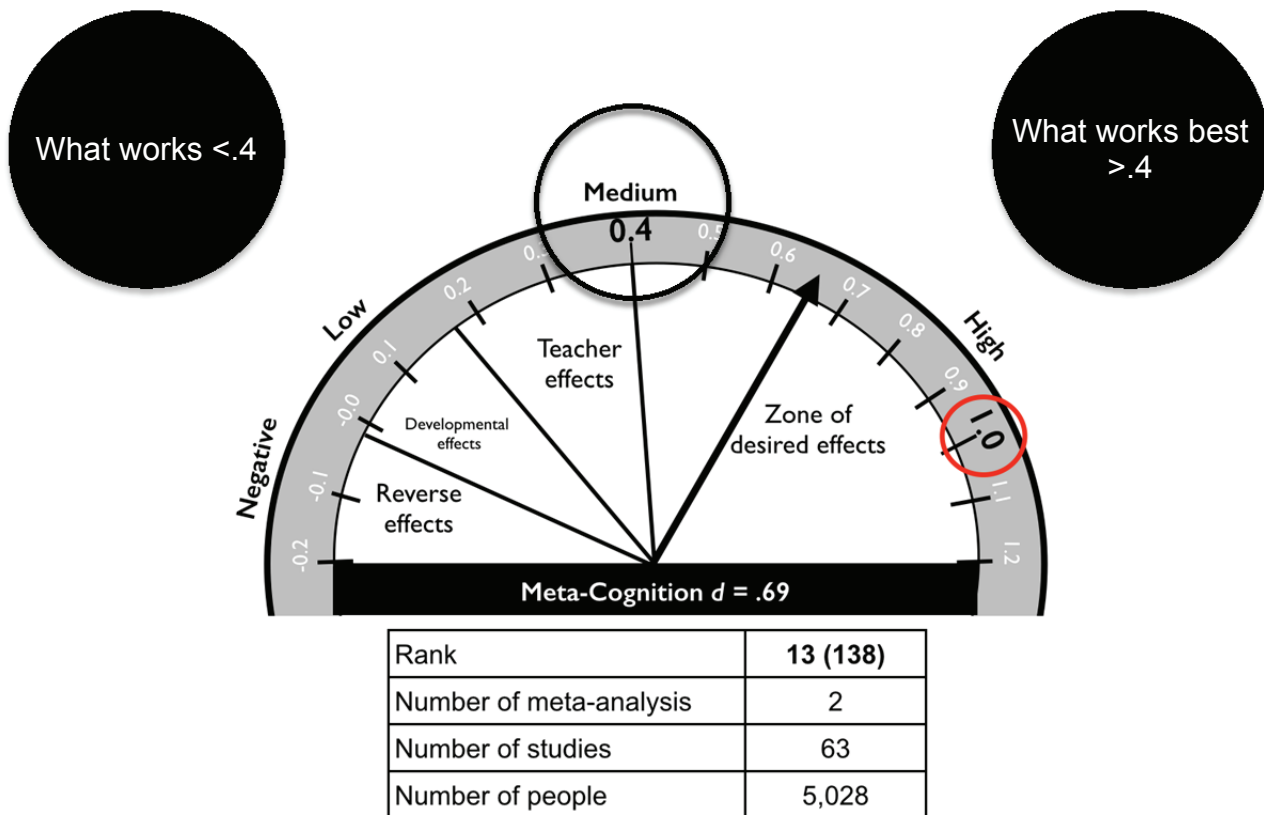
DISCUSSION

The Big Picture and Performance Tasks: How Do These Powerful Practices Align?

Suppose you have an opportunity to combine the very best research with respect to effect size – what would that look like for students?

According to *Visible Learning* (Hattie, 2009), schools that **doubled** their performance followed a similar set of strategies:

- Set incremental goals (.56)
- Analyzed student data
- **Used formative assessments and performance tasks (.90)**
- Collaboratively reviewed evidence on instruction (.60)
- Used instructional time more productively (.44)





DISCUSSION

Five to Thrive: Strategies That Improve Learning

Source: *Engaged Instruction: Thriving Classroom in the Age of the Common Core* (2013) Lead and Learn Press

Activation	• Academic vocabulary • Background knowledge • Essential questions • Advance organizers, including anticipation guides* • K-W-L (know-wonder-learn) • Teacher and student-generated comparisons • Student learning goals* • Preview content
Collaboration	• Cooperative learning* • Reciprocal teaching* • Jigsaw • Socratic seminar • Feedback – peer-to-peer / teacher-student • Games for learning • Simulation/roleplaying
Metacognition	• Nonlinguistic representations* • Concept mapping* • Summarizing / note-taking • Read/recall/check/summarize • Content frames • Interacting with text • Similarities and differences • Close read • Annotations • Think out loud • Self-Assessment

Communication	• Powerful questioning* • QARs – question, answer, relationship • RAFT – Role, audience, format, topic • Writing to learn strategies • Constructed response • Argumentation* • Benchmark work • Anchor papers • Learning targets • Scoring guides and rubrics • Guided practice • Modeling
Application	• Authentic performance tasks or problem-based learning* • Project-based learning • Inquiry • Individual contracts • Generating/testing hypotheses* • Portfolios • Interactive notebooks

Five to Thrive for Students

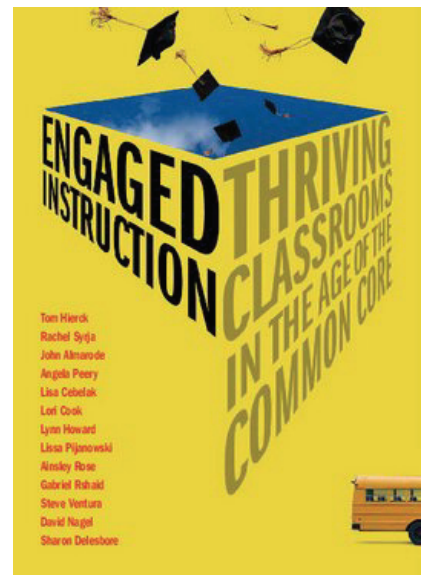
Activate my knowledge

Collaborate with others

Think about my own thinking

Communicate my learning

Show what I know





ACTIVITY

How to Create an Engaging Classroom Scenario

S.C.R.A.P.

Process for Creating an Engaging Scenario

- Situation: The context of the engaging scenario.
- Challenge: The challenge or problem that the student encounters.
- Roles: The careers and authentic jobs that the student assumes.
- Audience: The person or group to whom the students present the results of the challenge.
- Product or Performance: What is produced by the students upon completion of the assessment.

Situation	
Challenge	
Roles	
Audience	
Product	
Full Description	

Engaging Scenario 1st Grade ELA

Mrs. K's kindergarten class is learning about stories. She has asked you to retell a story for her class. You have decided to make a puppet show for the story *The Three Little Pigs*. Be sure to include the characters, setting, and to tell the story in sequence from a diff. pt. of view.

S - helping a kindergarten class
C - to retell a story through a puppet show
R - a writer, producer, director, presenter
A - kindergarteners
P - puppet show

Task 1 - Sequence story strips (DOK 1)
Task 2 - create a flow chart that retells key details (DOK 3)
Task 3 - make story map (DOK 3)
Task 4 - make puppet show (DOK 4) from a different point of view

Assessment
Rubric

*** Differentiation**
- Pictures instead of words
- Story on tape/CD
- watch on Smartboard
- partner support

SCRAP Planning Tool

Situation	
Challenge	
Roles	
Audience	
Product	
Full Description	



ACTIVITY

Creating Specific Tasks: Staircase to Complexity

Elementary Example

Task	Product or Performance: What will students do to demonstrate their understanding of the “unwrapped” priority standards?	DOK
1	Sequence story strips	1
2	Create a flow chart the retells key details	3
3	Create a story map	3
4	Create a puppet show from a different point of view	4

Secondary Example

Task	Product or Performance: What will students do to demonstrate their understanding of the “unwrapped” priority standards?	DOK
1	Create a Cornell Notes research booklet	1
2	Write a research article for a journal	3
3	Create a PowerPoint presentation with speaker’s notes	3-4
4	Give an oral presentation with powerpoint	4



ACTIVITY

Performance-Task Development with the SQUARED Planning Tool

The SQUARED planning tool helps to provide focus and clarity for all performance tasks.

S	Which standard(s) will this performance task address?
Q	What are the Essential Questions and the corresponding Big Ideas this task will target?
U	Which “unwrapped” concepts and skills will students demonstrate through this task?
A	How will students apply the concepts and skills? What will they produce or perform?
R	What resources will students need to complete the task?
E	What evidence will I need to see to verify that all of my students have learned the concepts and skills?
D	How can I differentiate the application to meet the learning needs of all?

SQUARED Planning Tool Example

**Developing Performance Task 1 for Communication 101 Unit of Study:
Create a Cornell Notes Research Booklet**

S	•Integrate information presented in different media or formats as well as in words to develop coherent understanding of a topic	
Q	Essential Question: Why do you have to question the validity of what you read? Big Idea: Everything you read is not always true.	
U	•Information •Topics or issue •Facts •Reasoned judgement based on research finding •Speculation	INTEGRATE (Information) DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING (topic or issue) DISTINGUISH (facts, reasoned judgement based on research findings, speculation)
A	Create a Cornell Notes research booklet	
R	Journals, books, internet access to research an environmental issue Review "Taking Cornell Notes" Review proper format for citing sources and creating a bibliography for all possible sources: books, journals, Internet articles, video clips Anchor papers and products (samples of student work at each of the rubric performance levels)	
E	Students will meet proficient of higher level on Task 1 rubric. Students will respond to the Essential Question with their Big Idea in written or oral format.	
D	Special Education student supports: Identify the resources students should use and insert the headings for their research on the Cornell Notes form. Have instructional support staff read the articles to the students if necessary.	

SQUARED Planning Tool

S		
Q		
U		
A		
R		
E		
D		

Task Planning Templates

Task	Product or Performance: What will students do to demonstrate their understanding of the “unwrapped” priority standards?	DOK
1		
2		
3		
4		

Task	Product or Performance: What will students do to demonstrate their understanding of the “unwrapped” priority standards?	DOK
1		
2		
3		
4		



ACTIVITY

Designing Tasks Checklist

Designing Tasks Self-Check Form

Design Considerations	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4
Tasks allow students to develop understanding				
Tasks address the Essential Questions				
Tasks provide evidence of student learning				
Tasks focus on "unwrapped" Priority Standards				
Tasks incorporate nonfiction writing				
Tasks include an external audience				
Tasks can be modified for learner differences				
Tasks are authentic				



DISCUSSION

Authentic Performance Task Example

Engaging Scenario



Good news! Your parents have finally agreed to let you have that new cell phone. *But here's the catch:* You have to convince them that you've done your homework and found the cell phone package with the greatest number of “perks” for the least amount of cash. To do this, you must *analyze three cell phone packages* to determine the one that best meets your parents' requirements.

Be prepared to present your information *mathematically in a persuasive letter* that you will write and deliver to your parents. If you make a strong case, and back it up with data, you may soon be text-messaging your friends on your new phone. Good luck!



Synopsis of Math and Language Arts Performance Tasks

- ❖ **Task One:** Create a **Venn diagram** representing the features of three different cell phone packages.
- ❖ **Task Two:** Create a **comparison chart** showing the cost of each phone, cost of each package, number and type of minutes included, and perks offered by each cell phone company.

- ❖ **Task Three:** Write a **summary essay** comparing and contrasting the pros and cons of each of the three cell phone types.
- ❖ **Task Four:** Write a **persuasive letter** to your parents stating your choice of cell phone package with data to support the reasons for your choice.



DISCUSSION

Peer Tutoring and Feedback

In his research (outlined in *The Hidden Lives of Learners*),¹ Graham Nuthall put microphones on students each day and then analyzed what was happening for them in their classrooms. Among many other things, he discovered that 80 percent of the feedback that students received each day was from other students.

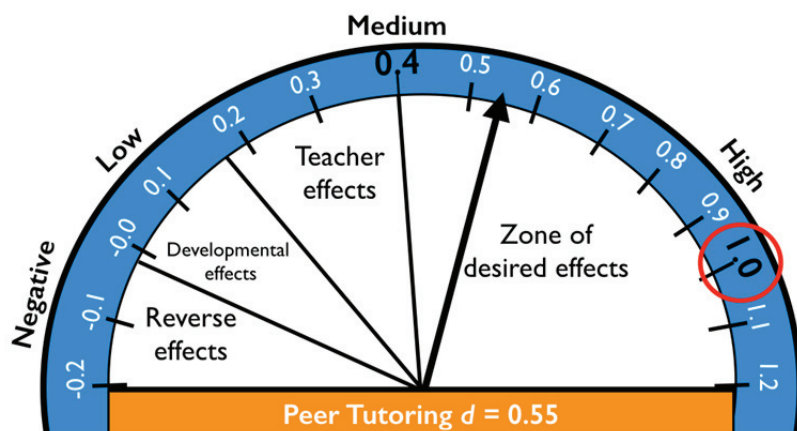
In discussion with students, he found out that students like getting feedback from each other.

The overall effect of the use of peers as co-teachers is quite powerful. It is an excellent method to teach students to become their own teachers. Peer tutoring has many academic and social benefits for both those tutoring and those being tutored. If the peer intervention is more student controlled, such as peers being involved in setting goals, monitoring performance, evaluating performance, and selecting rewards, the effects are greater than when the teacher controls the situation. ***When students become teachers of others, they learn as much as those they are teaching.***

What opportunities do students have to work together? What tools do you provide for them when they work together? When peers work together they can use tools such as rubrics and exemplars and other frameworks to assist them to work together effectively.

The instructional components of the peer tutoring model include:

(a) explicit teaching of students in how to be tutoring experts, (b) purposeful partner assignment, (c) careful preparation of tutoring materials, (d) highly structured tutoring procedures that include specific feedback for tutors to provide tutees, (e) expert role reversal, and (f) active teacher monitoring.





DISCUSSION

What is an Assessment Capable Learner?

In Visible Learning (2009), Hattie says, “The fundamental premise is that all students should be educated in ways that develop their capability to assess their own learning.”

Students who know about their learning and can plan their next learning steps with the teacher (or a peer).



Can your students do this? Are they encouraged and given the opportunities to do this?



How are you currently involving your students in the learning process?

The “Save One Student” Program – S.O.S

Most students’ ultimate failure is far from a one-time event. It is the accumulation of multiple losses of credit or assignments and the building up (for some) an insurmountable future hurdle.

The Save One Student program is designed to address students who have demonstrated an inability to complete assignments on time in the traditional classroom setting.



Durango High School-Save One Student-DRAFT



The Save One Student (S.O.S.) program is designed to address students who have demonstrated an inability to complete assignments on time in the traditional classroom setting. This is not intended for chronic disruptors, nor is it for students who are in need of extra help or a formal intervention in the content area.

Students are placed in this program by their content area teachers. Teachers will contact the parent and notify them that they have assigned S.O.S intervention. Teachers will need to fill out this S.O.S. form and send it to _____.

S.O.S is Tuesday–Friday during Break and SSR (9:21-10:00). Students report to their assigned S.O.S. classroom after being released from their 2nd period class no earlier than 9:19. At the end of SSR, students will USE THIS FORM as their pass to report to their 3rd period class no later than 10:05.

- Students receive their assignments from their regular teachers and are expected to complete the work.
- Upon completion of the work, student will get an EXIT signature from the teacher that assigned SOS.
- Students will bring the signed form to their S.O.S. class to be exited by the administrator.
- Failure to attend will result in disciplinary action (No Pass List, Activity Suspension)

Student Name _____ Special Program _____

Teacher _____ Subject _____

work to be completed before student is released from SOS program

Parent contact date _____ Method of contact _____

Teacher exit signature _____ Date _____

YOU HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED TO SOS. YOU MUST REPORT TO _____ FOR BREAK AND SSR TODAY AND EVERY DAY UNTIL YOUR WORK IS COMPLETE.

FAILURE TO ATTEND WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

PLEASE SHOW THIS PAPER TO YOUR 2ND PERIOD TEACHER TO BE RELEASED AT 9:19 AND REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO _____



REFLECTION

Think about the following questions and how you might answer them to shape your leadership practices and policies:

1. What are new ideas, research, and insights that you have gained?
2. What will be your greatest challenges in implementing improved leadership strategies with Common Core alignment?
3. What will be your greatest rewards in implementing improved leadership practices?