

CREATING POWERFUL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

The four criteria below can be useful in shaping classroom activities to more effectively promote the kinds of authentic intellectual engagement that leads to deep understanding. Each of these qualities may exist to a greater or lesser extent in the various tasks, lessons, and assignments we create for students. As such, each of the 4 criterion represents a continuum ranging from:

Having a weak presence & being only partial required by the task

Having a strong presence & being fully demanded by the task



Novel Application: Applying, organizing, interpreting, evaluating, or synthesizing prior knowledge to solve novel problems or form new judgments.

Meaningful Inquiry: Develop new understandings and insights that go beyond the obvious and extend one's current understanding.

Effective Communication: Expressing, representing, justifying, supporting, and communicating ones ideas, understandings, methods, and processes effectively using disciplinary tools, symbols & language.

Purposeful Reach: Producing discourse, products, and performances that have value beyond the classroom. Efforts have utilitarian, aesthetic, or personal meaning & connect learning to the larger world.

Note: These criteria are based in part on work by Fred Newmann (2001) on the nature of Authentic Intellectual Work.