Teaching + Assessing the Transferable Skills Across the Curriculum

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School Redesign in Action
From the Great Schools Partnership
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Outcomes

Define the Transferable Skills, along with their component parts
Outcomes

Review the steps that two Vermont teachers used when teaching and assessing the Transferable Skills
Outcomes

Review and apply steps and strategies for teaching and assessing the Transferable Skills
Agenda

Welcome and Review of the Agenda

Introduction to the Transferable Skills

Review of a Classroom Example

Applications to Practice

Questions, Closing & Feedback
Is a non-profit support organization based in Portland working nationally with schools, districts and state agencies, providing coaching, and developing tools.
GSP has served as the coordinator of the New England Secondary School Consortium since its inception in 2009
We Believe

In equitable, personalized, rigorous learning for all students leading to readiness for college, careers, and citizenship
We Believe

That schools must simultaneously attend to policy, practice, and community engagement.
Group Norms

- Respect Time
- Ask questions & seek to understand
- Listen well
- Allow others sufficient “air time”
- Attend to personal needs
- Foster good humor
THE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Informed Thinking
- Self Direction
- Collaboration
Pair/Share
The Transferable Skills

1. Review the performance indicators for the Transferable Skills.

2. Select a Transferrable Skill that you think is hard to teach or assess. What makes this skill challenging to teach? How did you learn or improve this skill?

3. Introduce yourself to a colleague at your table & discuss your experiences.
“Typical classroom activities convey either a passive and narrow view of science learning or an activity-oriented approach devoid of question-probing and only loosely related to conceptual learning goals…. As teachers try to cover the broad curriculum, they give insufficient attention to students’ understanding and instead focus on superficial recall-level questions.”

Schools Urged to Teach Life Skills for Success Alongside Academics

By Caralee Adams on November 26, 2014 11:04 AM
“Real mathematics is about inquiry, communication, connections, and visual ideas. We don’t need students to calculate quickly in math. We need students who can ask good questions, map out pathways, reason about complex solutions, set up models and communicate in different forms.”

- Boaler, Jo. “Memorizers are the Lowest Achievers and Other Common Core Math Surprises.” The Hechinger Report, May 7, 2015.
THE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

EDUCATION FOR LIFE AND WORK
Developing Transferable Knowledge and Skills in the 21st Century

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES
The skills our graduates need most:

- complex communication competencies
- non-routine problem solving
- verbal and quantitative literacy
- self-direction & collaboration
THE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Informed Thinking
- Self Direction
- Collaboration
When the Transferable Skills Shape Our Assessments:

Rich and authentic student tasks = Engagement

Explicit teaching of these skills along with content-area skills and knowledge = Equity
Steps for Teaching & Assessing

The Transferable Skills

- Define the stages/steps of teaching
- Model the skill/review models
- Give some tools
- Let kids practice/create
- Give feedback
- Make sure kids reflect
- Make sure that opportunities are ongoing so that kids can apply feedback
Creative and Practical Problem Solving in the ELA Classroom

Essex High School Pilot Project
Change We Can See:
Making the Invisible Visible
Change We See: Making the Invisible Visible

Task Overview

Sometimes, the problems that exist within communities can be highly visible, attracting attention and discussion. However, at other times, the problems within communities may be invisible – unnoticed by the majority, experienced by the few or the powerless. When we discuss literature, current events, and social issues, these discussions can help us perceive problems that may have been invisible before.

This project provides you the opportunity to tackle an “invisible” problem that impacts your life, school, or local community. After selecting a problem to study, you will create a product that can make this invisible problem visible, and propose a solution that could address this problem.
Change We See: Making the Invisible Visible

Big Idea

The first step to creative and practical problem solving is openly acknowledging, describing, and addressing the problem.

Focusing Questions:

- What is an intangible or invisible issue that impacts you, your social circle, or your broader community? Why is this problem invisible to most people?
- What is a viable way to expose it?
- What are some practical ways to address it or solve it?
Some Student-Friendly Learning Targets

I can…

- Expose an “invisible” problem;
  *(Performance Indicator A)*

- Develop a hypothesis about the problem I will investigate;
  *(Performance Indicator B)*

- Use my questions to guide my research;
  *(Performance Indicator B)*

- Collect enough data to create a text or other product to communicate my findings beyond my classroom.
  *(Performance Indicator B)*
ELA Task for Creative and Practical Problem Solving: 
Change We Can See: Making the Invisible Visible
From the Vermont Agency of Education (2015)
Student materials reorganized by Linda Cloutier-Namdar for pilot

Task Context/Rationale
Human beings are influenced by a variety of visible and invisible forces in their daily lives. When we discuss literature, current events, and other social issues, there are always invisible issues that remain unaddressed. This project seeks to provide students with the opportunity to tackle an invisible issue that impacts their lives and propose a solution to make the issue visible and resolvable.

Big Idea
When issues are not formally acknowledged and discussed, improvements can’t be made.

Essential Questions
What is an intangible or invisible issue that impacts you, your social circle or our broader community?
What is a viable way to expose and solve it?
Step 1 - Identifying an “Invisible” Issue

Learning Target

- I can identify an “invisible” issue/problem that I want to expose.

(Performance Indicator A)

Formative Tasks

1. Freewriting
2. Collaborative Talk
3. Class Discussion
Students explored their thinking, awareness of their community, and questions through freewriting.

Students had thirty minutes to write in response to these questions.

1. Works of literature can sometimes shine light on issues that are generally ignored or unseen. What issues do the books we’ve read/discussed illuminate?

2. Describe an issue or challenge that students in our school face which you are uniquely qualified to see and understand.

3. Describe an issue or challenge that people in our town face which you are uniquely qualified to see and understand.

4. Describe an issue or challenge involving the local environment or the natural world which you are uniquely qualified to see and understand.

5. Have you ever felt invisible, or have you ever felt that you were wrestling with a challenge that no one else could see or that no one would acknowledge? When, and why?
Step 2 - Generating Questions

Learning Target

- I can demonstrate my understanding of initial vs. probing questions (Performance Indicator B)
- I can write probing questions about an issue/problem to deepen my understanding of it (Performance Indicator B)

Formative Tasks

1. Class practice asking questions throughout the semester
2. Importance of Questions - presentation with Erica LeClair and Adam Murray
3. Let’s Research! - Wikipedia Game
4. Generating Initial and Probing Questions Task
5. Probing Questions Peer Conference
“How often I found where I should be going only by setting out for somewhere else.”

– R. Buckminster Fuller
Indra’s Net
One Thing is Not One Thing.

“Imagine a multidimensional spider’s web in the early morning covered with dew drops. And every dew drop contains the reflection of all the other dew drops. And, in each reflected dew drop, the reflections of all the other dew drops in that reflection. And so on, to infinity. That is the Buddhist conception of the universe in an image.”

– Alan Watts
### What’s in a Question?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Questions</th>
<th>Probing Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple questions of fact that consider the who, what, where, and when of the issue;</td>
<td>Deep, complex questions that consider the implications, effects, connections, or causes of the issue;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose: to help you develop a basic understanding of the issue you are researching.</td>
<td>Purpose: to help you think more deeply about the issue at hand;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Probing questions will help you build a finished project that is thorough, original and insightful.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Prove**

(verb) to explore or examine something.

(noun) a blunt-ended surgical instrument used for exploring a wound or part of the body.
“Going into this assignment I initially was focused on only the cause and effect of procrastination. I changed the direction in which I was going to approach my issue after we had a class activity in which we used Wikipedia to branch out from the simple issue and enter the complexity of it.”

- AR

As students probed using Wikipedia they generated a list of topics and ideas that evidenced the connectivity and complexity of their invisible issue.
Focusing Questions

What questions do I need to ask to gain a deeper understanding of my invisible issue?

Initial Questions

Probing Questions

Hypothesis

Creation
**ISSUE:** PERCEIVED INEQUITY OF FUNDING CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

**Initial Questions**

1. What equation does the high school use to calculate the funding amount for each club?

2. Why not create a maximum amount for all clubs then divide that up to the clubs that need them?

**Probing Questions**

1. Do school sports help society in the long term?

2. Is there a direct relationship between school clubs and sports to the number of incarcerated students later in life?
ISSUE: FOSTER CARE SERVICES

1. What is needed to provide support for adolescents to prevent them from entering the justice system?

2. What agencies or programs are available to support these young adults?

3. What do these kids require or what’s missing from support systems?

4. What illegal activities are kids participating in to get them involved in the justice system?

5. What therapeutic methods can programs or agencies utilize to support kids and prevent incarceration among troubled youth?

6. What transition programs are available to kids aging out of foster care?
Students were given opportunities to share ideas, providing feedback on the ideas of others, and receiving feedback on the research they were doing. A form which could serve as a guide for their conversations was provided in Google Classroom.
Step 3 - Identifying Research Tools + Sources

LEARNING TARGETS

- I can identify tools and procedures for collecting, managing, and analyzing information.
  
  **Performance Indicator B**

- I can design/use a data collection system and research plan.
  
  **Performance Indicator B**

Formative Tasks

1. Read the article, “Two Heroes, One Common Dream”

2. Identified research strategies used by the author: interviews, researching online, reading print sources, making observations etc.

3. Reviewed Library Databases/Resources

4. Determined a data collection system
LEARNING TARGETS

- I can use questions to guide my research.
  **Performance Indicator B**

- I can document my learning using the note taking template.
  **Performance Indicator B**

- I can summarize my learning, articulate challenges, and celebrate successes.
  **Performance Indicator E**

Formative Tasks

1. Research/Note taking Guides
2. Check ins (written and verbal)
3. Feedback #1, #2, #3 using Google Classroom
Google Classroom Note-Taking Documents

Students selected which note-taking guide to use based on source type:

Text Sources
Interviews
Observations
Surveys
Sample Note-Taking Guide for Text Sources

In the space below, fill in the following citation information for this source: author’s name; article title; title of magazine, journal or newspaper; date of publication; page numbers if applicable; name of database or website; date accessed. (*If you use a source like EasyBib to create a citation, be sure that the citation includes the information listed above.)

Source Evaluation Questions: Effects of polluting our communities

1. What kind of text is this?  
   An informative text; website created by Lake Champlain International.

2. Who wrote it?  

3. If the piece is an article from a publication, where was it published?  
   - On Website

4. If the source is a website, does it have authors or sponsorships listed? Is there advertising on the page? Is there a bibliography so that you can see the author’s sources?
   At the bottom of the page it has a list of the people and universities from which the information was gathered. There were not advertisements from other companies however the site had links on the side called “stay connected” through Facebook, Instagram, and other social media.
First Check-In Task

First Check-In
Due 10/21/15

The goal of this assignment is to take stock of what you have done so far. Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

**Essential Question:** What is the intangible or invisible issue you have chosen to research that impacts you, your social circle or our broader community?

**Summarize** in 2-3 sentences what you have learned up to this point.

**Identify a challenge and a victory** in your work thus far.
“At the beginning of this project, when my bias was really strong, I really stepped back and started from scratch. I then slowly developed my new, informed opinions as I conducted research and compared data. I have many other questions worth researching…”

- (AR)
“Cell Phone usage in schools is a hot button issue, and as such I had to cipher through a lot of opinionated articles, to find the solid facts and their interconnections... For the overall process, I learned the most prioritizing and identifying trends, patterns and relationships on the issue.”

- DS
“Up until 11th grade I studied in Ontario, Canada and the methods we used to research were very specific and narrow. Throughout this research assignment not only did I learn more about my topic, but I also learned how to effectively research.”

- AR
“I could have probably had a bigger question than the one I used, to receive better, and more, content.”

- BC
LEARNING TARGETS

- I can consider what I have learned to generate a hypothesis.
  **Performance Indicator D**

- I can consider how I will apply what I have learned to make my issue visible.
  **Performance Indicator D**

Formative Tasks

1. Evaluated a range of professional and student models
2. Engaged in sketching and brainstorming
“Art does not solve problems, but makes us aware of their existence. It opens our eyes to see and our brain to imagine.”

- Magdalena Abakanowicz
Students viewed and discussed a wide range of examples of invisible issues being made visible by professional and citizen artists to get them thinking!

Step 6 - Creating Final Products

LEARNING TARGETS

- I can create a product that makes my invisible issue visible.
  **Performance Indicator**

- I can produce an Artist’s Statement to communicate my process and to describe how my research informed my end product.
  **Performance Indicator**

- I can present my end product and share my hypothesis.
  **Performance Indicator**

Summative Tasks:

1. Creating a Product to Make the Invisible Visible
2. Formal Artist Reflection
3. Formal Presentation
Issue - Social Implications of Cell Phones
Your artist’s statement must include these items:

- A description of the issue that you have studied
- A description of your problem-solving process
- An explanation of how your data analysis led to your proposed solution
- A discussion of the different solutions that you considered

“Picking the issue that I did for this project meant a lot to me due to the fact that I am constantly hearing … tech is an “easy way out of traditional book learning.”

From there I began feasting away at information…
I really appreciated this project because it gave me more knowledge than I really planned on learning.”

- MG
Issue - Inequities in Funding Co-Curriculars
Issue - Garbage Dumping at Indian Brook
Tough Decisions Ahead:

Do I look cool with my friends?

Is this decision going to benefit me?

How will this affect my future?
Issue - Response to the Word ‘Obesity’
"After seeing the project examples in class I immediately knew that I wanted to do a DNA strand showing that we are all made up of the same simple molecules, and we can’t change that.”

- ML
Issue - Effects of Racial Profiling on Muslims

From ML’s poem, 
End Disrespect

“It could be me or it could be you.

Think before you speak -

Just see what that could do…”
**Step 7 - Evaluating Student Work**

Students were evaluated on the Artist’s Statement, the product created, the presentation and a self-reflection using the Transferable Skills Scoring Criteria for Creative and Practical Problem Solving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE INDICATOR</th>
<th>BEGINNING</th>
<th>DEVELOPING</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>EXPANDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Observe and evaluate situations in order to define problems.</td>
<td>I can • Make observations about a problem situation.</td>
<td>I can • Identify variables that influence a problem situation.</td>
<td>I can • Articulate the problem and identify constraints, based on observations and collect related information from multiple sources.</td>
<td>I can • Analyze situations to define complex problems and explain their relevance within the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Frame questions, make predictions, and design data collection and analysis strategies.</td>
<td>I can • Ask questions about a situation or phenomenon.</td>
<td>I can • Take information into consideration when making predictions.</td>
<td>I can • Identify tools and design procedures needed for collecting, managing, and analyzing information.</td>
<td>I can • Identify my data collection strategy by analyzing strengths and weaknesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Identify patterns, trends, and relationships that apply to solutions.</td>
<td>I can • Determine whether my data are sufficient or if I need to gather more data.</td>
<td>I can • Identify the most important or relevant data I have gathered.</td>
<td>I can • Explain patterns and/or trends (including outliers) in the data and the</td>
<td>I can • Prioritize the part of the problem and relationship.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 8 - Reflecting + Giving Feedback

**LEARNING TARGETS**

- I can collaborate with my peers to deepen my understanding of the issue I’m researching.  
  **Performance Indicator B**

- I can practice presenting my end product and give and receive feedback from my peers.  
  **ELA Indicator**

- I can share my learning with members of my school community.  
  **ELA Indicators**

**Formative Tasks**

1. Presentation Peer Conference
2. Reflecting and Giving Feedback
Peer Feedback

“Making the Invisible Visible” Presentations

Audience Member: ___________________ Presenter: ___________________

Remember: The more specific you can be, the more valuable the feedback.
Weak feedback: I liked it.
Strong feedback: When you explained the reason you chose your topic, it helped me to ...

Two things I learned or thought about differently:

The most creative thing about it was, in my opinion...

One thing I appreciated:
Project Reflections

“This assignment has done much more for me than helped me with my grade, but it has also changed the way I look at things and hopefully will continue to help me in the future.”

- AR
“In all the research papers and projects I have done, I have never written down questions. However, writing down the questions not only helped me to ask more questions, but to dig deeper in my research.”

- MB
“... it made me realize that young adults are not as ready to make these decisions as much as I thought they would be. Although most of them have grown up with educated parents who have already been at that stage in their life, constantly telling them what’s wrong and what’s right, it is still not enough to encourage young adults to make the right decision.”

- MG
Using the skill you chose earlier, think about where and how you could teach this in your class.

Use the planner and the scoring criteria to help you create opportunities for learning, practice & feedback in your classroom.

Review resources and sample activities.

Discuss and add other resources and activities to the planner that can teach this skill.
Choose the Planner for the skill you selected;
Add your information to the contributor's table;
One person in each group types in the document;
Don’t delete what others have written;
Use comments to communicate with others around the room to find each other, to ask questions, to share thoughts and connections.
How Can You Get Involved?

We are searching for student work to use in the scoring calibration system.

Any high school teacher who will have students complete a task that is aligned with any of the task models can submit student work samples.
How Can You Get Involved?

If you are interested in submitting student work, sign up using the link on this page:

www.greatschoolspartnership.org/transferableskills

On this page, you will also find:

• resources for teaching and assessing the Transferable Skills

• information about recognition for your work should you choose to participate
Questions?
THANK YOU

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