

Project Management



Self-Directed Learning Spaces

Organizing for Multi-Tasking

The good news . . . this is not a cookie cutter project lock stepping students through activities! Organizing a positive approach and creative classroom atmosphere modeled after the writer's multi-tasking workshop spaces will be the best predictor of success. In order to support students' taking responsibility and pacing the work for their own creative expression, self-directed learning spaces are needed. The ***I-imagine*** Project was designed as a student scrapbooking journey guided by their teachers as a creative process for awakening the dreamer and believer in each student that their life matters, culminating in a celebration vision video. While some teachers may be tempted to simply assign the making of the video as on-your-own activities, the pre-writing and wondering activities are intentionally designed to be a self-directed, reflective journey honoring the importance of identifying one's own passion and light.

Time symbolizes what is valued in our life. Make time to unfold and celebrate the uniqueness of each human spirit during this scrapbooking journey in their own way. This multi-tasking workshop approach will also deepen and strengthen the rich experiences needed for students to awaken a belief in their personal power to create a life that matters.

Organize Learning Guilds

1. Take inventory. Make a list of the specific skills needed - then do a quick survey or sign up of classmates who feel competent to help and/or teach others the hardware and software skills. See Reference Handout XXX for example.
2. If essential skills are missing, post sign up sheets advertising for students who would be willing to take on the learning curve for their community **before** launching the project.
3. Cluster the designated expertise into Learning Guilds as in medieval times.
4. Ensure that everyone has a skill that will serve their learning community.

HAVE GUILDS DESIGN A SYMBOL OR COLORED BADGE TO WEAR THAT WOULD VISUALLY REPRESENT THEIR EXPERTISE.

Tapping Into Expertise

Use Guild members to organize mini-lessons, video tutorials, and/or written recipe cards for helping others with learning technical skills of their Guild.

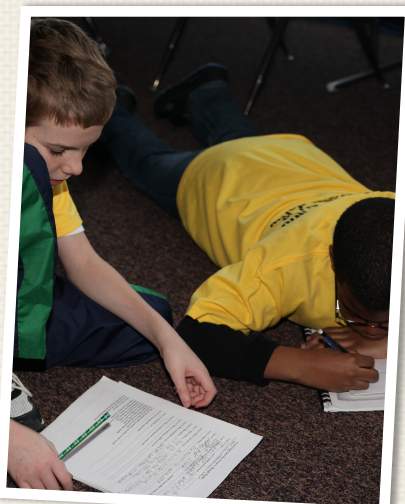
Earning Points / Awards

As an incentive for Guild members to teach each other their specialized skills, create processes that acknowledge or celebrate visible leadership in successfully transferring their expertise to others including adults.



LEARNING GUILDS

Sharing expertise creates positive learning community, grows a sense of pride when skills and leadership needed by the groups are distributed, and thankfully becomes a key survival strategy for operating multitask classrooms.



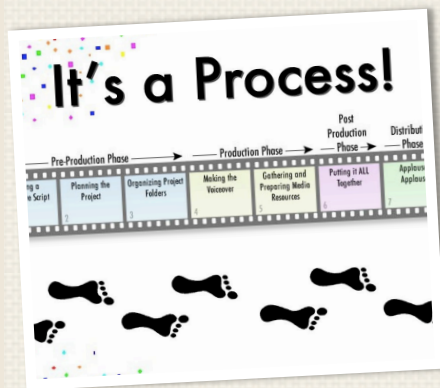
LEARNING PARTNERS

Organize groups of 2-3 students as learning partners who are the first “go-to classmates” for questions, ideas and feedback. You can create groups based on jigsawing learning guilds, learning styles / work styles, or positive relationships. Be sure to provide intermittent reflection time for what is working and what needs to work better with their partnerships.



THREE BEFORE ME!

Expect students to rehearse problem-solving any question at least three (3) different ways BEFORE calling on the teacher. They need to give it a try first! When you reach that raised hand, gently ask “what have you tried so far?” If nothing has been tried, ask “what do you think you could have tried?” Then either find a classmate that might help or work through one of their ideas before rescuing them.

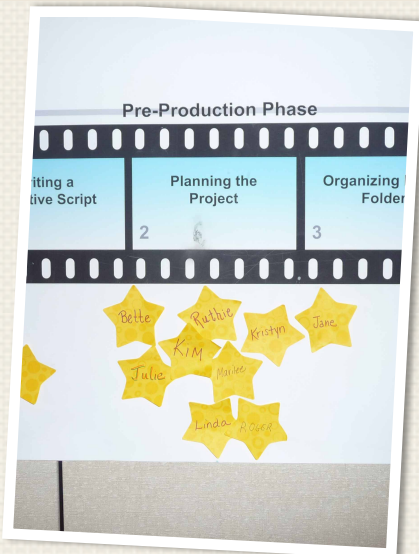


SEVEN PROCESS STEPS

Using the seven (7) steps as a process map structures expectations for the thinking and work needed for each step be completed with maximum quality before moving on. Jumping into using the technology tools too early will distract and divert attention from worthy content FIRST!

Use Seven Steps for Success

1. Each step contains tasks that need to be done well before moving onto the next one. Each process builds success for the next tasks that enables all students to be “in the zone” of excellence by the time they finish all the steps.
2. Creating sign-off protocols and rituals for each step before students move into the next step ensures higher quality for the end product. You have the opportunity to catch someone off the mark and then course correct in time to shore up their projects.



POST A VISUAL PACING MAP

Post the seven steps PLUS any other sub-steps or tasks on the classroom wall. Ask each student to visually post a sticky note with their name on it by the step they are working on right now. If more than one class - use different colors for each class. At a glance the teacher can “see” how everyone is progressing or not!

MULTI-TASKING WITH BENCHMARKING SUPPORTS DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION - HONORS OUR DIFFERENCES IN UNFOLDING CREATIVITY AND PRODUCTIVITY.

3. Setting benchmarks (e.g. by end of the week - all storyboards need to be completed) paces the project time for all learning styles. It is not a deadline with stern consequences but a generic pacing that allows authors to self-manage their time without being in a total free fall like “see you in two weeks - go forth and good luck.”
4. Benchmarks say do it your way - you are on your own. But I keep my eye on you in case you need encouragement, support or heads up - make a plan



GRAFFITI WALLS

Post empty flip chart “parking lots” around the classroom. Make a HELP ME space that students can take responsibility to ask questions or post needs for specific images or sounds - maybe help with scanning! Organize a place to thank classmates that helped or inspire! Plan a place for feelings about how students experience their journey. Make a sad/sorry and glad/proud space for reflections. Use post-it notes or markers!

Mirror Mirror on the Wall

Reflection is the act of looking into (at) yourself and your learning experiences, like a mirror of seeing and knowing yourself beyond the external doing-ness. So, while we learn by 'doing'. We actually learn more by “metacognition” - that is the conscious thinking about what we did, how we did it, what was the experience like, or can we do it differently the next time, etc.

The student scrapbooking tasks are designed to be hands-on, experiential learning. However, what really converts doing into learning is **reflection** ~ thus teachers are encouraged to place significant attention, time and value into unpacking students' “Wondering” exercises.

**UNLESS REFLECTION IS
DELIBERATE AND CONSCIOUS,
THERE CAN BE NO LEARNING.**

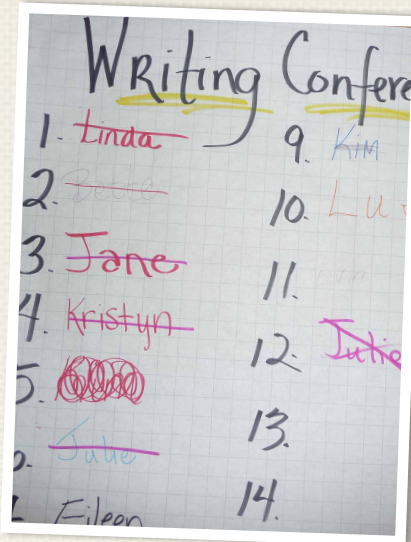
Vary the debriefing and method of sharing. Be sure to use processes like go-arounds so everyone, not just the volunteers, have air time. But respect anyone not prepared to share YET!

1. Gather the **whole class** in a circle. Encourage community and safety while learning from each other.
2. **Small groups** - make more talking space and intimacy while taking less class time.
3. **Learning partners** - turn to table mates or learning partners to say out loud the big ideas or aha's from their journal “wondering.”
4. Use the graffiti walls as one way to collect **individual** thinking, feelings and big ideas that are public to the group.



MINI-LESSONS

Learning “just-in-time” teaches skills as needed with mini-lessons and mini-sized groups. Have sign-up sheets for who wants or are ready to learn specific skills like making voice-overs with audacity. Or saving files. You can operate more than one mini-lesson at a time IF you have prepared either learning guilds, trained parents or older students to lead - not just the teacher! Not the whole class!



CONFERENCE SIGN-UPS

Letting student authors choose the time that they are ready for critical friend feedback is another strategy for self-directed learning that works! Have students sign-up - get the rest of the class focused on their tasks for the day and then begin one-to-one interactions. See *Getting READY for Inventing* for more details and conferencing strategies.



REFLECTIONS

The *I-imagine* scrapbook offers frequent, introspective “wondering” questions to promote insight and aha's into knowing what you know. It is essential that teachers intermittently make time for sharing within learning partners, small or whole class groups. Sharing with a larger community also builds positive relationships that will reap a multitude of benefits through and beyond the school year as well.