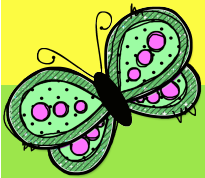
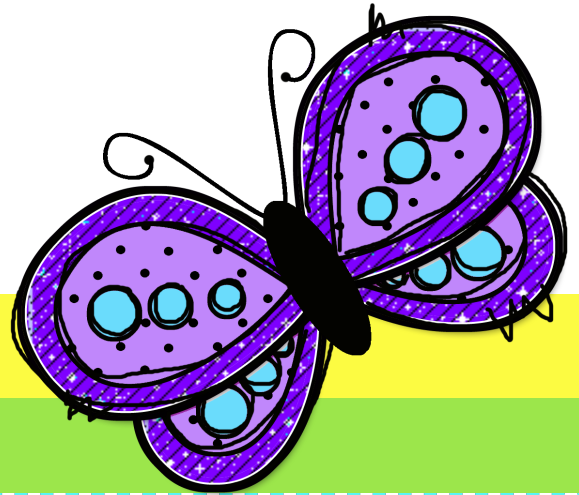


North Florida, Sunshine & South Carolina Regions

Imagine¹⁰
the power of 10



Assignments Matter in Rigorous Instruction

“Not all tasks are created equal, and different tasks will provoke different levels and kinds of student thinking” – Stein, Smith, Henningsen, & Silver, 2000

As Wayne Dyer has famously stated, “our intention creates our reality”. An unintentional classroom is one in which opportunities are lost because too little thought is given to what is most important. Rigorous *planning* helps teachers to think deeply about learning opportunities and create an intentional classroom. Imagine teachers develop and utilize rigorous research-based lessons by unpacking the standards and collaborative rigorous planning. Steps to assignment planning include:

- Identify content, focus standards and skills
 - Ask yourself... What do you want students to learn?
- Determine the product
 - Ask yourself... What do you want students to turn in or perform as evidence of learning?
- Establish Rigor
 - Ask yourself... what rigorous demands do you want to embed in the assignment and what qualities to expect to see?
- Write a Prompt
 - This is the statement that asks students to do something.
- Write a rubric
 - Ask yourself... what do you expect to see in a product for a passing grade?
- Do your assignment
 - Check your assignment. Revise if needed.
- Make an instructional plan
 - Ask yourself... what resources and strategies will you use to guide students through the assignment?

(Dougherty,2012)



The must-have features of an assignment are the following:

- **Prompt** that sets up a charge to do something
- **Product** or performance that demonstrates progress in learning
- **Rubric** that describes how well students need to demonstrate progress

Big FOUR



Content Planning

Establish control over the pace and effort involved in the student learning process.



Classroom Management

Engage students in clear and relevant goals that challenge critical thinking.



Rigorous Assignments

Instruction

Equip assignments with a level of difficulty by complicating the task and asking students to manage a number of elements.

Assessment






Evaluate and adjust expectations in a scaffolded way to challenge students from easier to harder or lower to higher levels of performance.

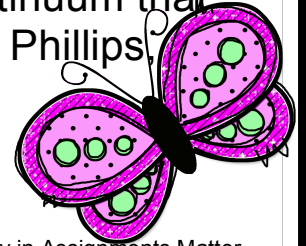
HELP STUDENTS **GROW**

- **G:** Gauge where your students are.
- **R:** Recognize their strengths and weaknesses.
- **O:** One step at a time, provide instruction to help them grow.
- **W:** Watch them rise to higher levels.



Five Design Principles for creating assignments:







-  **Thoughtful engagement.** Students engage in academic thinking, practices and products appropriate to the discipline.
-  **Literacy as common practice.** Students engage frequently in reading, writing, listening, and speaking and language use.
-  **Value.** Units and courses are worth doing because they are connected to standards and long-term goals, such as college readiness or next-level coursework.
-  **Manageability.** Units and courses are manageable in time and effort for both teachers and students.
-  **Pressure gently applied.** A course is designed as a continuum that moves students through increasingly rigorous work. (Vicki Phillips, director of education at the Gates Foundation, coined the phrase “pressure gently applied” to describe how educators and systems should persist in delivering high-quality curriculum.



Eleanor Dougherty in *Assignments Matter*

Keep these principles in mind while you plan units and coursework, as each principle informs your choices in creating meaningful work for students.

Some planning Don'tsand Do's

-  **Don't talk too much while you instruct.** That is, plan your instruction to limit teacher talk and to allow student to do the work. This recommendation doesn't mean a lecture now and then isn't a good experience, particularly if it involves note taking. However, too often teachers do the bulk of the talking and in the process give away answers or limit students' abilities to explore ideas and practice skills. (Billings & Roberts, 2012)
-  **Don't stray from your plan.** If you engage students in instructional strategies or program that don't support the assignment, they get lost and lose momentum (Marzano, 2003)
-  **Don't be too repetitive.** Vary your instructional events from assignment to assignment; this keeps the classroom experience more interesting and motivating. (Danielson, 1996)
-  **Do give students multiple opportunities to learn content and skills.** That may mean repeating a skill set in an assignment but with different content or approach. (Marzano, 2003)
-  **Do let your students make mistakes.** The first way we learn is through trial and error. As well, design a grading system that allows for reteaching and relearning. When you build in trial and error instruction, you will be rewarded when students finally say, “I get it!” (Stiggins et al., 2006)
-  **Do show your enthusiasm for learning, even when it's a struggle.** Your enjoyment of learning and your enthusiasm will transfer to your students. (Dougherty, 2012)

