Work that Engages Students

When Work Can Not be Required or Graded

- San Marino High School
- Social studies teacher
- Keynote speaker
- Conference presenter
- Blogger
- Podcast host
- Flipped Learning Global Initiative Leader

Five Lessons that I've Learned so Far

LESSON #1: I'm having some success when I call upon my students to produce work that:

1. Relates to the subject matter
2. Allows students meaningful choice
3. Is designed to be shared on the internet
4. Will be shared on the internet provided that it meets my high hopes and expectations
5. Can be reflected upon and revised multiple times

LESSON #2: My [Token Economy Spreadsheet](#) serves as a powerful

motivating tool

Lesson #3: My <u>Titans Got Talent</u> FB page serves as a powerful motivating tool.

Lesson #4: My offer to write <u>letters of recommendation</u> in which I describe student work serves as a powerful motivating tool

Lesson #5: My <u>reinvisioned office hours</u> serves as a powerful motivating tool

Work That Engages Students

- Civic Action Projects
- Knock Off Videos
- Podcasts
- Historical Fiction Letters
- Fictional Diary Entries
- Textbook Motivated Travel Blog
- Explorations into America's Past
- The Student Produced Kahoot

- The Historical Figure Twitter Parody Account
- Museum Wall Exhibit Pitch
- Computer Games

Civic Action Projects

- <u>Letter</u>, Email or Videogram (to a Government Official)
- <u>Public Service Announcement</u>
- <u>Infographic</u>, Petition, Survey, Interview
- Editorial Blog Post
- Social Media Hashtag Campaign

<u>50 Activities For Students Wanting to Engage in a CAP</u> (Medium)
<u>Civic Action Projects for the Science Class</u> (KQED)
<u>Youth Media Challenge Captures Stepping Up Stories</u> (KQED)

Knock Off Videos

- [Course Hero](#)
- [Sound Smart](#)
- [Adam Norris](#), [Tom Richey](#), Carey LaManna, Kelsey Falkowski
- [TED-Ed Lesson](#)
- [Whiteboard Animation](#)
- [Powtoon Video](#)
- [TED-Talk](#)

Podcasts

- [Titan Talk Interview](#)
- [NPR's Student Produced Podcast Challenge](#)

[8 Student-Made Podcasts That Made Us Smile](#) (NPR)
[Student Produced Podcasts](#) (KQED)
[Teaching Students How to Produce Their Own Podcasts](#) (NYT)

Alternative Writing Assignments

- Mini Research Paper (Mini BRIA; aka Explorations into America's Past
- Historical Fiction Letter
- Fictional Diary Entry
- The Student Produced Kahoot
- The Historical Figure Twitter Parody Account
- Local History Blog Post
- Textbook Motivated Travel Blog
- Museum Wall Exhibit Pitch

Not the Usual Suspects - Part I) and Not the Usual Suspect - Part II

Games

- ICivics

Question #1: Peter. Are you saying that if a student busted their ****'s and produced quality work, based on real and measurable standards, yet did not live up to your "standards, hopes, and expectations" you won't share or publicize their work?

Answer to Question #1: Great question. Will have to think more about how best to answer. In the meantime, just this. One of my standards, hopes, and expectations is "solid effort"" and given solid effort I would surely share.

Question #2: Does this mean that you have entirely stopped giving any form of direct instruction.

Answer to Question #2: No. That's not correct. I'm still giving direct instruction. This, every other day for up to an hour using Google Meet with every meeting designed exclusively for the purpose of teaching the students how to answer this year's APUSH Exam Free Response Question. Sure, I try to make in interactive and engaging, but for the most part, I'm doing the talking.

Question #3: To what extent have your students taken to the Google Hangout meetings.

Answer to Question #3: A very healthy percentage of my students are showing up for class. They appear to find value in the meets, though I have no solid evidence in support of this claim. Just reading tea leaves and wondering if off screen, behind my back, the students are putting forth a fair share of evidence that suggests my claim is way off base.

Question #4: (Aside from what you've mentioned in your slideshow) I also think that there is more need for "connecting" with students at this point (and less need for assessing and grading). in this regard, there has been much written on Edutopia recently. [Here's one.](#) My takeaway - that we have to lean towards EOL (evidence of learning and not "assessments") [And here's another](#). My takeaway - lower expectations, increase experience.

Answer to Question #4: Thank you. This is a great point you've made. Also thank you for the links. I will read first first chance I get. Much appreciate.

Question #5: Any great concerns?

Answer to Question #5: Yes. I keep wondering if the attendance and participation that I am getting is due to my "token economy." So maybe it's not the work. In any event, if it is the Token Economy, then they are like me . . . for as a high school football player, I remember winning being important, but I also remember how hard I would work to have the coach give me a sticker for my helmet after a good week of practice or a game well played. The coaches "token economy" sure motivated me to produce!

Question #6: Have you checked out [Flippity Badge Tracker](#)? It should work well with your Token Economy

Answer to Question #6: No I have not, but I will check it out first chance I get.

Question #7: Any other great concerns?

Answer to Question #7: Yes. I keep wondering as I move into spring break if it was just the newness of it all that caused my students to step up as they have.

In other words, will my students bail in droves after spring break saying "we checked out what you had to offer, suffered through it the first two weeks, but now, since we know clearly that none of this is required, bye."

Question #8: Peter. I agree with you that this is the perfect time to innovate, and I really like your ideas for student generated projects/work. My big concern is that I do not want to sacrifice all of our advance of learning the curriculum and replace it with student self-designed assignments. (In other words) I see these projects as valuable, but not a be-all to end all. I guess my question is - "why can't we do both?" Follow the curriculum AND student driven project work?

Question #8:
Steve. I totally agree with you. In this time, I think we should try to do both. Certainly, I'm not one to call for a complete abandonement of standards and/or prescribed curriculum.

Question #9: I'm wondering. You're not calling for a school policy requiring teachers to put this kind of work before students are you. If so, my position on that issue is as follows: If a teacher wants to chart new waters, in addition to adhering to the prescribed curruclum, I say go ahead, knock yourself out. But a oolicy prescription for all . . . that in my mind would that lead to mass confusion, ignore learning goals and standards, and ultimately break down learning, not advance it.

Question #9:
I agree

Question #10: Do you have any articles suggesting that work which provides student with voice and choice, is produced with the goal of being shared on the internet and/or with a real-world audience, and that seeks to meet high standards indeed engages students.

Question #10:
Yes. This one for sure. [Designing Engaging Assignments: Three tips for coming up with work that sparks real engagement in your students](). (by Beth Pandolpho and appearing in Edutopia in March 20178)