

# The Six A's of Designing Successful Projects

## Authenticity

Projects use a real world context (e.g., community and workplace problems) and address issues that matter to the students

## Academic Rigor

Projects address key learning standards identified by the school or district and helps students develop habits of mind and work associated with academic and professional disciplines.

## Applied Learning

Projects engage students in solving semi-structured problems calling for competencies expected in high-performance work organizations (e.g., teamwork, problem-solving, communication, etc.)

## Active Exploration

Projects extend beyond the classroom and connect to work internships, field-based investigations, and community explorations.

## Adult Connections

Projects connect students with adult mentors and coaches from the wider community.

## Assessment Practices

Projects involve students in regular exhibitions and assessments of their work in light of personal, school and real-world standards of performance.

Visit the High Tech High website at [www.hightechhigh.org](http://www.hightechhigh.org) for access to:



- Videos
- Project write-ups
- Student and teacher digital portfolios
- "Un-Boxed" publications and PBL articles

The 6 A's were created by Adria Steinberg © 1996 Jobs for the Future



## The Six A's of Designing Projects

<b>Authenticity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the project emanate from a problem that has meaning to the student?</li> <li>Is it a problem or question that might actually be tackled by an adult at work or in the community?</li> <li>Do students create or produce something that has personal and/or social value, beyond the school setting?</li> </ul>
<b>Academic Rigor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the project lead students to acquire and apply knowledge central to one or more discipline or content areas?</li> <li>Does it challenge students to use methods of inquiry central to one or more disciplines (e.g., to think like a scientist)?</li> <li>Do students develop higher order thinking skills and habits of mind? (e.g., searching for evidence, taking different perspectives)?</li> </ul>
<b>Applied Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the learning take place in the context of a semi-structured problem, grounded in life and work in the world beyond school?</li> <li>Does the project lead students to acquire and use competencies expected in high performance work organizations (e.g., teamwork, appropriate use of technology, problem solving and communication)?</li> <li>Does the work require students to develop organizational and self-management skills?</li> </ul>
<b>Active Exploration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do students spend significant amounts of time doing field-based work?</li> <li>Does the project require students to engage in real investigations, using a variety of methods, media, and sources?</li> <li>Are students expected to communicate what they are learning through presentation and/or performance?</li> </ul>
<b>Adult Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do students meet and observe adults with relevant expertise and experience?</li> <li>Do students have an opportunity to work closely with at least one adult?</li> <li>Do adults collaborate on the design and assessment of student work?</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do students reflect regularly on their learning using clear project criteria that they have helped to set?</li> <li>Do adults from outside the classroom help students develop a sense of real world standards for this type of work?</li> <li>Will there be opportunities for regular assessment of student work through a range of methods?</li> </ul>

From Adria Steinberg *Real Learning, Real Work*, Routledge © 1998

