

## **The Six A's of Designing Projects**

Adria Steinberg, Real Learning, Real Work (1997)

### **Authenticity**

- Does the project emanate from a problem that has meaning to the student?
- Is it a problem or question that might actually be tackled by an adult at work or in the community?
- Do students create or produce something that has personal and/or social value, beyond the school setting?

### **Academic Rigor**

- Does the project lead students to acquire and apply knowledge central to one or more discipline or content areas?
- Does it challenge students to use methods of inquiry central to one or more disciplines (e.g., to think like a scientist)?
- Do students develop higher order thinking skills and habits of mind? (e.g., searching for evidence, taking different perspectives)?

### **Applied Learning**

- Does the learning take place in the context of a semi-structured problem, grounded in life and work in the world beyond school?
- 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)?
- Does the work require students to develop organizational and self-management skills?

### **Active Exploration**

- Do students spend significant amounts of time doing field-based work?
- Does the project require students to engage in real investigations, using a variety of methods, media, and sources?
- Are students expected to communicate what they are learning through presentation and/or performance?

### **Adult Relationships**

- Do students meet and observe adults with relevant expertise and experience?
- Do students have an opportunity to work closely with at least one adult?
- Do adults collaborate on the design and assessment of student work?

### **Assessment**

- Do students reflect regularly on their learning using clear project criteria that they have helped to set?
- Do adults from outside the classroom help students develop a sense of real world standards for this type of work?
- Will there be opportunities for regular assessment of student work through a range of methods, including exhibitions?