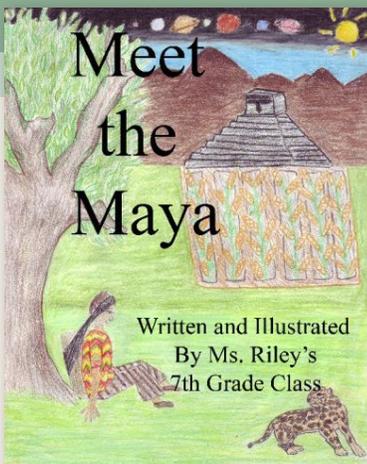


## The Mayan Community Project Sample



The Mayan Community Project was developed by Heather Lovell, a former seventh-grade teacher at [High Tech Middle](#). We use the Mayan project as a sample for how to use the MyWays tools in [Exercise Three: Learning Design](#) and [Exercise Four: Design Assessment](#). The project provides a demonstration for how you can utilize the MyWays concepts to create, improve, and evaluate learning design aimed at activating the broader, deeper competencies, agency and whole learning principles. The Mayan project is an inspiring example of whole learning and we hope you enjoy it as much as we have!

**After reading through the Mayan Community Project description below, gather your team to analyze the project with the examples that follow.**

### ◆ How to Use the Mayan Community Project

In this sample, you will find a short overview of the Mayan Community Project and worked examples that analyze the project using four MyWays tools:

- **Competency Correlation Worksheet:** This worked example examines how the Mayan project addresses competencies across the MyWays Student Success Framework.
- **Junior Version Characteristics Worksheet:** This example demonstrates the ways in which the Mayan project scales down the activity to support seventh graders' learning without losing its authenticity and wholeness.
- **Whole Learning Analysis Worksheet:** With this example, we examine how the Mayan project addresses the seven principles of whole learning to create a broad and deep learning experience, not just an active and interesting project.
- **Assessment Strategy Analysis Worksheet:** This example analyzes the multi-layered assessment that is integrated into the learning experience of the Mayan project.

Make sure to read through the full overviews of [Exercise Three](#) and [Four](#) to dig deep into the concepts behind these tools.

## Summary of the Mayan Community Project

**Description:** After doing extensive individual and group research on current and ancient aspects of Mayan culture, students will summarize information from their research to write and illustrate a children's book, A-Z: What We Learned about Mayan Culture. Each student will be responsible for creating his/her own page with illustrations to contribute to the class book. The book will be bilingual and each student will have a chance to translate parts of their work into Spanish with help from the Spanish teacher. As a class, students will produce, promote, publish, and sell the book, operating as a business with committees and job positions. All proceeds from book sales will go to sending impoverished children to school for a year in the Mayan towns near Lake Atitlan in the highlands of Guatemala.

- **Essential questions:** Why is it important to learn about the Mayan civilization today? How are books published and marketed? What is life currently like for people of Mayan descent?
- **Learning goals include:** Knowledge of Mayan culture, the reality of poverty in Central America, skills in writing and editing for publication, actual experience of job roles in the publishing process, business planning, marketing and sales, and the empowerment of “how to make a difference in a child's life.”
- **Process is in-depth and over time:** 12-week project, with approximately two hours class time/day, group and individual research, two to three revisions of book pages, student choice of research topics & job roles.
- **Authentic, culminating experiences and assessments:** Peer editors wielding the “Changes Needed” or “Approved” stamps, “Book Signing” (exhibition), and book selling activities in and with the local community.

## Project Product and Deliverables

- Research Notes
- Group PowerPoint presentations, study guides, and quiz questions
- Persuasive cover letter and committee application based on one of the following publishing roles:
  - Senior Translators
  - Senior Editors
  - Public Relations
  - Publishing/Graphic Design
  - Communications
  - Web Design
  - Fundraising/Sales
- Individual: One book page with illustrations
- Whole Class: Completed book A-Z: What We Learned about Mayan Culture. (View the [finished book here!](#))
- In-Class Essay on Colibri
- Student-created website for marketing book
- Charitable contribution: Money generated from book sales will be donated to sending impoverished children to school for a year in the Mayan towns near Lake Atitlan in the highlands of Guatemala

## ◆ Learning Goals

### Students will know:

- Comprehensive information about Mayan culture, including: class structures, family life, warfare, religious beliefs and practices, artistic and oral traditions, architecture, locations, climates, and Spanish influences.
- How to use Photoshop to manipulate images and create artwork
- How to track expenses and profits using Excel spreadsheets
- What a business plan is

### Students will understand:

- How the legacy of the Mayan culture influences and affects Central American society today
- The reality of poverty in Central America and how to make a difference in an impoverished child's life
- The importance of effective business planning and marketing, and its influence on the success of a product
- The importance of fulfilling individual and group responsibilities within a "company"
- How authors use the writing process to improve their work for publication

### Students will be able to:

- Read a variety of non-fiction texts and analyze maps, graphs, and images related to the topic
- Create informative PowerPoints and useful study guides for their peers
- Successfully complete the quiz to demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of the topic
- Synthesize and summarize information into a written and illustrated page for a children's book
- Revise and edit writing for publication
- Write a persuasive cover letter and complete an application for a job position
- Discuss and reflect on the effectiveness of their business and marketing strategies.
- Participate in a Publication Party to showcase their knowledge of Mayan culture and their business skills they developed during the project
- Deliver effective oral presentations

## ◆ Required Materials and/or Tools

- Presentation Software (such as PowerPoint)
- Scanner
- Art Supplies
- Tracing Lamp/Overhead; tracing paper

- Binders for each Committee
- “Mailboxes” for Committee correspondence
- Daily Blog (Blogger)
- Publication websites: Students will need an on-demand Publication method. Some options are:
  - <http://www.lulu.com>
  - <http://www.selfpublishing.com/>
  - <https://www.createspace.com/>
  - <http://www.dogearpublishing.net/>: this site compares itself other self-publishing sites; it is a great place to help decide what your needs are so you can decide which site is best for you.

## ◆ Timeline

This project timeline is based on approximately two hours of class time/day.

- Week 1**
  - Introduction to project
  - Mayan calendar lesson and Trek Through Time PowerPoint
  - Break into focus research groups
- Week 2**
  - Research time
  - Learn Presentation & Question making skills
  - Research Notes due Thurs/Fri, January 15th/16th.
  - Start Presentation and Study Guide
- Week 3**
  - Start Reading *Colibri* by Ann Cameron
  - Continue Presentation Work
- Week 4**
  - Finish Presentation and Study Guide
  - Study Guide due for copying end of class Tues/Wed, Jan 27th/28th.
  - Learn about present situation in Guatemala
  - Excerpts from *I, Rigoberta* by Rigoberta Menchu
  - Continue reading *Colibri*
- Week 5**
  - Presentations Tuesday/Wednesday.
  - Picture Book study: Begin individual Picture Book Page
  - Persuasive writing lessons
  - Continue reading *Colibri*
- Week 6**
  - 1st draft Picture Book Page due Wednesday, February 11th.
  - Content quiz about presentations Wednesday.
  - Revision of Book Page and Gallery Walk
  - Application and Cover letter for Committee due Thursday.
  - Continue reading *Colibri*

- Week 7**
  - 2nd draft Picture Book Page due Tuesday, February 17th.
  - Art mini-lesson by Ms. Barrett
  - 1st draft of illustration due Wednesday, February 18th.
  - Continue Revision of Book Page and illustration and translations
  - Learn about writing business plans
  - Business Plan Presentations Thursday/Friday.
  - Finish reading *Colibri*
  
- Week 8**
  - Committee Work...Deadlines in effect
  - 2nd Draft Illustration due Monday
  - 3rd draft Book Page due Monday to the Senior Editors.
  - *Colibri* In Class Essay
  - Continue Editing & Revision of Book Page and illustration
  - Final draft Picture Book Page w/illustration due Friday, February 27th.
  
- Week 9**
  - Committee Work...Deadlines in effect
  - Book Publication Ready due Wednesday, March 4th.
  
- Week 10**
  - Committee Work...Deadlines in effect
  - Letter Writing and Class Sales Effort
  
- Week 11**
  - Final Committee Work
  - Letter Writing and Class Sales Effort
  - Work on Exhibition Presentations
  
- Week 12**
  - Final Exhibition of Work for Community
  - Book sales continue after project

## ◆ Assessment

Since this is an extensive project, there were many graded activities throughout. The following list includes some of the primary components of students' final grades.

### Research

- Individual Research Notes 1: 20 points
- Group Power Point: 50 points
- PP Study Guide/Quiz Questions: 30 points
- Content Quiz: 20 points

### Book Page

- First draft: 15 points
- Second Draft: 15 points
- Third Draft w/color illustration: 20 points
- Completed Page & Completed Illustration: 80 pts

## Business Phase

- Business Plan: 50 points

### ◆ **Teacher Reflections: Heather Lovell**

“The Mayan Community Project is always an adventure and, to me, illustrates the fun and chaos possible from project based learning. The beginning is very researched based and somewhat controlled, but as the project moves toward completion, the students take over in their committees, and I feel more and more in the shadows of their work. What always strikes me most about their work is how authentic it is and how all the students revel in it. This year every single student submitted several drafts of their text, several drafts of their illustration, and an attempt at Spanish translation. Every student wants to be in a real published book, and I love how so many of them can keep the bigger goal of helping others in their mind as they work. Throughout the process, they often expressed their fears about making mistakes that would hurt our book sales and concerns that our choices would cause us to make less profit and not help as many kids as we wanted. Being the second year of the project, the precedent was already set at raising at least \$1,500 so that the same six students sent to school last year would be able to continue and not have to stop schooling. My students really tuned into the fact that they had the power to help others and ran with it. I had never seen them so careful with their writing, their researching, their fundraising or their attitudes. I must admit, that after this project I am always a bit drained. I carry the same worries about book sales and profits that the students do, and the circus of trying to manage different committees with all different goals and deadlines is exhausting. In the end it always turns out amazing. So far this year we have already raised much more than last year and still have books to sell. The students are SO proud of their work, each and every one of them, and I couldn’t be prouder of them.”

Lovell’s [in-depth project description and reflection](#) is extremely informative for those wanting to learn more.

### ◆ **More Project Resources**

Additional materials including handouts and lesson plans can be found at the project’s [website](#). Be sure to look at the Resources tab as well as the Project Details.

### ◆ **MyWays Tools**

See following pages.

# Mayan Community Project - Competency Correlation Sample

While the whole learning and junior version analyses are aimed at providing principles and parameters to assist you in creating pedagogy and learning experiences that enable learners as “active players in experiences that carry meaning and require commitment,” we also want to ensure that through such experiences, students progress towards mastery in the full range of knowledge, know-how, habits, and personal wayfinding abilities that we have all identified as what they need to be successful in college, career, and life – i.e. the MyWays competencies.

The Competency Correlation Project tool will help you think about that. While this tool can be used in a number of flexible ways, in this case, it has been used to analyze the Mayan project to identify which elements of the four MyWays competency arenas (and, in many cases, which of the 20 specific MyWays competencies) it develops.

Educators can use this tool on a number of levels – in early project design stages, it can be used at a higher, conceptual level to identify which arenas and which individual competencies are to be featured in a project. (And indeed, in a version that would allow for tracking of multiple projects, you could monitor across projects that groups of learners are hitting all four arenas in ways identified by the school to be desirable.) For competencies with more specific school, local, or Common Core standards, these can be incorporated into the analysis at a more detailed level (e.g. there are specific Common Core English standards and habits of mind addressed in the Mayan project, as well as specific Common Core math standards in the budgeting exercise).

The analysis provided of the Mayan project is a broad-brush look that captures all the various competencies addressed in this given project. What it does not do is qualify which competencies were the primary focus of the project – e.g. which skills and habits were targeted and implemented at greater depth. When you use this tool to design or evaluate your own projects, you would be likely to focus on a defined subset of competencies, though it would be desirable to ensure that you are helping students make progress on at least one competency in each of the arenas.

As you can see below, competencies from all four arenas were certainly addressed to at least some degree. It might be particularly interesting to do a comparative analysis between this active, integrated approach learning and a rigorous but more traditional approach to learning about:

- respect for the Mayan culture through a research paper
- book publishing by reading articles, or watching videos about publishing as an occupation
- feeling empowerment through helping others by having a bake sale to raise money for a good cause, but not one tied to personal and academic knowledge developed over an extended period of time in a collective, social effort

MyWays student competencies for success in college, career & life.

How does our project align with MyWays competencies?

<b>Content Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>English Core</b> Deep English learning and application across settings, aligned with the Common Core and similar standards</li> <li>• <b>Math Core</b> Deep math learning and application across settings, aligned with the Common Core and similar standards</li> <li>• <b>Science, Social Studies, Arts, Languages</b> Active learning of core disciplinary concepts and their application in a broad selection of liberal arts and sciences, and performing and language arts</li> <li>• <b>Interdisciplinary &amp; Global Knowledge</b> Integrated interdisciplinary thinking and empathetic development of global, cross-cultural, civic, environmental, and economic literacies</li> <li>• <b>Career-Related Technical Skills</b> The integration of academic, technical, and employability skills in at least one existing career area or emerging problem space of personal interest</li> </ul>	<p><i>Focuses on developing and integrating:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>English Core:</b> writing &amp; other standards &amp; habits of mind</li> <li>• <b>Social Studies:</b> Central America, culture concepts</li> <li>• <b>Art:</b> Mayan art history, illustration techniques</li> <li>• <b>Interdisciplinary &amp; Global:</b> cross-cultural knowledge and understanding, and economic literacies</li> <li>• <b>Career-related Tech Skills:</b> publishing junior version</li> </ul>
<b>Creative Know How</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Critical Thinking &amp; Problem Solving</b> Ability to analyze and reason effectively, and use systems thinking and design thinking toward solving problems in varied settings</li> <li>• <b>Creativity &amp; Entrepreneurship</b> The imagination, inventiveness, and experimentation to achieve new and productive ideas and solutions</li> <li>• <b>Communication &amp; Collaboration</b> Oral, written, and visual communication skills and the ability to work effectively with diverse teams</li> <li>• <b>Information, Media &amp; Technology Skills</b> Ability to access, evaluate, manage, create, and disseminate information and media using a wide variety of technology tools</li> <li>• <b>Practical Life Skills</b> Ability to understand and manage personal finances, health, and independence</li> </ul>	<p><i>Focuses on developing and integrating:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Critical Thinking &amp; Problem Solving:</b> through dealing with peer actions, real world, and authentic goal</li> <li>• <b>Creativity &amp; Entrepreneurship:</b> creativity in creating book and entrepreneurial inventiveness in marketing &amp; selling book</li> <li>• <b>Communication &amp; Collaboration:</b> students worked in teams throughout, also used power of communication to create book and generate book sales</li> <li>• <b>Information, Media, &amp; Tech skills:</b> use of Photoshop, Excel, PowerPoint, tracing lamps, etc.</li> <li>• <b>Practical Life Skills:</b> students must use their independence throughout the project as they create their books and harness the entrepreneurial spirit</li> </ul>

<b>Habits of Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Academic Behaviors</b> Going to class; participating fully; completing homework &amp; projects; and managing time &amp; resources</li> <li>• <b>Self-Direction &amp; Perseverance</b> Initiative, flexibility and adaptability, grit and tenacity, self-control</li> <li>• <b>Positive Mindsets</b> “I belong in this learning community; My ability and competence grow with my effort; I can succeed at this task; This work has value for me.”</li> <li>• <b>Learning Strategies</b> Study skills and strategies, goal-setting, self-regulated learning, help seeking</li> <li>• <b>Social Skills &amp; Responsibility</b> Interpersonal skills, empathy, cooperation, leadership, ethics, and ability to build social networks</li> </ul>	<p><i>Focuses on developing and integrating:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Academic Behaviors:</b> completing of projects, lots of practice managing time and resources</li> <li>• <b>Self-direction &amp; Perseverance:</b> initiative in all job roles, flexibility in dealing with the real world, tenacity in revising text and pursuing sales to reach targets</li> <li>• <b>Positive Mindset:</b> belonging in learning community, “I can succeed at this task and make an impact for others”</li> <li>• <b>Learning Strategies:</b> the project has many small and large goals along the way that students must navigate and seek help as needed</li> <li>• <b>Social Skills &amp; Responsibility:</b> each student works as part of a job-specific team, working collaboratively and responsible to each other; opportunities for leadership in election of team leaders, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Wayfinding Abilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Survey the Learning, Work, &amp; Life Landscape</b> Ability to research and understand information, resources, external barriers, and internal factors relevant to upcoming transitions in school, career, and life</li> <li>• <b>Identifying Opportunities &amp; Setting Goals</b> The self-awareness, focus, and strategic thinking to cultivate individual strengths and set goals for learning, work, and life</li> <li>• <b>Design &amp; Iterate Prototype Experiences</b> Ability to translate goals into prototype experiences for each new stage or transition, especially the transition from high schooler to independent, contributing adult</li> <li>• <b>Find Needed Help &amp; Resources</b> Ability to identify, locate, and secure the time, money, materials, organizations, mentors, and partners needed to support one’s plans</li> <li>• <b>Navigate Each Stage of the Journey</b> Ability to implement plans in the worlds of education, work, and life, making midcourse adjustments as required based on new experience</li> </ul>	<p><i>Focuses on developing and integrating:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Survey the Learning, Work, &amp; Life Landscape:</b> particularly research, writing, editing, fundraising, marketing, sales careers</li> <li>• <b>Identify Opportunities &amp; Set Goals:</b> Spanish speakers acted as Spanish edition editors, artists as illustrators, those with communication strengths talked on local TV</li> <li>• <b>Design &amp; Iterate Prototype Experiences:</b> students will be able to use their experiences in job-specific teams, delivering against goals, as a jumping off point for the experiences they will have as adults</li> <li>• <b>Find Needed Help &amp; Resources:</b> practice in identifying and securing time, money, materials, organizations, mentors, and partners to support this particular activity.</li> <li>• <b>Navigate Each Stage of the Journey:</b> the project has many steps from designing and writing the children’s book, to translating it into Spanish, to deciding best ways to sell the book and raise money for the charity. Being able to make adjustments and pivot is par for the course for students.</li> </ul>

# Mayan Community Project - Junior Version Characteristics Sample

While the seven principles of whole learning provide an excellent set of design parameters, the issue of how to create an appropriately “junior” version into which to embed the principles deserves additional attention. This sample from the Mayan project helps us see what that looks like.

Remember, in working through the Mayan project, that this is a learning experience for seventh graders. While the teacher made sure to include the “basic structural features” of the whole learning the exercise was addressing (developing respect for a culture, completing authentic work in publishing a book, and feeling the agency/empowerment of actively helping others), it is interesting to note, for example, which parts of the project involved complete versions of the full-scale activity and which parts were scaled down and how. (See row three in the worksheet on swaps, replicas, and scaled-down elements.)

Another important component of junior versions, which you can see in the table below, is that the level of challenge be reasonable for the knowledge level, interest, and learning agility of the learners involved right there and then, and second, that the level be reasonable for the general developmental readiness of the age group of those learners. And of course, there is interplay between those two.

The important message here is that teachers/educators need to know both a) their students, as people and learners, and b) human development! If your teachers have not had training on the latter, or if your learning model or system makes it difficult for teachers to know their students well, it is going to be difficult to create effective junior versions – or whole learning. In terms of projects being designed with developmental readiness in mind, notice how well the Mayan project seemed to hit the key developmental needs for this age group identified in the Consortium on Chicago School Research's newly-published [Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework](#) .

<b>Characteristics of Junior Versions</b>	<b>Junior Version Characteristics of the Mayan Community Project</b>
Capture the basic structural features of the full-scale activity.	<b>How this is demonstrated:</b> The Project was designed to address: 1) developing respect for the Mayan culture, 2) completing authentic work on all the key stages of publishing a book, and 3) experiencing the feeling of agency or empowerment involved in helping others. The teacher was careful to embed core structural elements for each of these ends, including 1) covering the integrity and strengths of the Mayan culture, both past and present, 2) establishing a real publishing process, from research to writing, editing, and marketing, and 3) establishing a fundraising project that enabled her students to effect change in the real world (funding the schooling of Guatemalan students - 6 in the first year, 7 in the second).
Throw out less important aspects of the activity, while leaving its spirit and shape intact.	<b>How this is demonstrated:</b> The learners did not travel to Central America, run printing-presses, see their book on the NY Times best-seller list, or change educational policy in Guatemala, but the “junior version” activities and experiences they participated in required all the responsibility, understanding, communication, persistence, cooperation, and other knowledge, skills, and habits of success inherent to the whole learning targeted in the project – at a level appropriate for them.
Swap in simulations, replicas, or scaled-down versions for elements of the activity that are not developmentally appropriate or practically possible.	<b>How this is demonstrated:</b> Some of the activities undertaken by the students were “full version” experiences. E.g. the students ran bake sales, called local radio stations, and invited acquaintances to book signings like any adult or student group who wants to raise funds and awareness. But other elements of the project involved “scaled-down” versions of tasks. By simulating a publishing house in their classroom, for example, the students were able to experience all the responsibilities of publishing: they filled out job applications (with cover letters), chose/were chosen for committees for each job role (editors, translators, public relations), and worked to schedules. The editors were fellow students, but their stamps still said “approved” or “changes needed,” and illustrations went through multiple critiques – at an appropriately demanding, seventh-grade level.
Set and maintain a reasonable level of challenge for the group and for individual learners.	<b>How this is demonstrated:</b> The teacher was aware that to her students, “research is never a popular or exciting word in the classroom,” so she structured the research element of the project to include both collaboration (each student participated in a Research Focus Group) and individual choice (within the focus area, learners could ask their own questions, ensuring that “each student also had a chance to develop expertise in an area of interest to them.”) The multiple roles in the junior version of the publishing house also enabled students with different strengths and abilities to develop those further: “Our advanced Spanish speakers got to shine as senior translators and our fantastic presenters got to be part of the public relations group.”
Include all seven Whole Learning principles, balancing an experience of the meaningful whole with attention to the hard parts, hidden norms, and group work, as well as with reflection on how elements of the learning are happening.	<b>How this is demonstrated:</b> See the completed Whole Learning analysis for the Mayan project, which illustrates how the experience is designed to address all seven of the Whole Learning principles . <b>Principles missing (and could they be incorporated?):</b> None missing.
Prototype and tune the learning experience to align with student capabilities.	At the time the project materials and reflections were loaded on HTH’s project website, the project had been run twice. The teacher’s reflections on the project illustrate the kind of active reflection and iteration that makes for the development of a successful project.

# Mayan Community Project - Whole Learning Analysis Sample

While next gen educators know the value of experiential, interdisciplinary, authentic learning approaches, and while project-based models like High Tech High and Middle and others have demonstrated success, we also know that most schools don't operate this way. Even highly experienced, true believers in this approach will admit that implementing this pedagogy in thoughtful and rigorous ways is not easy, either to describe or implement.<sup>1</sup>

With growing attention to even broader and deeper student competencies, as well as student agency, tools like this one, which help us reflect on the principles of whole learning, can be invaluable in helping to determine what makes one learning experience likely to activate and develop such attributes, while another may be active and interesting, but not move learners towards these goals.

Have a good look at the analysis, below, of the Mayan Community Project, which confirms that the learning project comprehensively incorporates each of the seven principles of whole learning.

It is clear, to take just one example, that the project design, while being holistic and motivating, ensured that the learners would "work on the hard parts" (principle #3). Students participated in deliberate practice, with multiple revisions of their book entries, informed by just-in-time mini lessons; they received feedback from peers and the teacher through gallery walks, critiques, and revisions – some occasioned by "changes needed" stamps from student editors; and they were required to discuss and reflect on everything from business plans to the entire experience.

As this worksheet shows, the "real world" aspects of this particular project are also impressive, especially given the developmental stage of the learners (young adolescents, not high school seniors). The teacher herself remarks, "What strikes me most... is how authentic it is... Every student wants to be in a real, published book... My students really tuned into the fact that they had the power to help others and ran with it. I had never seen them so careful with their writing, their researching, their fundraising or their attitudes."

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1. For a related discussion focusing on what makes for effective project based learning, see Suzie Boss, "The Hattie Effect: What's Essential for Effective PBL?" Blog post. Edutopia. 16 Sept, 2014. <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/hattie-effect-whats-essential-effective-pbl-suzie-boss>. John Hattie's research does not identify "project based learning" as one of its measured approaches, but does include many of the component elements, which align with whole game learning principles.

7 Principles of Whole Learning	High Tech Middle's Mayan Community Project (7th grade, teacher is Heather Lovell)
<p>Learn by wholes through junior versions</p> <p>Engage in learning experiences that capture entire cycles of creation or performance, and provide junior versions of real-world complexities and ambiguities</p>	<p>Learn by wholes through junior versions:</p> <p>"What strikes me most... is how authentic it is... Every students wants to be in a real, published book... Being the second year of the project the precedent was already set at raising [enough money so] the six students sent to school [in Guatemala] last year would be able to continue and not have to stop schooling. My students really tuned into the fact that they had the power to help others and ran with it. I had never seen them so careful with their writing, their researching, their fundraising, or their attitudes." Heather Lovell.</p>
<p>Make the learning worthwhile</p> <p>Choose learning that motivates because it addresses significant questions, produces meaningful products, and harnesses personal connection, choice, and creativity</p>	<p>Make the learning worthwhile:</p> <p>Meaningful content – not just "history trivia" on Mayan culture, but essential questions on "why it is important to learn about Mayan civilization today, how are books published &amp; marketed, what is life currently like for people of Mayan descent ([n Guatemala])?"</p> <p>Meaningful products – creation of book for authentic purpose of raising \$; "turned content knowledge into product of value outside our walls."</p> <p>Personal connection – empowerment, how to impact the world, "to make a difference in an impoverished child's life" in Guatemala today</p> <p>Personal choice &amp; creativity – allowed to choose specific individual topics and to generate own questions</p>
<p>Work on the hard parts</p> <p>Develop durable skills and competencies through deliberate (brain-science-informed) practice, actionable feedback, and reflection on content and process</p>	<p>Work on the hard parts by:</p> <p>Deliberate practice – book text revised 3-4 times. Just-in-time mini-lessons on questioning skills, art, persuasive writing, business plan</p> <p>Feedback – peer assessment through multiple gallery walks, critiques, revisions (not to mention the respected peer editor "Approved" &amp; "Changes Needed" stamps!)</p> <p>Reflection – outcomes include, e.g. "students able to discuss and reflect on the effectiveness of their business &amp; marketing plan"</p>
<p>Learn in a variety of settings &amp; ways</p> <p>Include many diverse learning experiences, developing key bridges for transfer, including the making of mental models and exposure to a variety of cues and contexts</p>	<p>Learn in a variety of settings &amp; ways:</p> <p>Diverse learning experiences – cross-cultural knowledge, knowledge of wide scope – essential questions applicable to other cultures, time periods</p> <p>Mental model making – analyzed existing alphabet books and publishing companies to transfer ideas, create models for their books/business</p> <p>Diverse exposure to cues and contexts – researched and inhabited real publishing job roles; also interacted with varied adult settings including local TV for interviews, school admin to organize Battle of Bands, and community for bake sale, car washes, Exhibition/Book signing.</p>

<p>Uncover the hidden rules &amp; norms</p> <p>Get below the surface of learning by discovering the field's unwritten rules and norms, why they exist, how to work within them, and when to work around them</p>	<p>Uncover the hidden rules &amp; norms: Discover the unwritten rules &amp; norms &amp; develop strategies for working within and around – individuals research and learn how the writing process works to improve their work for publication, how to edit and manage peers who hadn't made the corrections requested, and how marketing and sales can be effective in their goals to raise money</p>
<p>Learn from others &amp; together</p> <p>Harness the benefits of learning as a collective and socially situated enterprise, ranging from pairing with peers to joining real-world communities of practice</p>	<p>Learn from others &amp; together: Authentic social endeavor – group research, writing, publishing, marketing &amp; sales team work Community of practice – participated in committee roles/responsibilities, including electing committee leaders; leveraged strengths in diversity of talent, with roles for strong Spanish speakers, good writers, artists, business and sales Collaborative, Peer learning – in addition to individual research notes &amp; writing, created study guides to share with other team members, group PowerPoints, presentations, etc.</p>
<p>Learn how to learn</p> <p>Students drive their own learning through autonomy, choice, self-reflection, and self-management of authentic learning opportunities</p>	<p>Learn how to learn : Autonomy &amp; Self-reflection – kept daily logs to communicate progress &amp; struggles, expected to “explain all your decisions, successes, struggles,” Self-management – “By the time we moved into the publication phase... the students had taken on full responsibility for our success.” At the Book Signing/Exhibition Night, “be prepared to explain what you learned from the process, field questions,” etc.</p>

# Mayan Community Project - Assessment Strategy Analysis Sample

The Mayan sample below provides valuable insight into the multi-layered assessment integrated into the learning experience. You will see in the sample that the Mayan project demonstrates key elements of the assessment strategies, including:

- While students were challenged to undertake a project beyond their initial comfort zone, many forms of formative assessment were used to give students feedback and direction: writing feedback and revisions, “gallery walks,” peer assessment, content checks, and self-reflection.
- The entire project—a book research and publishing enterprise with both simulated and authentic qualities—includes both an overall performance assessment as well as component performance tasks for the research, book creation, sales and marketing, public performance, and the giving of the charitable donation.
- The project is “a series of assessment-embedded learning experiences with multiple forms of measurement.” Most of the assessments are formative and performance but traditional content assessment is also incorporated. As noted in the analysis, many of the approaches expand assessment into the hard-to-measure arenas like Habits of Success and Wayfinding Abilities.
- The analysis summarizes three ways that evaluation of the Mayan learning experience improved the quality of the project: the application of established design parameters in the project creation, evaluation and re-calibration of the project over time, and High Tech High’s formal protocol for teacher reflection on completion.

## Project: Mayan Community Project

### Formative Assessments

#### How these are incorporated:

- **Revisions:** Drafts, feedback, and revisions are central to this project – enabling the students to experience the kind of feedback and revision that takes place in book publishing. As the teacher noted, “Students revised the text three or four times. They helped each other make the writing fit the audience and gave suggestions to their peers before I ever saw the work. Their illustrations went through multiple gallery walks, critiques, and revisions before the final was created.”
- **Feedback/Critique:** HTH has some specific protocols for feedback, including, as just mentioned, gallery walks and critiques. “Gallery walks” occur when each team/group posts a piece of work in the classroom and the class spends 15-20 minutes walking around the “gallery” writing feedback on specific parts of the task rubric on sticky-notes. Another type of HTH feedback is the “feature” critique, used to highlight one particular piece of work a team has created, that is never “perfect” but should serve as a good example for others to learn from. All feedback of either type must be “kind, specific, and helpful,” and the intention is that the specific protocols scaffold what will become a “culture of critique,” where students are informally critiquing and thereby supporting each other’s work on an on-going, collaborative basis.
- **Peer assessment:** In addition to the class-wide forms of feedback mentioned above, much of the revision for each student’s personal book page is based on assessment by peers who have applied and been chosen for specific publishing job roles. Peer Senior Editors “...went through every student’s book page to make sure there were no mistakes. They especially loved their editor’s stamp that said APPROVED and CHANGES NEEDED.” Peer Senior Translators were responsible for providing feedback on the Spanish versions of their classmates’ book pages.
- **Formative content checks:** When learning about the Mayan culture at the beginning of the project, the teacher incorporates formative assessments including the sharing of student-created study guides with other class members, and quizzes on student-created presentations. HTH encourages the use of these and other formative assessment on content, including pair-and-shares and check-ins, both to see how students are progressing against rubrics and how they feel their learning is going. One version of this is the use of exit cards (asking students to explain one thing they learned that day or one question they still had).
- **Reflection:** One of the learning outcomes of the project is that students can “discuss and reflect on the effectiveness of their business and marketing strategies.” At the Book Signing exhibition night, all students were expected to “be prepared to explain what you learned from the process” to an authentic community audience.

### Performance Assessments

#### How these are incorporated:

- **Overall experience:** The project is an extended performance learning experience, or (from an assessment perspective) a “classroom-embedded performance assessment.” Students demonstrate their knowledge and skills by working through real-life collaborative processes and creating authentic products over an extended period of time. The engagement level for the project is raised considerably by the authenticity of the simulated publishing process. As the teacher noted, “It was important to me that this be a very real process from the researching of information to the final book signing.... The stakes were very high; published authors can’t cut corners.”

- **Component Performance Tasks** – The set of tasks in the project were rich and integrated but also carefully designed so there were both formative/process and summative/product or performance elements that covered the learning objectives. For the formative elements, see previous row. A selection of the more summative product- and performance-oriented assessment elements include:
  - **Research** – phase culminates in development and delivery of Group PowerPoint presentations, but content knowledge and understanding feed further into book page creation
  - **Book creation** – writing of a persuasive cover letter and “job” application for publishing job positions/committees; creation of book page with illustrations and Spanish translation
  - **Sales and marketing** – student creation of website for marketing the book; letter writing, phone calling and other communications, creation of promotional materials, and numerous other tasks for class sales effort. “The communications committee got us a TV interview on the local morning show, the fundraisers put on a huge school-wide “Battle of the Bands” to raise money.” “It astounded, and humbled, me that the kids could accomplish so much on their own. They made all of San Diego their audience, from chanting, “Help Mayan kids” at their bake sales to having neighborhood car washes, to inviting everyone they knew to our book signings. They took every aspect of their work seriously...”
  - **Public performance** – Some of the “public performances” were embedded throughout the project: “The public relations group would be making calls to radio stations in the office, the sales committee would be down the hall working on a fundraiser, the senior editors would be chasing people to fix their book page...everyone was everywhere. As our classroom transformed into a publishing house, the students learned that book publishing is full of phone calls, debates, deadlines, checklists and meetings.” At the end, the Publication Party served as a summative experience (exhibition/ performance) that showcased the students’ knowledge of Mayan culture and the business skills developed during the project.
- **Charitable donation to Guatemalan schoolchildren** – One of the three key learning objectives of the project was for the students to “experience the feeling of agency or empowerment in helping others.” The delivery of the donation represented a performance outcome that was just as meaningful to the HTH students as it was for the Guatemalan student who benefited from it. “By choosing to sell the alphabet books they’d made in class, my students took on a huge fundraising project that turned content knowledge into a product of value outside of our walls....The Mayan Community Project raised \$1,500 to pay for schooling for six Guatemalan students in the first year and seven students in the second. The class’s hard work kept those kids in school. No one wanted to let them down; it wasn’t an option.” Teacher Heather Lovell summed this element of the performance assessment beautifully: “Rarely does anything from middle school really last in the minds, much less hearts, of students. I really wanted to make this project continue on outside of our little classroom; I wanted it to affect my students and show them that they can touch other lives with their work.” Students’ learning journals reflected this impact.

## Multiple Measures

### How these are incorporated:

- **A system of multiple, integrated assessments:** like the MA Driver’s License presented in the exercise overview, assessment for the Mayan project is really a “series of assessment-embedded learning experiences with multiple forms of measurement.” Here are the primary components of the Mayan assessment, with their weightings, as listed for the students:  
 “Since this is such an extensive project, there will be many graded activities throughout the project. The following is a list of some of the primary components of the students’ final grades:”

#### Research

- Individual Research Notes: 20 points
- Group Power Point: 50 points
- PP Study Guide/Quiz Questions: 30 points
- Content Quiz: 20 points

#### Book Page

- First Draft: 15 points
- Second Draft: 15 points
- Third Draft w/color Illustration: 20 points
- Completed Page & Illustration: 80 points

#### Business Phase

- Business Plan: 50 points

- Most assessment is formative and performance assessment, integrated into the “whole learning” junior version learning experience. While the list of components above confirms that the project has a system of multiple, integrated assessments, it does not make evident what “type” of assessments are involved. As the previous sections of this table confirm, the vast majority of the assessment activity in the project is either formative assessment involving feedback, iteration, and reflection aimed at improving skills and knowledge, or performance assessment that focused on research, editing, business planning, public presentation, scheduling, collaboration, study, and self-management skills, among others.
- The project also includes elements of more traditional and on-demand summative assessment, aimed particularly at content understanding, including: teacher grading of research notes; the creation of study guides and PPT presentations by students on specific content areas; the sharing of these study guides and presentations; quizzes and tests to “demonstrate knowledge of the content in the presentations” and an in-class essay test. Rob Riordan, the co-founder of HTH, [explains](#) that, while the network focuses on assessing what students “really need to know now... how to access content, play with it, transform it, synthesize it, and use it, and how to work with others to do all of that.” They also “do content assessment as well, because that can also offer a window on how well you’ve executed some of these processes,” as well as making sure that learners are where they should be with regard to content knowledge and core skills.
- **How well the project assessed the four MyWays competency arenas:** The project provided abundant opportunity for learners to develop aspects of all four MyWays arenas – including Habits of Success and Wayfinding Abilities. (For the learning areas covered, see the completed Competency Correlation Project Worksheet in the Learning Design Exercise.) In terms of assessment, it is clear (see cells above) that the project provides continuous, integrated formative and performance assessment for the Content Knowledge and Creative Know How competencies involved. Despite strong development opportunities for Habits of Success and Wayfinding Abilities, there appears to be less explicit “assessment” of how this development progresses. This is common, even in next gen whole learning environments. But it is clear that progress in aspects of these two arenas are attended to in less formal ways, as expressed through student learning journals.

HTH as a network has recently started defining and “assessing” these competencies more directly, through reflection, exhibition, and opportunities for advisory groups and individuals to progress through playlists that address Habits and Wayfinding competencies engaged during their project-based whole learning. At HTH Chula Vista, for example, they have established habits of heart and mind (like persistence, mindfulness, and evidence), and created a Presentation of Learning for these competencies where students present artifacts of their learning and talk about how they show the progress they’ve made in these areas. Another HTH middle school teacher also created a playlist curriculum called “[Guts, Goals and Grit: A Socio-emotional Curriculum for Understanding Learning](#).” According to the teacher, “The unit evolved out of student reflections after a challenging year-long project... I was struck by how they were grappling with understanding their own learning and how it related to their ideas of success and self-worth.”

## Badges & Micro-Credentials

### How these are incorporated:

The Mayan project incorporates the wider learning ecosystem in its learning design: learners undertake parts of the project “in the real world” and by interacting with adults beyond their teacher – negotiating with school faculty to arrange Battle of the Bands, booking promotional interviews with the local radio station, interacting with the community at bake sales and car washes to raise funds, selling their Mayan book to businesses, family, and community members. The project does not, however, incorporate badging for this wider ecosystem activity. Should the school wish to do this, they could create badges to “recognize” certain activities or “certify” specific skills developed in the parts of the project taking place outside the school’s walls. Or they could encourage the students to access external badges for activities like the mastery of PPT or website design.

## Quality Reviews of Learning Experiences

### How these are incorporated:

With an expanded goal line that targets not only knowledge and know how but also aims to help students develop Habits of Success, Wayfinding Ability, and the student agency involved in all arenas, sometimes it is either not possible or not desirable to try to gauge progress by measuring specific student outcomes, even through performance assessment. In these arenas, the most important starting point is to at least offer experiences that enable students to engage and practice the competencies. But we don't need to do this blindly. In this case, it is appropriate to step back from measuring outcomes to look at inputs and outputs – evaluating the experiences, and programs to ensure that these experiences are relevant and of high quality. The Mayan Project illustrates several aspects of evaluation, and its proactive twin, design, based on time-tested and evidence-based principles:

- **The use of design parameters in project creation** – Heather Lovell notes that she followed Adriana Steinberg's guidelines for designing authentic projects (which are similar in many ways to David Perkins' whole learning principles). Here she describes how her project design was influenced by one of these principles, connection to the real world: "Authenticity is necessary to make work in school directly access the real world and have an effect on that world, not simply be a copy or simulation of the real world. In her article, 'Real Learning, Real Work: School-to-Work as High School Reform,' Steinberg presents several guidelines for designing authentic projects. Many of her ideas really hit home for me, in particular her belief that students should see a reason for doing what they are doing in school beyond getting a grade. In setting up the Mayan Community Project everything tied back to our goal of helping students in Guatemala."
- **Evaluation and calibration of the projects, how they balance challenge and support, and how they are tuned over time.** Heather Lovell referenced this kind of evaluation, which included attention to some of the same factors of junior versions, such as scaffolding of student agency and iteration of project design: "The Mayan Community Project is always an adventure and, to me, illustrates the fun and chaos possible from project-based learning. The beginning is very researched based and somewhat controlled, but as the project moves toward completion, the students take over in their committees, and I feel more and more in the shadows of their work." ... "This year every single student submitted several drafts of their text, several drafts of their illustration, and an attempt at Spanish translation." ... "Being the second year of the project, the precedent was already set at raising at least \$1,500 so that the same six students sent to school last year would be able to continue and not have to stop schooling. My students really tuned into the fact that they had the power to help others and ran with it. I had never seen them so careful with their writing, their researching, their fundraising or their attitudes....So far this year we have already raised much more than last year and still have books to sell."
- **While independent evaluation can also be valuable, HTH has a protocol for teacher reflection on project completion** that encourages a continuous critique and improvement culture. In this protocol, a teacher analyzes:
  - What went well?
  - What would I do differently? (e.g. integration of more content lessons, elements that could be further standardized to enable focus on more important work or to make it easier for students to direct more of their own work)
  - What about support for diverse learners? (e.g. team roles, variety of just in time teaching and learning techniques, exemplars/explicit visualization of end goals, close communication, and ongoing assessment)
  - What might this project might look like with greater curriculum integration? Is it possible to make it more holistic?