NGLC MyWays

Exercise Three - Learning Design
Learning Design as Rich as Your Definition of Student Success

This exercise focuses on exploring and iterating around how well your learning design maps to your community's definition of success using a concept called whole learning (more on that below)! The tools in this exercise will help you answer this crucial, rubber-meets-the-road question:

How well does our design for learning and the organization of our school directly support students' attainment of that richer, deeper definition of success?
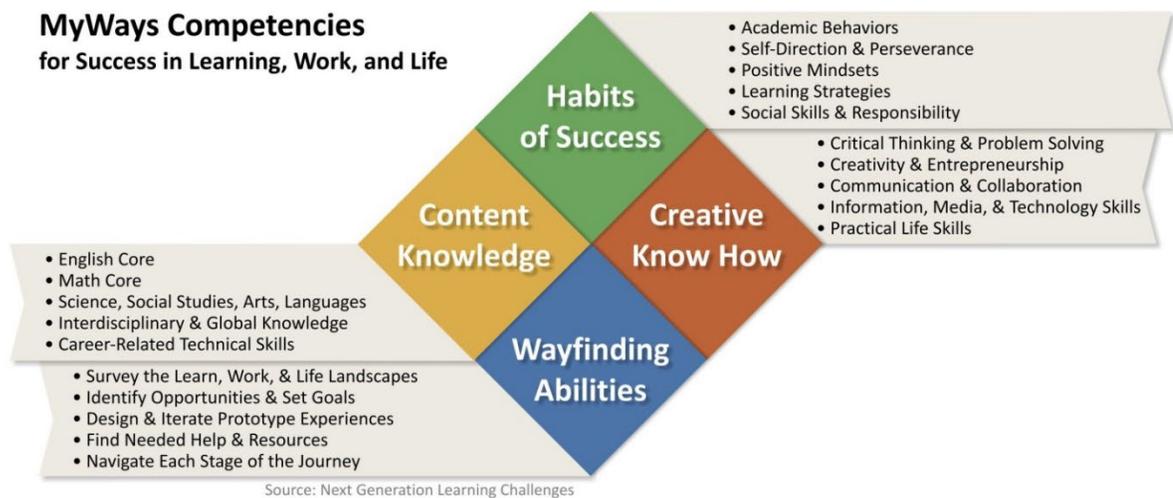
◆ Here are three tools designed to help get you there:

- **Whole Learning Analysis Worksheet** - How well do your projects reflect the principles of Whole Learning?

- **Junior Version Characteristics Worksheet** - How well do your projects harness the benefits of Junior Versions?

- **Competency Correlation Project Worksheet** - How do your learning experiences map to the 20 MyWays competencies?

◆ Key Concepts

Before you dive into using the tools, there are some important concepts to dig into first. With each of the exercises, reading the associated reports will be most beneficial to deepen your learning and understanding (and because they are rich with insight and fun to read!). But we want you to be able to roll your sleeves up and play with these tools even if you haven't yet read the reports. Understanding these concepts will let you do that.

MyWays Competencies

As you likely know from exploring the website and reviewing the reports and other exercises, MyWays is a synthesis of 20 student competencies needed for success in college, career, and life. These competencies draw on research across a broad landscape, and provide a composite framework applicable to all students regardless of aptitude or socioeconomic circumstance, including those students who must overcome the extraordinary challenges of intergenerational poverty.

MyWays Competencies
for Success in Learning, Work, and Life

Habits of Success
- Academic Behaviors
- Self-Direction & Perseverance
- Positive Mindsets
- Learning Strategies
- Social Skills & Responsibility

Creative Know How
- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
- Creativity & Entrepreneurship
- Communication & Collaboration
- Information, Media, & Technology Skills
- Practical Life Skills

Content Knowledge
- English Core
- Math Core
- Science, Social Studies, Arts, Languages
- Interdisciplinary & Global Knowledge
- Career-Related Technical Skills

Wayfinding Abilities
- Survey the Learn, Work, & Life Landscapes
- Identify Opportunities & Set Goals
- Design & Iterate Prototype Experiences
- Find Needed Help & Resources
- Navigate Each Stage of the Journey

Source: Next Generation Learning Challenges

Consider printing out the competencies and taping them to your workspace
as you use these tools - visual reference points are always quite helpful!

Combining Thinking Skills + Real World Learning

A majority of the competencies identified in the MyWays model require a combination of thinking skills and real world abilities — because life certainly requires both. And often times in life, textbook learning is insufficient. Especially when it comes to Creative Know How, Habits of Success, and Wayfinding Abilities. Knowing how to write well, does not mean you will be able to take care of your physical health, be responsible with money, or be able to successfully find the right help when you need it. That's why when we're designing learning we need to consider activities that will help students develop their thinking and these real world abilities. In Report 11, we identify three key learning design constructs for activating these deeper and expanded competencies: Whole Learning, Levers for Capability & Agency, and Wider Learning Ecosystem.

The tools in this exercise dive specifically into Whole Learning, so here's a description of it to get you started. For a deeper look at Whole Learning, and for insight into the other two important concepts, make sure to check out Report 11.

Whole Learning & Junior Versions - Real Working, Learning, and Co-Creating

This concept draws heavily from David Perkins' *Making Learning Whole*. The main crux is this: learning experiences that most effectively support students' attainment of richer, deeper definitions of success are, by their very nature, holistic and authentic. They make learning whole again. This is quite intuitive when you think about it (but certainly not how many learning experiences are designed). Consider the deep learning that comes with complex career tasks, demanding arts performances, or challenging sports — they all require an understanding of how the whole thing works, actively engaging in different elements of the activity, experiencing what works and what doesn't, and completing and delivering an authentic product to a real audience. Perkins outlines seven principles of Whole Learning, which integrates the most important elements of learning and developmental science into a practical guide for developing broader and deeper competencies, and will be very helpful as you review your own learning design.

The seven principles of Whole Learning
Learning by Wholes through junior versions

2 Make the learning worthwhile

7 Learn how to learn

3 Work on the hard parts

1 Learn by wholes through junior versions

6 Learn from others & together

4 Learn in a variety of settings & ways

5 Uncover the hidden rules & norms

Based on David Perkins, *Making Learning Whole*

#1 Learn by wholes through junior versions
Engage in learning experiences that capture entire cycles of creation or performance, and provide junior versions of real-world complexities and ambiguities

#2 Make the learning worthwhile
Choose learning that motivates because it addresses significant questions, produces meaningful products, and harnesses personal connection, choice, and creativity

#3 Work on the hard parts
Develop durable skills and competencies through deliberate (brain-science-informed) practice, actionable feedback, and reflection on content and process

#4 Learn in a variety of settings & ways
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

#5 Uncover the hidden rules & norms
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

#6 Learn from others & together
Harness the benefits of learning as a collective and socially situated enterprise, ranging from pairing with peers to joining real-world communities of practice

 # 7 Learn how to learn
Students drive their own learning through autonomy, choice, self-reflection, and self-management of authentic learning opportunities

Because Whole Learning, like running a community organization, composing a song, or making and keeping friends, is complex, Perkins introduces the concept of a junior version, which we ask you to experiment with in the tools. Junior versions mean creating an accessible experience that is scaffolded in developmentally appropriate ways, while still keeping the essence of "the whole" with all the purpose, motivation, and complexity that it entails.

◆ Dig Deeper

The MyWays website is rich with information for you to explore. Here is the report we recommend taking a look at as you complete this exercise:

- [Report 11](#) for a full review of Whole Learning and junior versions.

◆ Putting Concepts to Work: Download Tools

Now that you have explored the key concepts, it's time to start using them and practicing. The tools will help equip your learning design team with a reliable process for critiquing emerging curricula and instruction — strengthening the connection to learning and developmental science and encouraging the development of broader and deeper competencies. Even at a quick, conceptual level, these tools can flag key issues and "help change the conversation" within your team with respect to transforming learning design as a force for teachers to provide a more authentic experience for their students, as well as for learners to be able to reflect on their learning. You can also use the tool instructions to run a workshop, letting your teachers and educational designers team up to analyze the Mayan project prior to tackling one of your own projects.

"*Put it this way: When I was playing [Little League] I wasn't playing full-scale, four bases, nine innings.*

But I was playing a perfectly suitable junior version of the game. A junior version was just right for my size and stamina and the number of kids in the neighborhood.

But when I was studying those shards of math and history, I wasn't playing a junior version of anything.

It was kind of like batting practice without knowing the whole game.

Why would anyone want to do that?"

David Perkins

Use the tools to do one of the following learning design tasks:
- Evaluate one of your existing projects (learning experiences) to identify gaps, plan improvements, or adapt the design to change or add competencies;
- Analyze an existing "exemplar" learning experience (like [High Tech Middle's Mayan project](#), or other projects you've been impressed with) for group workshop, or other development purposes; or
- Develop design parameters for the planning of new project

Whole Learning Analysis Worksheet

Junior Version Characteristics Worksheet

Competency Correlation Project Worksheet