

The Six A's of Project-based Learning

Authenticity	Is the project based on a problem or question that is meaningful to the student?
	Is the problem or question one that an adult might tackle at work or in the community?
	Does the project provide the student with opportunities to produce something that has personal and/or social value beyond the school?
Academic rigor	Does the project cause the student to acquire and apply knowledge related to one or more disciplines or content areas?
	Does the project challenge the student to use research methods from one or more disciplines? (For example, does it cause him or her to think like a scientist?)
	Does the student develop higher-order thinking skills? (For example, does he or she search for evidence or seek a different perspective?)
Applied learning	Does the student solve (e.g., design a product, improve a system or organize an event) a problem that is grounded in life and work?
	Does the project require organizational skills and self-management?
	Does the project cause the student to learn and use skills (such as problem-solving, communication, technology and teamwork) that are expected in the workplace?
Active exploration	Does the student spend a significant amount of time doing field-based work?
	Does the project require the student to use various methods, media and sources to conduct an investigation?
	Is the student expected to make a presentation to explain what he or she has learned?
Adult relationships	Does the student meet and observe an adult who has relevant expertise and experience?
	Does the student work closely with — and get to know — at least one adult?
	Do adults collaborate with each other and with students on the design and assessment of projects?
Assessment	Does the student use project criteria (that he or she helped establish) to gauge what he or she is learning?
	Do adults from outside the classroom help the student develop a sense of real-world standards?
	Is the student's work assessed regularly through methods such as exhibitions and portfolios?

The six A's of project-based learning are taken from the 1997 book *Real Learning, Real Work: School-to-Work as High School Reform*, by Adria Steinberg.