

Agora

By Jelena Savković

✉ connect@ecagora.com

☎ +381645014051



Complex tasks - workshop for teachers

Complex tasks are tasks that involve more than one interaction or stage in order to complete it, and as such they require us to use strategic, critical and creative thinking, and problem solving skills. Complex tasks are more engaging, more rigorous, more meaningful and authentic, as well as more effective in long term and trans-disciplinary learning. This workshop will give teachers tools to structure and assess complex tasks.

Workshop objectives

- To distinguish between **difficult** and **complex** tasks
- To explore the ways to **structure** complex tasks
- To share the ways to **assess** complex tasks
- To understand the importance of **authentic audience**

Resources and supplies

- Teaching for Understanding by David Perkins (flipped classroom activity),
- Kagan's Bloom taxonomy rethink
- Big classroom,
- Projector,
- Pens and papers,
- Printer

Assessment

- Disciplinary and interdisciplinary charts

Skills

In this workshop session, teachers will have the opportunity to:

- Negotiate ideas and knowledge with peers
- Give and receive meaningful feedback
- Develop new skills, techniques and strategies for effective teaching
- Identify strengths and weaknesses of personal teaching strategies (self-assessment)
- Demonstrate flexibility in the selection and use of teaching strategies
- Present information in a variety of formats and platforms
- Evaluate evidence and arguments
- Revise understanding based on new information and evidence
- Consider ideas from multiple perspectives
- Propose and evaluate a variety of solutions
- Use brainstorming and visual diagrams to generate new ideas and inquiries
- Consider multiple alternatives, including those that might be unlikely or impossible
- Apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products or processes
- Practice visible thinking strategies and techniques
- Make connections between subject groups and disciplines



Flow of activities and learning engagements

Welcome and introduction – 1 min.

Activity 1: Whole group discussion and identifying difficult and complex tasks – 10 min.

Activity 2: Quick Think pair share of complex tasks in teachers' classrooms – 5 min.

Activity 3: Presentation and discussion about some examples of complex tasks. – 10 min.

Activity 4: Creating a complex task in a disciplinary and in an inter-disciplinary Environment. Charts as evidence. – 30 min.

Activity 5: Flipped classroom check in point, Jigsaw – Teachers share what they think was most important from the text, 3 groups: How should we teach? What should we teach? How can we assess complex tasks? – 10 min.

Activity 6: Teachers will think of an opportunity for the authentic audience for the complex tasks that they've created. Adding to the charts and sharing. – 10 min.

Closing and thanks – 1 min.

Sneak peek into the resources

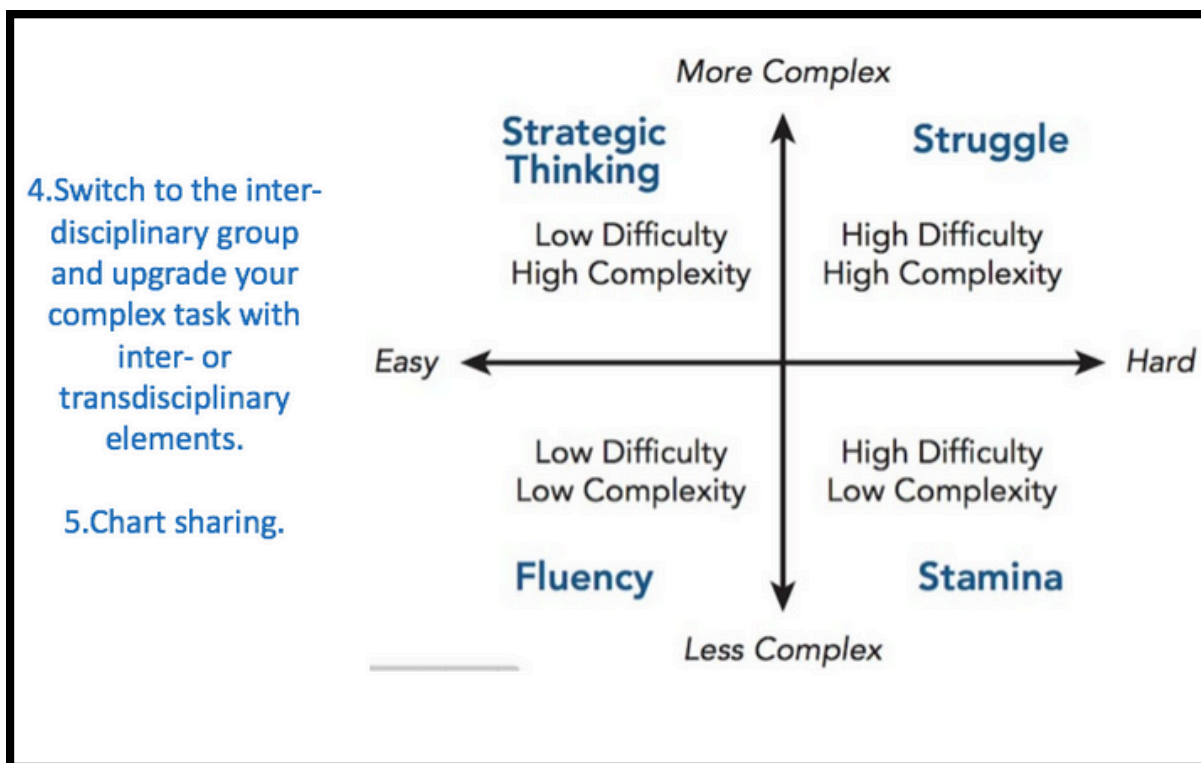
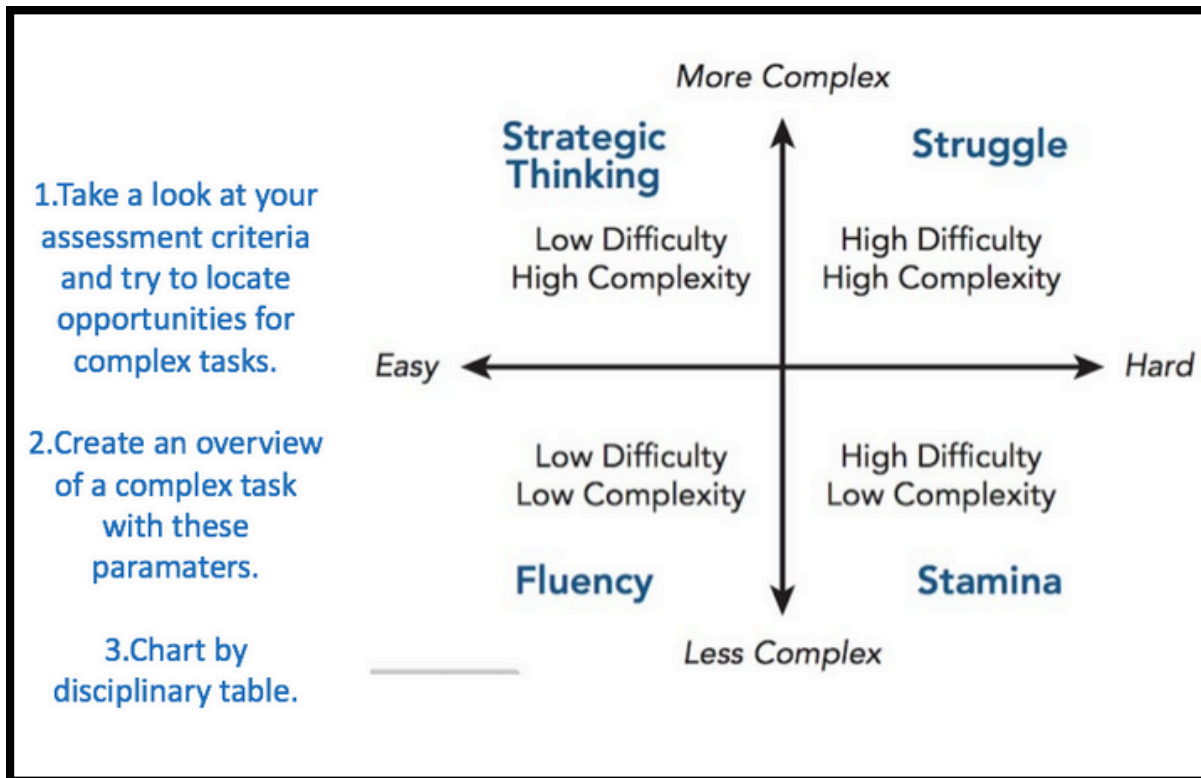
Q: Difficult or complex?

- Memorizing a long string of unrelated numbers
- Mastery of sight words
- Reading for longer periods of time
- Close and critical reading of a complex text
- Mastery of math facts
- Writing a research paper
- Make decisions about timelines, rubric usage and checklists
- Writing while maintaining voice
- Critical analysis through writing/debate
- Studying for an upcoming test
- Setting goals
- Making a plan
- Making adjustments based on progress

Q: Difficult or complex?

1. *What is the water cycle?*
2. *How does the water cycle work?*
3. *How does the water cycle affect the world's supply of usable water?*
4. *What impact does human interference have on the water cycle and the world's supply of usable water?*
5. *What can be done to prevent human interference from affecting the water cycle and the world's supply of usable water?*

Sneak peek into the resources



Sneak peek into the resources

Read the examples
of authentic
learning tasks, and
come out with the
right, authentic
audience that's
feasible for your
class.

Ten Design Elements of

Authentic Learning

Real-world relevance: Authentic activities match the real-world tasks of professionals in practice.

Ill-defined problem: Authentic activities are relatively undefined and open to multiple interpretations, requiring students to identify for themselves the tasks and subtasks needed to complete the major task.

Sustained investigation: Authentic activities comprise complex tasks to be investigated by students over a sustained period of time, requiring significant investment of time and intellectual resources.

Multiple sources and perspectives: Authentic activities provide the opportunity for students to examine tasks from a variety of theoretical and practical perspectives, using a variety of resources, and requires students to distinguish relevant from irrelevant information.

Collaboration: Success is not achievable by an individual learner working alone. Authentic activities make collaboration integral to the task, both within the course and in the real world.

Reflection (metacognition): Authentic activities enable learners to make choices and reflect on their learning, both individually and as a team or community.

Interdisciplinary perspective: Authentic activities have consequences that extend beyond a particular discipline, encouraging students to adopt diverse roles and think in interdisciplinary terms.

Integrated assessment: Assessment is not merely summative in authentic activities but is woven seamlessly into the major task in a manner that reflects real-world evaluation processes.

Polished products: Conclusions are not merely exercises or substeps in preparation for something else. Authentic activities culminate in the creation of a whole product, valuable in its own right.

Multiple interpretations and outcomes: Rather than yielding a single correct answer obtained by the application of rules and procedures, authentic activities allow for diverse interpretations and competing solutions.

Examples of Authentic Learning

Interviews
Video reports/projects
Oral reports
Case briefs
Photo stories
Peer editing/review
ePortfolios
Data Analysis
Infographics
Debates
Ask the "expert"
Letters to editor/government
Floor plans
Timelines
Surveys
Research data (real data sets)

Document Analysis
"Teacher" for a day, module or concept
Case studies
Podcasts/Vlogs
Product reviews
Article critiques
Concept mapping
Graphing data
Presentations
Design projects
Group Projects
Models/constructing objects
Proposals
Scenarios
Inquiry based Learning

Journaling/reflection
Wikis and other collaborative writing
Group problem solving
Blogs
Lab work
Role playing
Simulations
Field work
Field trips
Research projects
Problem based learning (PBL)
Real world problems (finding solutions)
Editorials
Multi-media creation



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER
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