

DAY TWO

PART ONE: Pedagogy of Projects, Oracy and Beautiful Work

Essential Question: What is beautiful work? How can we get our students to produce work they are proud of in this project?

Outcome: 3 minute presentation

Constraints: You can only use one slide (no other technology) and everyone in the group needs to contribute

Assessment: Oracy Framework (attached at the back)

Audience: Joe and Julian

09:30 - 10:30

We will be presenting at 10:30!

STEP ONE: REFLECTION

With the person next to you, reflect on the session last week using the following prompt questions. The person who has been teaching the longest must go first.

- What stood out to you last week?
- Is there anything you want to challenge about the session?
- What questions do you have which you want to be addressed?

Write down a summary on the post-it notes provided. When you have finished, hand them to Joe.

STEP TWO: CONNECTING

The aim of the morning session is to design a short presentation about 'what is beautiful work?' and 'what beautiful work YOUR students will produce'.

We are now going to connect with others in the group, using this as a theme. As a group, we are going to share a piece of work which we are proud of.

In your group, take it in turns to finish the statement: **A piece of work I am proud of is... because.. (it doesn't have to be work related!).**

Someone should act as a timer - giving 3 min per person. While the person is speaking, I want everyone else in the group to think of one question to ask the presenter.

STEP THREE: READING

Below is an extract from Ron Berger's Ethic of Excellence. Read the passage out aloud (one person reading each paragraph), then discuss the questions at the end.

What makes a craftsman?

For twenty five years I've led a double life. I'm a full-time classroom teacher in a public school. In order to make ends meet for my family, I've worked during the summers, and sometimes weekends, as a carpenter. In the classroom or on the building site my passion is the same; if you're going to do something, I believe, you should do it well. You should sweat over it and make sure it's strong and accurate and beautiful and you should be proud of it.

In carpentry there is no higher compliment builders give each other than this: That guy is a craftsman. This one word says it all. It connotes someone who has integrity and knowledge, who is dedicated to his work and who is proud of what he does and who he is. Someone who thinks carefully and does things well.

I want a classroom full of craftsmen. I want students whose work is strong and accurate and beautiful. Students who are proud of what they do, proud of how they respect both themselves and others.

When building a complex roof frame, some carpenters are adept at trigonometry and use calculator to figure rafter angles. Others never paid attention during high school math and rely on a tape measure, spatial intelligence, and an experienced eye. In the end, as long as time and budget are reasonable, these differences don't matter. What matters is clear; a well-built house.

In my classroom I have students who come from homes full of books and students whose families own almost no books at all. I have students for whom reading, writing, and math come easily, and students whose brains can't follow a line of text without reversing words and letters, students who can't line up numbers correctly on a page. I have students whose lives are generally easy, and students with physical disabilities and health or family problems that make life a struggle. I want them all to be craftsmen. Some may take a little longer to produce things; some may need to use extra strategies and resources. In the end, they need to be proud of their work, and their work needs to be worthy of pride.

A few years ago I was crouched on the roof of a playhouse, nailing shingles with Aaron, one of my sixth-grade students. It was a glorious October Sunday, bright and crisp, one of those rare days that made me remember why I lived in New England. The afternoon light was on the maple trees around us, the leaves yellow and scarlet, and from up there the world looked good.

Holly and Justine, fifth graders from my class, were painting trim down below and giggling about something. Mike showed up with his little sister and called up: I know I'm not in your class but could we help out too? So they pitched in and soon Kate showed up and joined the

crowd. With a crew of seven you might think we could finish the whole thing off quickly; it was only a playhouse. The truth was my class had been working almost every afternoon during school and after school for three weeks and still we had quite a way to go. Building with kids takes time.

I'll admit it was an elaborate playhouse. It was designed by my students in collaboration with their kindergarten buddies as a service project during our study of architecture; it was a gift to the younger students of the school. By Kindergarten request, it was two stories tall with a stair ladder inside, a "spy window" on the second floor, two windows on the first floor, and a front porch. It also had clapboard siding, Victorian trim details, and interior panelling. It wasn't that big, but it was nicely done.

I had argued repeatedly with my students that they were making a big mistake with their colour choices: with pine green paint for the siding and cream coloured trim, they had chosen green shingles. A green roof with green siding! I explained to them that it was going to clash and pleaded with them to consider a safer shingle colour, something like black or tan. I got outvoted by my class. Turns out I was totally wrong. The shingles were a dark shade of grey-green that complemented the siding very well. My students received glowing comments from the community on their colour choices. And don't think they didn't point this out to me all year long. As I was nailing off a shingle I noticed Aaron smiling at me. I know they look good, I said.

I looked at Aaron carefully spacing roof nails. I looked at the kids below me working together intently, installing clapboard and painting trim. I looked at this beautiful playhouse the students had designed and built. How do I share this? I thought. How do I capture this?

The power of that Sunday was not really about New England or playhouses. It was not about gifted kids, or clever teaching, or curriculum that should be marketed. There was a spirit, and ethic in the air that day. It was partly about the kids, the teaching, the curriculum, the school conditions, the community, but importantly, it was about all of these things at once. It transcended these things. It was the culture of the school that encouraged these kids to volunteer, to work together, and to care deeply about the quality of what they did. It was the ethic that this school culture instilled.

How do you share a culture? An ethic?

From An Ethic of Excellence by Ron Berger

- **What resonated with you?**

- **What is in the toolkit of a craftsperson?**

STEP FOUR: EXAMPLE WORK

Send someone in the group to Joe to get an example of student work. Take it back to your table and discuss...

- What is good about it?
- What could be improved about it?
- Is there anything this makes you think about your own project outcome?

STEP FIVE: DESIGNING THE PRESENTATION

In your group, you need to present to the rest of the room your answer to the question...

'What makes beautiful work?' and 'How can we get our students creating work they are proud of in these projects?'

This will only be a 3 minute presentation - you may use one slide if you like (but nothing else!).

Joe and Julian will give feedback at the end based around the content of your presentation and your oracy (using the framework attached).

STEP SIX: PRESENTING AT 10:30!

