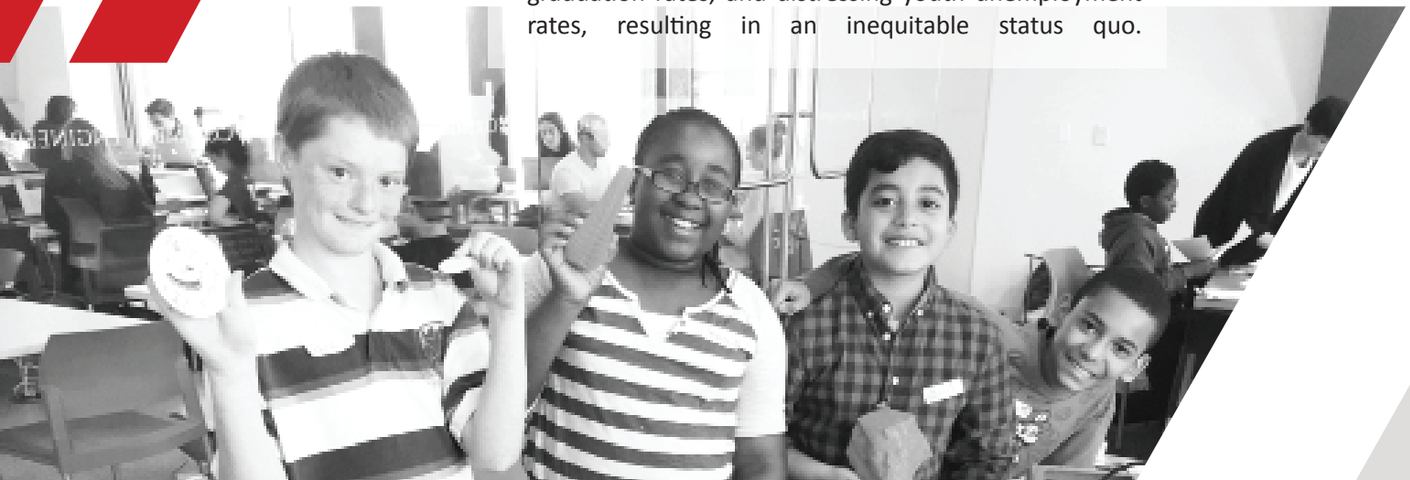
SCHOOLS® THAT CAN

REAL-WORLD LEARNING RUBRIC

Introduction

BACKGROUND

Since its inception more than a decade ago, Schools That Can (STC) has been focused on promoting quality education for deserving, yet under-served, students. We've always held a high bar for schools in our network, and they have boasted impressive results. For instance, our member schools have outscored their peers on norm-referenced and standardized tests and have demonstrated exceptional graduation rates. Increasingly, though, schools have shared that this is not enough. While high school graduation rates have been rising, college completion rates for low-income students are still dismal, with less than 10% earning college degrees by age 24. Moreover, there is a documented disconnect between the skills in demand from employers and those being taught by educational institutions, resulting in roughly half of young people *with* college dregrees being un- or underemployed. Despite evidence that up to 65% of today's students will one day work in a career that does not yet exist, today's education system has not changed dramatically. Instead, this antiquated system is preparing leaders of the future for careers of the past, resulting in disengaged high school and graduation rates, and distressing youth unemployment rates, resulting in an inequitable status quo.



REAL-WORLD LEARNING

As we have reflected on how best to support our schools in developing their capacity to prepare students for viable postsecondary pathways, we have set a strategic priority on Real-World Learning for the 21st Century, which we see as a missing link between student achievement and long-term life success. "Real-World Learning" is defined in detail below, but at its core is learning that is active, applied, and grounded in the world beyond school walls. Real-World Learning goes beyond test scores to empower young people with the skills to navigate college, career, and community, laying a critical foundation for young adult success. Corroborating this important need, data from our most recent program survey, completed by 55 STC schools, shows that many schools struggle to effectively integrate Real-World Learning both into their vision and daily practices.

RWL Rubric

A REAL-WORLD LEARNING RUBRIC

Beginning in early 2016, STC embarked on a strategic journey to clearly define "Real-World Learning" in and for schools through a rubric. The initial version was developed by a working group of educators and consultants supporting innovation in schools who came together to conduct a review of the literature on college and career readiness, project-based learning, school partnerships, Deeper Learning, and other relevant educational approaches. In Fall 2017, the first draft was entrusted to STC's newly-created Advisory Council to finalize. The Advisory Council is made up of STC school leaders from across sectors and grades, as well as educational researchers, supporters, and advocates (see appendix for list). The Council shared additional feedback and resources in order to flush out and finalize the rubric.

HOW TO USE THE RUBRIC

This rubric has been designed for 1) k-12 schools – to reflect on their own practices, set goals, and drive continuous improvement efforts, 2) STC – to recognize, celebrate, and learn from Leading Real-World Learning schools; to share resources, examples, and practices with schools; and to design programming to support schools' improvement efforts, and 3) leaders across the education to employment (e2e) pathway – to use as a guide for exploring partnerships with schools.

This is a journey and we encourage schools using this to think of it as such. Real-World Learning does not happen overnight; rather, it takes a concerted effort from the entire school and community. This rubric is not intended to be evaluative or judgmental, but rather is a tool to guide schools on that journey and to celebrate successes. We encourage schools who find themselves in the "Emerging" category to see this as an opportunity for growth and to work with their leadership team to select one area of practice to focus on. "Progressing" schools may be further along in this journey, and we hope that the rubric can help map a clear path as they move forward. Finally, we encourage schools who find themselves in the "Leading" category to see this as an opportunity to share their successes, practices, and resources with other schools to help them advance, while also committing to continuously improve their practices and outcomes for students.*

A CAVEAT: This rubric focuses exclusively on the research and practices that define Real-World Learning for the 21st Century. However, we recognize that Real-World Learning in and of itself is not sufficient. To ensure excellent and equitable opportunities for all students, schools must also focus on developing high quality instructional practices, teaching rigorous and relevant curriculum, fostering a safe and supportive school environment, building a data-driven culture, meeting all learners' needs, and ensuring strong organizational leadership. Some may even argue that without a safe and supportive environment and strong leadership, meaningful Real-World Learning cannot consistently take place. Thus, STC encourages school leaders to focus on those areas as needed and when ready, to use this rubric as a guide for promoting practices, policies, and mindsets that ensure students are equipped to fulfill their potential beyond graduation.

* STC is beginning to build a library of aligned resources for schools to access along their journey. Initial resources are listed in this appendix.

DESCRIPTOR	EMERGING	PROGRESSING	LEADING
External Partnerships Support Real-World Learning Experiences 	In the early stages of developing partnerships to support real-world relevant learning. For example, may have some partnerships for after-school programming.	Has some partnerships with external organizations in place to offer real-world relevant experiential learning, but opportunities are limited to a subset of students or a particularly narrow area of focus and are often offered as enrichment or extracurricular activities. Teachers are not typically involved in these partnerships and projects.	At some point in their tenure at the school, all students access multiple opportunities for real-world, relevant, experiential learning both in and out of school through partnerships with external organizations, individual experts, and more (i.e., local businesses, service organizations, manufacturers, healthcare providers, entrepreneurs, not-for-profit and government agencies, research labs, and community-based organizations). Teachers are actively involved in these partnerships.
Teachers Design and Facilitate Rigorous, Relevant Real-World Learning Experiences	Most classrooms still rely on traditional direct instruction methods with teachers doing more of the talking and thinking. School may be exploring ways to increase opportunities for hands-on learning and application of content knowledge.	Some teachers are experimenting with facilitation of hands-on learning. A few teachers may actively integrate project-based pedagogy into their classrooms or teachers may work together across disciplines for an annual interdisciplinary project. Lessons provide limited opportunities for students to gain deep conceptual understanding and meaningfully apply what they are learning.	The majority of teachers are effective facilitators of learning, empowering students to engage in both design and assessment of their learning. Teachers consistently collaborate with colleagues within and across disciplines, and even with experts beyond school walls, to ensure that classroom activities foster conceptual understanding and skills and that students have multiple opportunities to apply what they learn through projects and experiential learning.
Student Success Extends Beyond Academics to Include Cognitive, Interpersonal, and Intrapersonal Outcomes 	Instructional and assessment practices still focus almost exclusively on academic outcomes.	Instructional and school practice is beginning to make explicit connections to broader learning outcomes (i.e., social-emotional learning, Deeper Learning Outcomes, habits of mind, wayfinding abilities, etc.). Teachers may reference these outcomes in instructional plans, but mastery is still focused almost exclusively on core academic content.	Instructional and school practice is grounded in a holistic vision of student success. This is reflected in projects and lesson plans designed explicitly to foster a range of learning outcomes (i.e., social-emotional learning, Deeper Learning Outcomes, habits of mind, wayfinding abilities, etc.). Additionally, grading systems incorporate diverse assessment practices (i.e., portfolios, mastery-based grading, badging, presentations of learning) to acknowledge and support mastery of these outcomes.

DESCRIPTOR	EMERGING	PROGRESSING	LEADING
School Supports a Cohesive Education to Employment (e2e) Pathway	The school is aware of the upcoming transitions that students and families will face and is in the process of developing strategies to support them in moving to the next phase, but is still largely focused on the grade bands served.	The school offers developmentally appropriate learning experiences and may have a college or career-going culture, offering occasional career days or college visits, depending on grades served. Provides some support to students and families as they prepare to transition to the next phase but supports for alumni are inconsistent or nonexistent.	In addition to offering developmentally appropriate learning experiences, the school builds a culture that values multiple pathways, including college and careers, and both ignites students' passions and cultivates skills in navigating pathways (i.e., field trips, career days and fairs, mentorship opportunities, academically rigorous courses, dual-enrollment opportunities, college visits, job shadowing, and internships). The school provides direct support to students and families as they plan for and transition into and out of the school through bridge programs and, as relevant, scholarships and alumni support programs. Leaders and educators see this as part of their role, not an "add-on."
Student Work is Authentic, Complex, Relevant, and Publicly Shared	Student work may be more superficial, and is shared only with the teacher or in the classroom but not beyond.	Student work is aligned to grade level standards and includes some authentic and complex tasks. School has begun displaying student work and provides some opportunities for students to present work to external audiences.	Students regularly complete developmentally-appropriate, high-quality, authentic and complex tasks (i.e., aligned to higher order thinking skills, higher Depth of Knowledge levels, etc.). School prominently displays examples of student work and provides regular opportunities for students to share their work with external audiences.
Resources are Flexible and Creatively Used to Support Learning	The school's practices and policies are still largely defined by traditional use of resources, though teachers and leaders may be exploring ways to use resources creatively.	Pockets of creativity exist and are expanding, but resource use still follows more traditional models. Some teachers may use space creatively, but common spaces are not effectively leveraged. The school may occasionally differentiate the schedule to support real-world learning experiences.	The school uses multiple resources (space, time, human, and financial) creatively to advance learning. Classrooms may use different configurations depending on lessons and units and common space is designed creatively to empower student collaboration and learning. The school uses creative scheduling and staffing models to support real-world learning and to offer out-of-school learning experiences (internships, etc.).

Appendix A: References

The following is a sampling of the books and articles that our Advisory Council reviewed in developing this rubric.

Bertram, V. (2014). One Nation Under Taught: Solving America's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Crisis. New York, NY: Beaufort Books

Burke-Vigeland, M., Kelley, K., Moore, M., Rivera, S., & Thaler, M. (2013). The ABCs of STEM: Aligning Design Pedagogy to Engage the Next Generation of Innovators. https://www.gensler.com/uploads/documents/The_ABCs_of_STEM_09_24_2013.pdf

Gensler (2016). A High-Performance Place for Learning: Exploring the Future of Education via New Takes on the Learning Environment. https://www.gensler.com/research-insight/research/a-high-performance-place-for-learning

Harvard GSE. (2011). Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenge of Preparing Young Americans for the 21st Century. https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/4740480/Pathways_to_Prosperity_Feb2011-1.pdf?sequence=1

Lathram, B., Lenz, B., & Vander Ark, T. (Aug 2016) "Preparing Students for a Project-Based World"

Martinez, M. & McGrath, D. (2014). Deeper Learning: How Eight Innovative Public Schools Are Transforming Education in the Twenty-First Century. New York, NY: The New Press.

Martinez, M., McGrath, D., & Foster, R. (2016). How Deeper Learning Can Create a New Vision for Teaching. https://nctaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/NCTAF-ConsultEd_How-Deeper-Learning-Can-Create-a-New-Vision-for-Teaching.pdf

Meeder, H. (2016). The Power and Promise of Pathways: How to Prepare All Students for Career and Life Success. NC3T.

Nestor, K. (2016) "Understanding College Success in Graduates of Saint Martin de Porres High School" http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/New_Pathways.pdf

Senn, D. & Marzano, R. (2015) "Engaging in Cognitively Complex Tasks." West Palm Beach, FL: Learning Sciences International http://www.learningsciences.com/files/samplechapters/Marzano_Engaging_SampleChapter.pdf

Visher, M. & Stern, D. (2015) "New Pathways to Careers and Colleges: Examples, Evidence, and Prospects." MDRC. http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED558505.pdf

Wagner, T. (2010). The Global Achievement Gap. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Wagner, T. & Dintersmith, T. (2015). Most Likely to Succeed: Preparing Our Kids for the Innovation Era. Simon & Schuster.

Pell Institute & Penn Ahead (2015). "Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States." http://www.pellinstitute.org/downloads/publications-Indicators_of_Higher_Education_Equity_in_the_US_45_Year_Trend_Report.pdf

Zeiser, K., Taylor, J., Rickles, J., Garet, M., & Segeritz, M. (2014). "Evidence of Deeper Learning Outcomes." AIR & Research Alliance for NYC Schools

Appendix B: Resources & Examples

Schools That Can is in the process of building a resource library with examples, programs, and products that support improvement across the Real-World Learning descriptors. As we work to build that out, we are sharing a few examples to help those newer to Real-World Learning begin to visualize what this could look like. Many of the examples included below are highly developed models; as we build our library, we will include resources for schools with a range of access points, including bite-sized lessons for those just getting started and whole school models.

External Partnerships Support Real-World Learning

Schools like PTECH and MC2 STEM have formal partnerships between companies, colleges, and school districts that enable college credit, internship experiences, and certifications

Menu of ideas for partnerships between schools and companies

Linked Learning connects classroom learning to internship experiences

What Kids Learn from Experts highlights how individual experts can give students' feedback

Polaris' Justice for All project partnered students with community members to counter rising violence in their community

Teachers Design and Facilitate Rigorous Relevant Real-World Learning Experiences

BIE Rubrics - 21st Century Skills

Deeper Learning Component 3: Teachers Design Meaningful Learning Experiences for Students

Design thinking challenges https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/02/for-the-jobs-of-the-future-this-could-be-the-key-skill

Self-Organized Learning Environments (SOLEs) put students in charge of their learning by shifting the teacher's role from direct instructor to facilitator

Student Success Extends Beyond Academics to Include Cognitive, Interpersonal, and Intrapersonal Outcomes

NGLC's MyWays helps schools define student competencies for success in college, career, and life

The EPIC Schools in NYC have developed Competencies & Attainments, which include Common Core Standards and social-emotional learning outcomes; instead of getting grades in individual classrooms, students work to master these attainments

How 3 states have shifted to competency-based education models

How Brooklyn LAB Charter School integrates non-academic habits into the classroom

School Supports a Cohesive Education to Employment (e2e) Pathway

Fairs and counseling programs help students actively prepare for and apply to the next stage of the e2e pathway

Summer bridge programs to introduce new students to the school culture

Graduate support programs provide advising, tutoring, and even financial support to student alums

Job shadowing and internships help students explore career pathways earlier in their educational journeys

Student Work is Authentic, Complex, Relevant, and Publicly Shared

EL Education Models of Excellence: Attributes of High Quality Work

Using Webb's Depth of Knowledge to Increase Rigor. Aungst, Gerald (September 9, 2014)

The importance of highlighting student work (and see Austin's Butterfly video embedded on the page)

High Tech High's Presentations of Learning

Resources are Flexible and Creatively Used

7 Tips for Planning a Makerspace

Pair Academic Teachers with Learning or Success Coaches to support diverse learning outcomes

Cristo Rey's Corporate Work Study Model: partner companies subsidize tuition in exchange for one full-time intern position; this is staffed by 4 students collectively, with one student on site each day

Big Picture Learning schools have Advisors who work with students for all 4 years of high school; advisors help students pursue internships of interest and design standards-aligned projects to implement through their internships.

Appendix C: The Schools That Can Advisory Council

The STC Advisory Council members are leaders in their industries and sectors who are committed to working together to provide thought leadership and to support community engagement efforts. Council members offer strategic counsel on STC programming, partnerships and thought leadership and serve as advocates of STC to enhance their mission through external outreach and collaboration with education and industry in their community. During the 2016-17 school year, the Council was tasked with defining what "Real-World Learning" looks like for K-12 schools by reviewing, revising, and approving a research-backed rubric and developing an implementation plan for using the rubric across STC's network of schools. The Council met throughout the year to review research and share their own experiences and practices as they worked towards these goals.

Name	Title/Org	Organization	Region
Monica Martinez (chair)	Author, Senior Strategist	XQ Super School Project	Bay Area, National
Caylin Lo (secretary)	Global Analyst	Ogilvy RED	New York City
Matt Wunder	CEO	Da Vinci Schools (charter, K-12)	Los Angeles
Rich Clark	President	St. Martin de Porres High School (faith-based, 9-12)	Cleveland
Michelle Sanchez	Principal	Epiphany School (faith-based, 5-8)	Boston
Edwin Reyes	Principal	Technology High School (district, 9-12)	Newark
Michelle Navarre	Head of School	Polaris Charter Academy (charter, K-8)	Chicago
Ron Sofo	CEO	City Charter High School (charter, 9-12)	Pittsburgh
Jamaal Bowman	Principal	Cornerstone Academy for Social Action (district, 6-8)	New York City
Grace Suh	Director, Education Programs	IBM	New York City, National
Sarah Steinberg	VP, Global Philanthropy	JP Morgan Chase, New Skills at Work	New York City, International
Frank Baxter	Retired Ambassador, Chairman of the Board	Alliance College-Ready Public Schools	Los Angeles
Heather Lattimer	Associate Professor	University of San Diego	San Diego
Roland Anglin	Dean, Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs	Cleveland State University	Cleveland
Leslie Hiner	Vice President of Programs	EdChoice	Indianapolis, National

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