

# TEACHING TODAY'S LEARNERS #11



## Task or Experience?

A task belongs on a to-do list. It is something we check off, and once we are done, we don't have to look back. When students are very task-driven, they believe that when they turn in the assignment, they are finished. Finito! Learning is done! But that isn't the message we want to share with our learners. We want them to understand that learning **never stops** regardless of whether the project or assignment has been turned in.

Instead of assignments that are tasks waiting to be checked off, what if instead we moved toward creating experience opportunities for our learners? Experiences offer critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and continuous high-level learning: application, analysis, evaluation, and creation. It allows learners to get messy as they reach beyond the textbook or classroom instruction. Even by using the word experience, we create an understanding that learning is not a task to be completed, but rather a challenge to be taken.

### CREATE MORE EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES:

- ✚ Create Curiosity: Introduce project and problem-based learning that motivates learners to find the answer to a driving question
- ✚ Help to Visualize: Create simulations or dramatize events that help the learners see, feel, and experience the learning
- ✚ Make Learning Authentic: Share real-life problems or challenges for learners to develop solutions
- ✚ Look Outside School Walls: Reach beyond by using virtual field trips, skype, Google + communities, etc.
- ✚ Offer Play Time: Encourage learners to create and play games that connect to a skill or content to be learned or practiced
- ✚ Connect to Experts: Share experts or mentors - in person or via technology
- ✚ Create Marker Spaces: Provide a space where learners can gather to share resources and knowledge, work on projects, and even network to build deeper learning
- ✚ Encourage Passion Projects: Help learners connect with a passion and encourage them to spend time nurturing it
- ✚ Create/Increase Interdisciplinary Experiences: Help learners see connections to content; learning in our subject areas doesn't exist in silos

*Our job as teachers is not to "prepare kids for something;" our job is to help kids learn to "prepare themselves for anything." -A.J. Juliani*