



Why Authentic Intellectual Work?

For most students, the usual work demanded in school is rarely considered meaningful, significant, or worthwhile. What is meaningful intellectual work? Compared to the typical work of students in school which often seems contrived and superficial, the intellectual accomplishments of adults in diverse fields seem more meaningful. As a short-hand phrase that signifies the difference between the intellectual accomplishment of skilled adults and the typical work that students do in school, we refer to the more complex adult accomplishments as *authentic intellectual work*.

“Authentic” is used here not to suggest that students are always unmotivated to succeed in conventional academic work, or that basic skills and proficiencies should be devalued, but only to identify some kinds of intellectual work as more complex and socially or personally more meaningful than others. Specifically, authentic intellectual work involves original application of knowledge and skills, rather than just routine use of facts and procedures.

It also entails careful study of the details of a particular problem and results in a product or presentation that has meaning beyond success in school. We summarize these distinctive characteristics of authentic intellectual work as *construction of knowledge*, through the use of *disciplined inquiry*, to produce discourse, products, or performances that have *value beyond school*.

The powerful research results that emerged in several studies led us to conclude that if the framework for AIW and the scoring rubrics were deliberately used by teachers to guide instruction, students and teachers alike should benefit.

Dr. Dana L. Carmichael, Dr. M. Bruce King, and Dr. Fred M. Newmann
Founders, Center for Authentic Intellectual Work

Authentic Intellectual Work is the paradigm of considering the quality of students’ thought as they manipulate “big ideas” that are grounded in the discipline they’re studying and apply their solutions to the world outside the classroom. This kind of learning transforms the learner’s experience. More engagement happens and more meaningful learning occurs through increased academic rigor.

“AIW has become an irreplaceable source of collegial dialogue that incites ongoing, meaningful growth for me as a teacher. Each AIW experience has left me with thought-provoking questions, a clearer sense of my instruction, and the motivation to become a more deliberate teacher.”

— Sarah Brown Wessling
2010 National Teacher of the Year Award Recipient

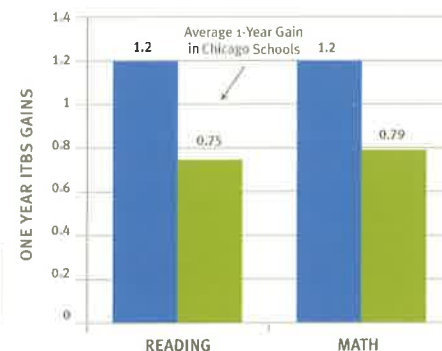


THE CENTER FOR
**Authentic
 Intellectual
 Work**



Equipping students to address the complex intellectual challenges of work, civic participation, and managing personal affairs in the contemporary world through reflective professional development.

Elementary Students' Gains in Reading & Mathematics According to Quality of Teachers' Assignments in Writing and Mathematics in 46 Chicago Schools
 Gain Scores Averaged Across Grades 3,6,8
 (Newmann et al, CCSR study, 2001)



FOR MORE INFORMATION
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How does AIW Professional Development work?



The Center for Authentic Intellectual Work provides professional development to improve the quality of teaching to help students:

- Develop higher order thinking,
- Demonstrate complex understanding of significant disciplinary concepts, and
- Engage in work that has meaning and value beyond school.

Significant features of AIW professional development include:

- Teachers, administrators, liaisons, and coaches forming professional learning communities focused on the successful implementation of AIW.
- Leadership Meetings focusing on expansion within a school, appropriate allocation of resources, and deep understanding of the AIW framework.
- Instructional personnel developing a common vision of quality instruction that is supported by research and aimed at improving student achievement.
- Teachers, individually and collectively, becoming more reflective and applying AIW to everyday classroom practices.
- Local capacity for sustainable reform increasing over time.



Teachers repeat this cycle throughout the year. AIW teams with 4-6 members meet 4-6 hours per month.

AIW Coaching and support deepens reflection and sharpens teachers' skills to have students perform at a higher quality of intellectual work.

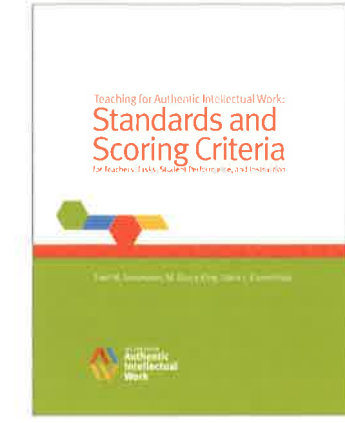
At each AIW Team meeting,
a member brings a task that is about to be assigned and didn't work as well as he/she would have hoped. He/she is the Presenting Teacher for that meeting.

An AIW Team member facilitates the meeting according to guidelines—and the facilitation rotates among members meeting by meeting.



Example of a Task scored by an AIW Team 9th Grade teacher, September of each year in American Government (U.S. Bill of Rights Media Project)

1. Find 10 newspaper or internet articles that deal with the U.S. Bill of Rights.
2. Cut the article out of the paper and highlight the parts that directly deal with the amendment.
3. Arrange or label in a three-ring binder.



AIW Team members individually score the task on three standards detailed in *Teaching for AIW Standards and Scoring Criteria* (2009):

- Construction of Knowledge in social studies
- Elaborated Communication in social studies
- Value Beyond School in social studies

AIW Team determines who will bring artifacts to be scored at the next meeting. Artifacts include:

- Tasks
- Student work and the task
- Video clip of instruction/classroom observation

Examples (U.S. Bill of Rights Media Project)

Have students rewrite one of the articles without the particular Bill of Rights and show how that would change the outcome of the article.

Pair or group students to create a role play of one of the articles and the rewritten version for the class. After seeing and discussing the role plays, have each student write at least one paragraph on the impact of the Bill of Rights on American life.

Example (Initial Scoring for Bill of Rights Project)

Standard	John	Jessica	Deb
Construction of Knowledge	2	1	3
Elaborated Communications	2	1	2
Value Beyond School	1	1	1

Facilitator records all the scores on a grid for everyone to see and then leads a discussion in which scores are explained by members, especially discrepant scores, and using evidence from the task and the specific language of the criteria, brings the AIW Team to a consensus score or common range.

Facilitator asks the Presenting Teacher what feedback has been most helpful, and has the Presenting Teacher share what he/she might change in the Task as a result of the discussion.

Facilitator prompts AIW Team to provide possible changes to the task that will improve the student performance of Authentic Intellectual Work.



Authentic Intellectual Work (AIW) done by teachers in Professional Learning Communities develops rigor, relevance, and relationships.



Example from White Bear Lake North Campus, MN, 9th Grade AIW team meeting, August 2010

Authentic performance for students with and without disabilities in the classes with highest and lowest authentic tasks
(King et al, RISER study, 2003)

