



CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- Sept. 21 East End Academy
- Sept. 23 Writing Club
- Sept. 23 ISLN, Science and S.S. Network at KEDC
- Sept. 28 PES Lesson Study K-2

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Friday Focus

Carter County Schools

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What Makes Students Do Good Work?

The research about authentic learning suggests that **purpose, relevance, student choice, and ownership** are the keys to making learning meaningful.

Make It Meaningful!

This just in from 42,000 high school students: They're mostly bored, and they often don't see the value in the work that teachers ask them to do. The recently released *Charting the Path from Engagement to Achievement: A Report on the 2009 High School Survey of Student Engagement* looks at student answers to such questions as,

- If you have been bored in class in high school, why are you bored?

- Are you challenged academically in your classes?
- Does your work in high school contribute to your growth in thinking critically? Writing and speaking effectively? Reading and understanding challenging materials? Learning independently? Acquiring skills related to work after high school? Solving real-world problems?

Two of three respondents (66 percent) indicated that they are bored at least every day in class. But students also clarified the kinds of work that would engage them. They rated the following most highly: discussion and debate (61 percent); group projects (60 percent); and pro-

jects and lessons involving technology (55 percent). Following close behind as favorites were presentations (46 percent); role-plays (43 percent); and art and drama activities (49 percent). It's no surprise that teacher lecture got the highest "like not at all" votes (44 percent) and the fewest "like very much" votes (6 percent). Students also indicated that they enjoy discussions in which there are no clear-cut answers (65 percent) and that they would welcome the opportunity to be more creative in school (82 percent).

As a teacher once said, "I never heard of a student not doing his work; it's our work he's not doing."

Students Suggest Homework Alternatives

Teenagers understand the need for the sustained practice at the heart of the homework enterprise. They have some creative suggestions about how assignments could be redesigned. The table presents six student-generated ideas for alternatives to traditional homework.

In This Learning Situation. . .	Instead of This	Try This
You introduced new material in class.	Assigning a question set so we will remember the material.	Ask us to think up a homework task that follows up on this material and to explain our choices.
You want us to read an article before a class discussion.	Making us answer questions that prove we read it.	Ask us to write down two or three questions we have after reading the article.
You want to see whether we understand a key concept (such as literary irony).	Making us complete a worksheet.	Ask us to demonstrate the concept for the class in small groups, using any medium.
You want us to see how a math procedure applies in various situations.	Assigning 10 word problems that involve this procedure.	Ask small groups to choose one word problem that applies this procedure in a real-world situation, solve it, and present it to the class.
You want us to memorize facts (such as dates in history).	Handing out a list that we will be tested on.	Ask each student to share with the class a memorization trick (such as a visual cue) that works with one item on this list.
You want us to remember what you taught last month.	Assigning a review sheet.	Give frequent short pop quizzes about earlier material. Go over each quiz, but don't count the grade.

"That was an awesome worksheet," said no student ever.



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