

# EMPOWERING STUDENTS IN DISTANCE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

A WEBINAR BY JOHN SPENCER





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WHERE YOU CAN'T FOLLOW ME

IN A GROCERY STORE

IN A DARK ALLEY

INTO THE DARK



## ZOOM STAFF MEETINGS BY HOGWARTS HOUSE

Hufflepuff: How's everyone feeling? OMG! We're going to get through this together. I miss you so much! Can I see your pets?

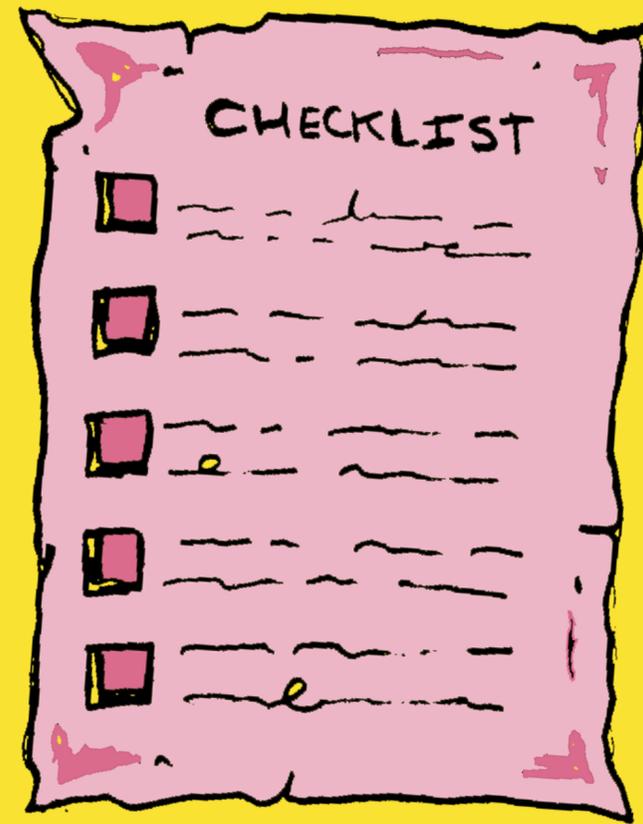
Ravenclaw: Let's get through this agenda ASAP so I can finish grading while listening to a podcast.

Gryffindor: Fidgeting the whole time, feeling stir crazy, can't wait to get out.

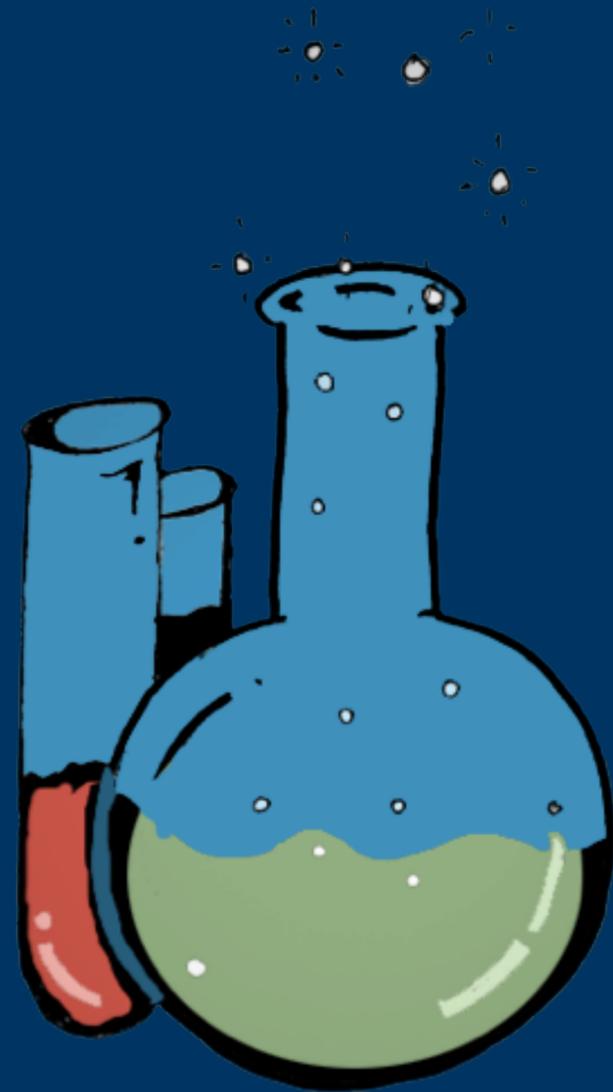
Slytherin: Misses the meeting entirely and lies about not getting the email invite.



WE ARE ALL  
"UNDER CONSTRUCTION"



THERE IS NO  
GUARANTEED FORMULA



IT IS AN AN EXPERIMENT



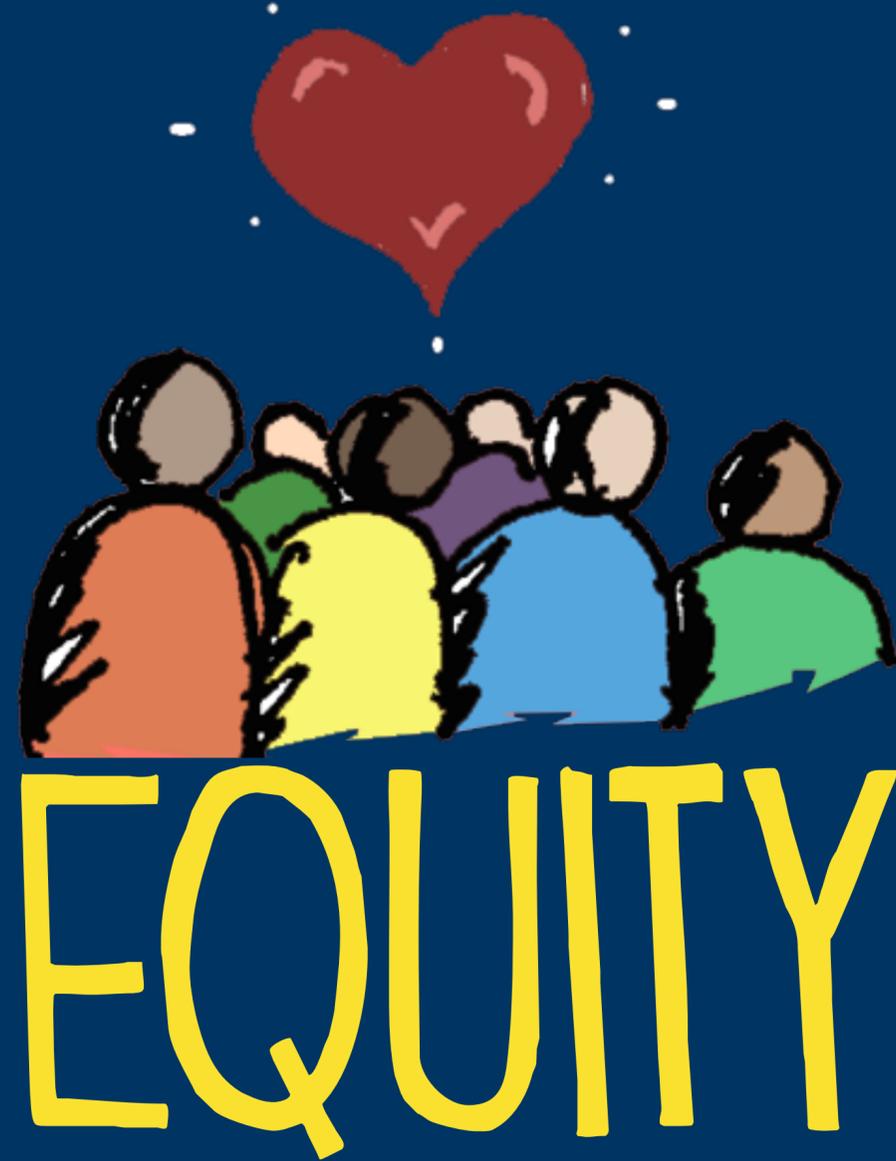
TEACHERS HAVE  
BEEN AMAZING



# THE CHALLENGES

LOW ATTENDANCE

LOW ENGAGEMENT



# BE PATIENT

PLEASE SHOW STUDENTS GRACE WITH ONLINE LEARNING. IN A K-12 ENVIRONMENT, YOU'LL HAVE STUDENTS WHO ARE STEPPING UP TO PROVIDE CHILDCARE FOR YOUNGER SIBLINGS. YOU'LL HAVE KIDS WHO ARE SHARING A SINGLE DEVICE WITH SIBLINGS. YOU'LL HAVE CHILDREN WHO ARE LIVING IN A STATE OF UNCERTAINTY AND CHAOS. BE GENEROUS WITH DEADLINES AND BE OPEN TO EXCUSING ASSIGNMENTS.



FOCUS ON THE HUMAN  
ELEMENT FIRST

You can find these on  
my Instagram  
[@spencereducation](https://www.instagram.com/spencereducation)



## YOUR QUARANTINE BAND NAME

Your quarantine band name is:

The + How you feel + the color of your  
sweatpants + the snack item you ate in a  
day that you thought would last for a week.





# CHOOSE ONE ITEM

Choose one item that represents a healthy way that you are dealing with social isolation. It could be a hobby, a mindset, or a creative endeavor. Explain why you chose that item.



You can find these on  
my Instagram  
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THE PROBLEM OF  
ENGAGEMENT IS A  
PROBLEM OF OWNERSHIP

LACK OF  
SELF-DIRECTION

COMPLIANCE

ENGAGEMENT

EMPOWERMENT

STUDENT AGENCY



# 6 WAYS TO EMPOWER STUDENTS IN DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES

1

2

3

4

5

6



PROVIDE CHOICE  
AND FLEXIBILITY

1

2

3

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6

1	2	3	4
—	—	—	—
— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —
— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —
— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —

# CHOICE MENUS

# Learning Targets

(Choose 1-2 that you currently haven't mastered)

Here's where you list optional learning targets.

Example in math:

I can identify a linear function by examining a graph.

Example in social studies:

I can determine the impact of World War II on the women's rights movement

# Resources

Choose at least 3 resources that you will use to learn about the content.

Here's where you link curated resources, such as videos, podcasts, articles, infographics, and models.

Example in math:

Crash Course Videos

Tutorial Article

Flip Video from a classmate

Examples:

History podcast

Article from Atlas Obscura

Primary source documents

# Product

Choose how you will demonstrate your mastery of the content.

Here's where you list options for what students will create to demonstrate their learning. This might be a blog post, essay, slideshow, podcast, model, etc.

Example in math:

Video explaining how you solved it

Example in social studies

Podcast explaining women's involvement in World War II war effort

1 2 3 4 5 6



EMPOWER STUDENTS TO  
CHOOSE THE TOPICS

1 2 3 4 5 6



GENIUS HOUR

1 2 3 4 5 6



EMPOWER STUDENTS TO  
SELF-SELECT THE SCAFFOLDS

1 2 3 4 5 6



TECHNOLOGY TUTORIALS

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6



# ACADEMIC TUTORIALS

1

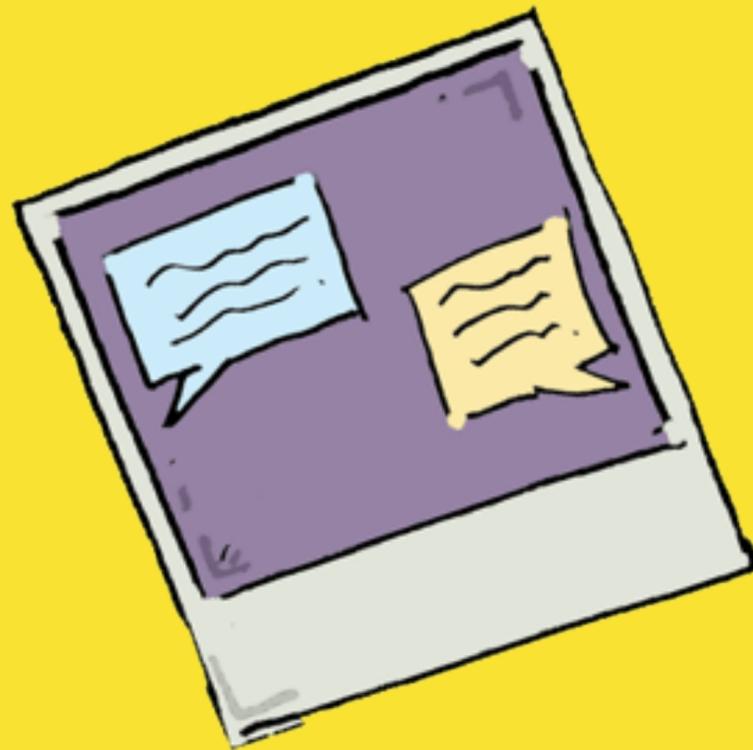
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# LANGUAGE SCAFFOLDS

1 2 3 4 5 6

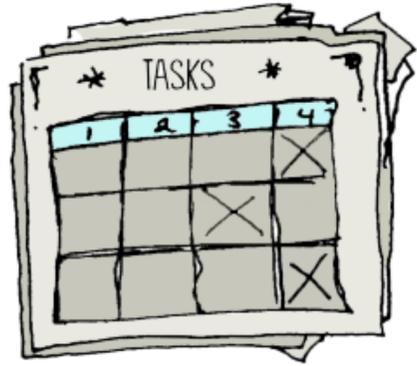


UNIVERSAL DESIGN APPROACH

1 2 3 4 5 6



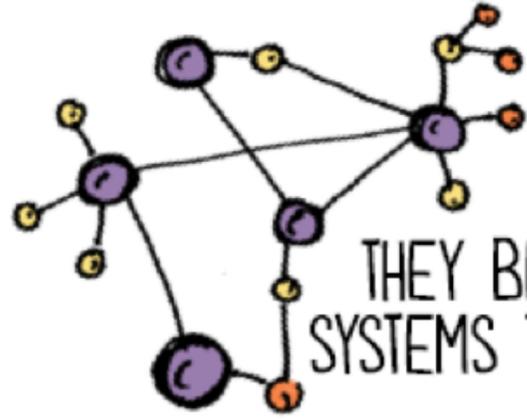
EMPOWER STUDENTS TO  
OWN THE CREATIVE PROCESS



THEY LEARN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

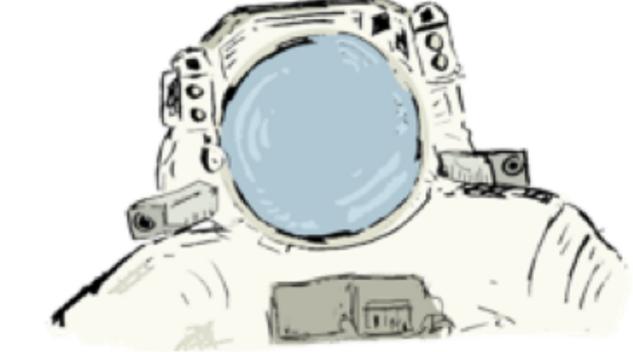


THEY GROW MORE EMPATHETIC

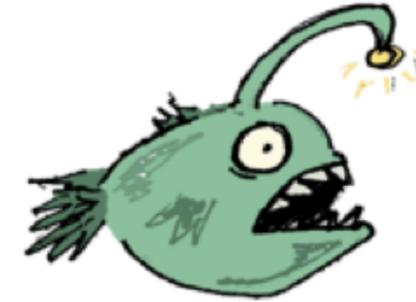


THEY BECOME SYSTEMS THINKERS

THEY BECOME HACKERS AND REBELS



THEY BECOME EXPLORERS

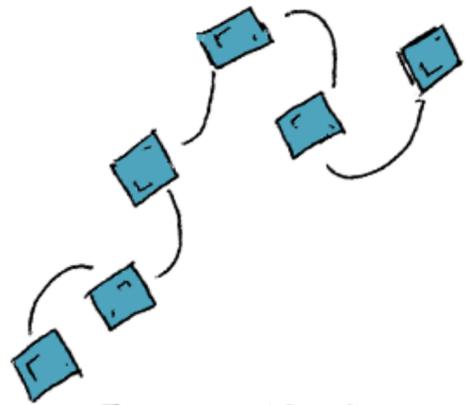


THEY BECOME WILDLY AND UNABASHEDLY DIFFERENT



THEY ARE MORE ENGAGED IN THE LEARNING

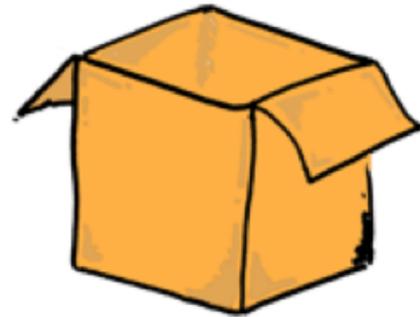
WHEN STUDENTS DEVELOP A MAKER MINDSET



THEY ENGAGE IN ITERATIVE THINKING



THEY BECOME PROBLEM-SOLVERS



THEY THINK DIVERGENTLY  
(THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX BY THINKING DIFFERENTLY ABOUT THE BOX)



THEY MAKE DEEP CONNECTIONS BETWEEN IDEAS



THEY ARE READY FOR THE CREATIVE ECONOMY



THEY LEARN TO TAKE CREATIVE RISKS



NO ACTUAL  
CREATIVE THINKING

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO  
INCORPORATE CREATIVE THINKING  
INTO DISTANCE LEARNING?

1

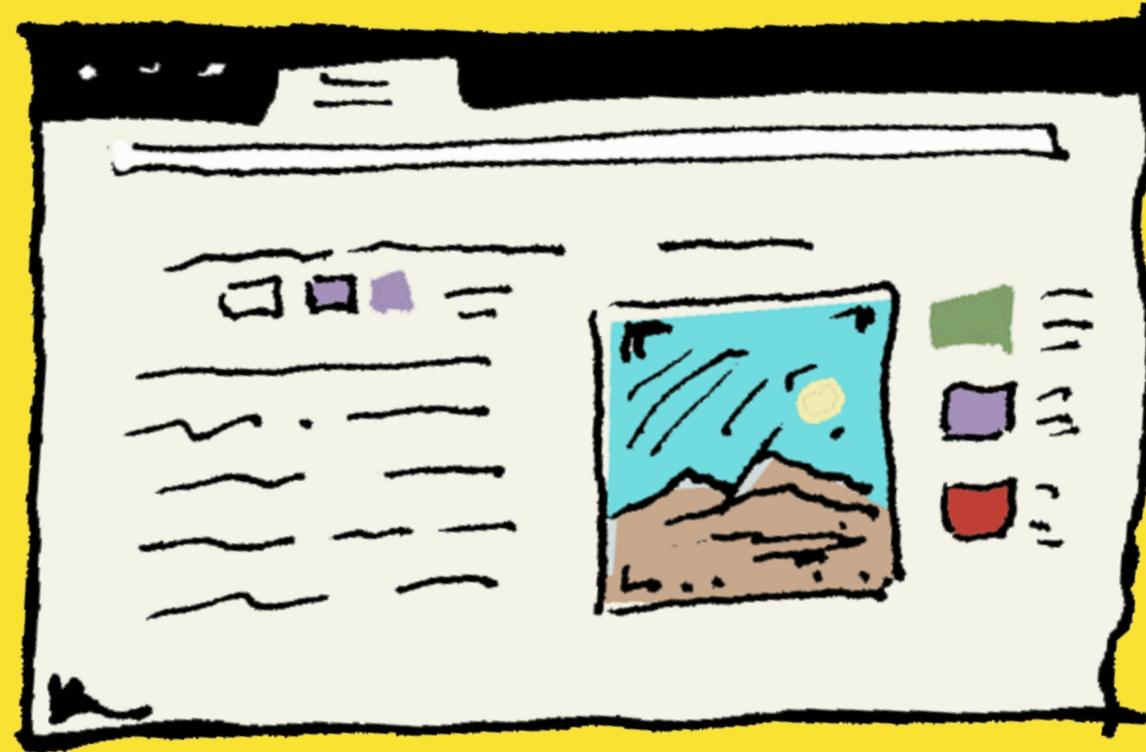
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# BLOG

1 2 3 4 5 6



PODCAST

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VIDEO

1 2 3 4 5 6

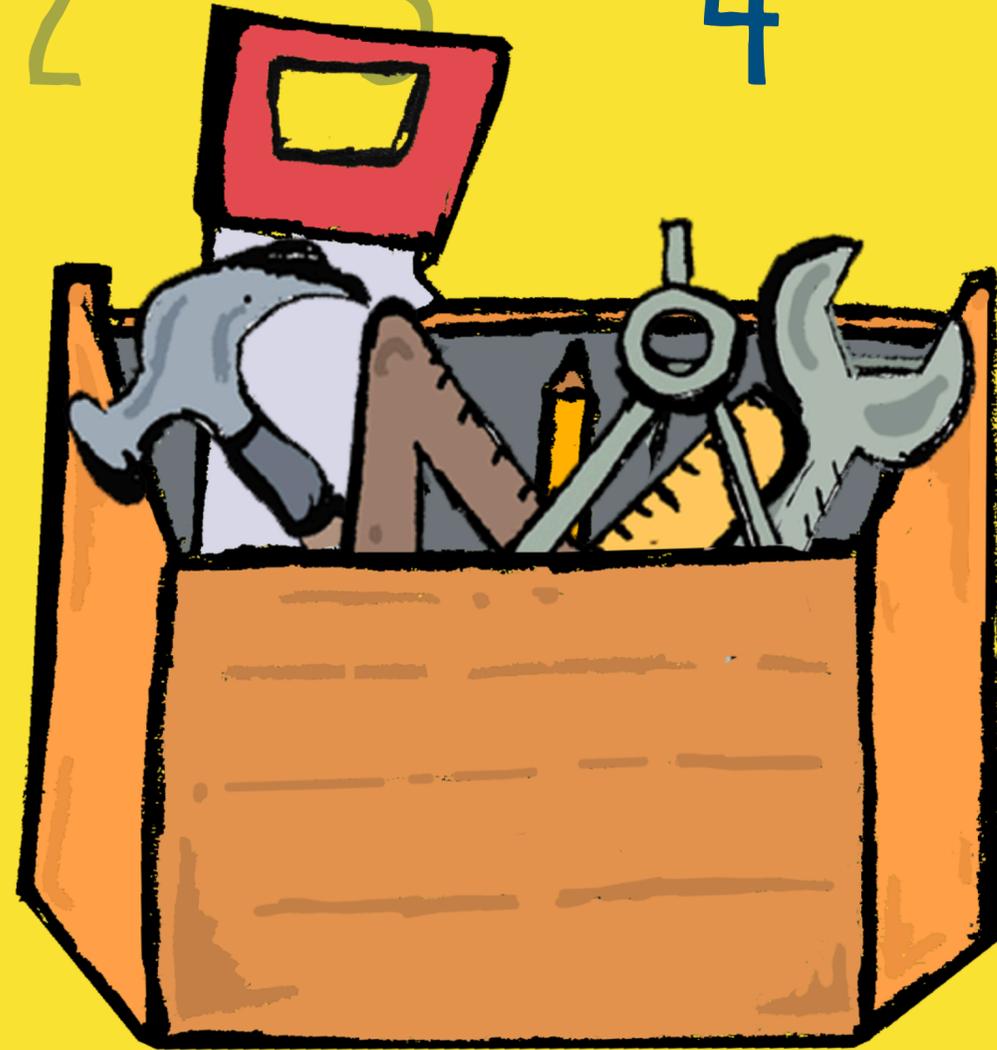


DO SOMETHING HANDS-ON WITH  
ACCOUNTABILITY BUILT IN



DISTANCE LEARNING DOESN'T HAVE  
TO BE IN FRONT OF A SCREEN

1 2 3 4 5 6

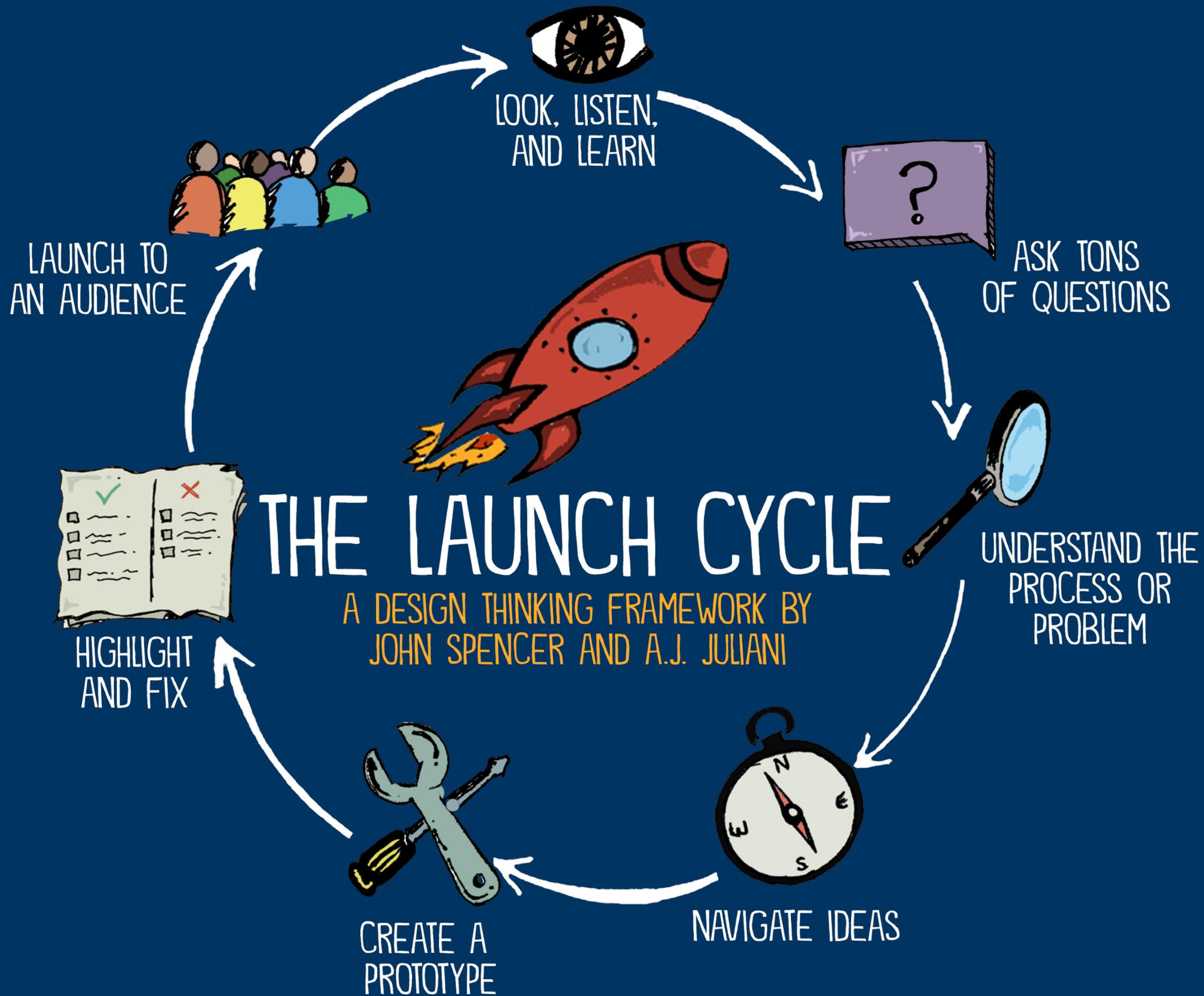


# PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

1 2 3 4 5 6



# DESIGN THINKING



1 2 3 4 5 6



# DESIGN SPRINTS

1 2 3 4 5 6



CREATIVE PROMPTS

## Inspire the Love of Writing

I built this site with a simple idea – that writing should be fun. Challenging? Yes. Important? Absolutely. But also fun. When students love writing, they write more (improving fluency) and they work to improve their writing (improving quality).

As a former middle school teacher, I lived for those magical moments when students would be so into their writing that they would groan when I announced a transition time. I loved watching reluctant writers grow into passionate authors who had found their voice.

This is why I've created these free video prompts that you can use as you inspire your students to fall in love with writing.

## Featured Writing Prompt



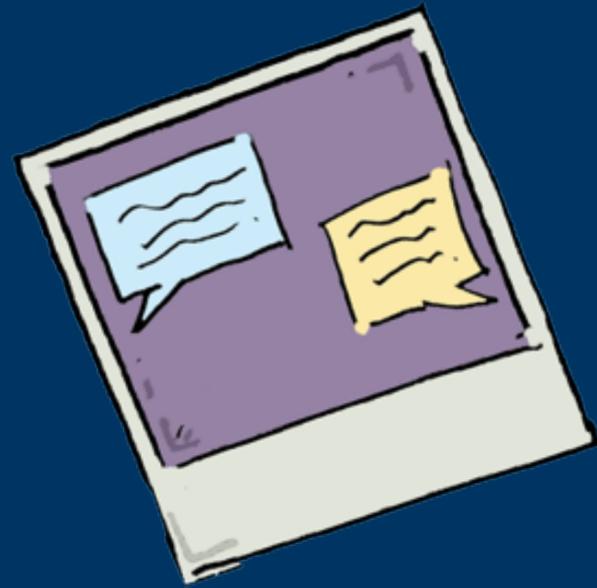
The featured writing prompt video thumbnail has a red background. At the top, it says "PERSUASIVE WRITING PROMPT" in a light, semi-transparent font. Below that, the question "Is technology making life better or worse?" is written in white. In the center, there is a graphic of a globe with a smartphone in front of it, displaying a play button icon. In the bottom right corner, there is a "Copy link" button with a document icon.

## The Power of a Teacher

When my son was in the fourth grade, he had a teacher who inspired her students to love writing. They wrote picture books and blog posts and filled their journals up with persuasive essays and personal narratives. They met regularly for their writer's workshop and, over the course of the year, they began to view themselves as authors and writers.

My son would finish his chores early in the morning and hop onto the computer to start writing. During the summer, he formed a writer's workshop and co-write stories on a shared document.

1 2 3 4 5 6



EMPOWER STUDENTS TO ASK  
THE QUESTIONS



**DAN MEYER**  
MATH CLASS NEEDS A MAKEOVER

**TED**

1 2 3 4 5 6

WHAT CAN YOU  
DO WITH THIS?

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2

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4

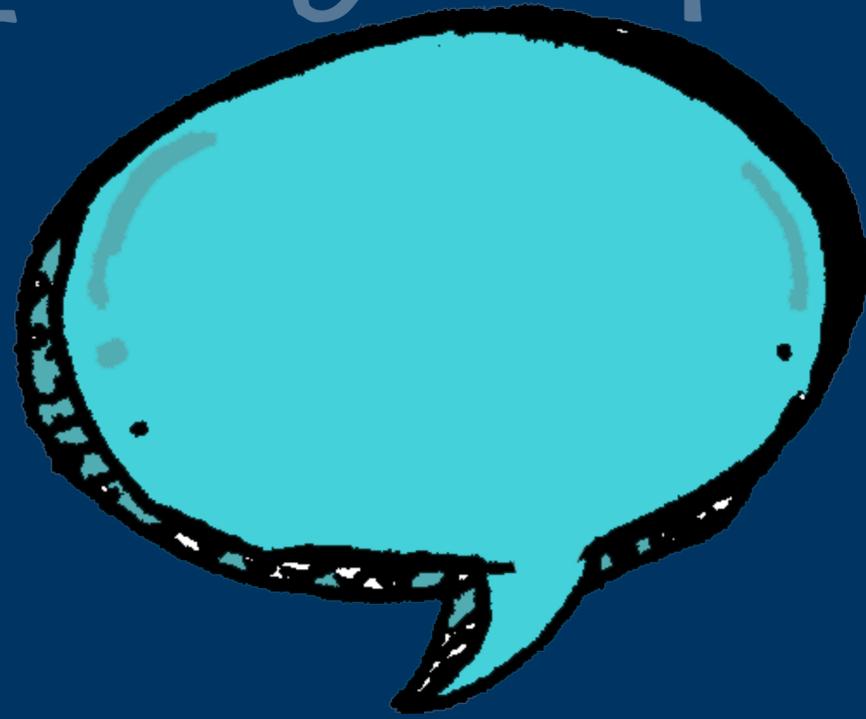
5

6



WONDER DAY

1 2 3 4 5 6



EMPOWER STUDENTS TO  
OWN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

1 2 3 4 5 6



SELF-ASSESSMENT

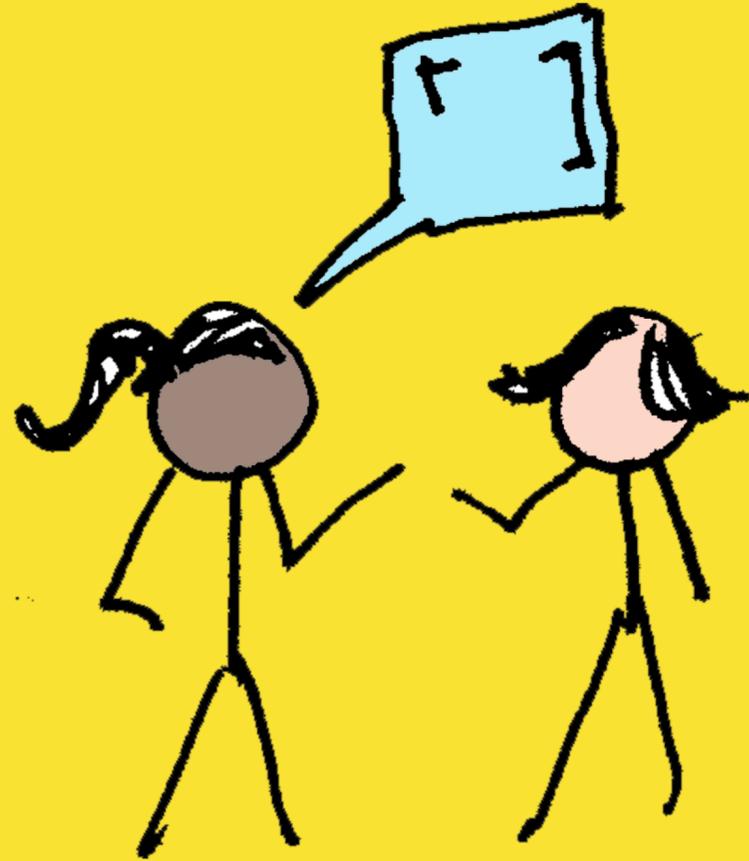
1 2 3 4 5 6

The following are some self-assessment options:

- **Tracking Goals:** Students create their own goals. Then they keep track of the progress. It might mean a graph, a progress bar, or simply a description of progress.
- **Self-reflections:** Here students answer reflective questions about what they are learning, where they are struggling, and what they need to do next.
- **Student Surveys:** Sometimes students struggle with open-ended self-reflection questions. Surveys provide a blend of the objective and the subjective. So, they might use a Likert scale, selecting specific words from a bank, or ranking items.
- **Self-Assessment Rubrics:** Students are able to look at the progression from emerging to mastering with specific descriptions in various categories.
- **Checklists:** These can be a powerful diagnostic tool that students use before, during, and after a task.

# GOOGLE FORM SURVEYS

1 2 3 4 5 6



# PEER ASSESSMENT

# PEER FEEDBACK

<b>Time</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Directions for Partner A</b>	<b>Directions for Partner B</b>
0-2	Elevator Pitch	Partner A explains the process, product or idea in two minutes	Explain your process, product or idea	Take notes on what you are hearing or listen actively
2-4	Clarifying Questions	Partner B asks clarifying questions without giving any feedback	Answer clarifying questions	Ask clarifying questions
4-6	Feedback	Partner B gives feedback to Partner A	Take notes on specific feedback you have gotten	Offer feedback in the form of two things that worked well and one idea for an improvement
6-8	Paraphrase	Partner A paraphrases what he or she has heard from Partner B	Paraphrase what you have heard	Listen to see if the paraphrased information is correct
8-10	Next Steps	Partner A makes a list of future revisions	Make a list of future revisions	Check the list of revisions

# 1 2 3 4 5 6

The following are some peer assessment options:

- **The 10-Minute Feedback System:** This critical friends approach begins with one student sharing their work or pitching an idea while the other student actively listens.
- **Structured Feedback with Sentence Stems:** Here, you as a teacher provide specific sentence stems that your students can use to provide diagnostic, clarifying, or critical feedback.
- **3-2-1 Structure:** This is simple. Students provide three strengths, two areas of improvement and one question that they have.
- **Feedback Carousel:** Each group rotates giving feedback to other groups.
- **Peer Coaching:** Students interview each other about the process, using the coaching questions from the student-teacher conferences to guide them if they struggle to come up with reflection questions.

IT STARTS  
WITH TRUST



# FEEDBACK AND TRUST GRID

CREATED BY JOHN SPENCER

When the feedback is positive but there is negative trust (you don't trust the person), you end up with flattery. This feels great but it's potentially toxic and often manipulative. When there's distrust and negative feedback, it's just hating. When the feedback is negative but there's a high level of trust, you actually have critical feedback. It doesn't feel good but it's often where growth happens. Finally, when the feedback is positive and there's a high level of trust, you have affirmation – and we all need more affirmation in our lives. These are the words that can pull you through even when you stop believing in yourself. Note that trust levels can change over time with personal growth, relational dynamics, and events. Also, trust is often task-specific and context-specific.

