

*Part of Opportunity Education's Webinar Series:
The Quest to Transform the High School Experience*

Build Skills into Lifelong Learning

Transform Content Instruction into Sustained Skills Practice

 **Opportunity Education**
www.opportunityeducation.org

Welcome!
We will begin shortly.
If you can see the
slide and hear the
music, you are all set.



Kelsey Cain

**Director of Professional Learning
Opportunity Education**

- B.A. in Psychology and Africana Studies; Teaching Licensure for K-6 all subjects, 6-12 Language Arts, Mathematics, and Social Studies
- Focused on helping educators create engaging, skills-focused, and active learning communities
- Interested in elevating student voice and agency in the learning process, with an emphasis on both process and product
- I love my rescue pups, watching sports, and being a Trivia scribe



Jennifer Dalbey

Senior Mentor, Quest Forward Academy Omaha

- BS in Journalism - Public Relations; MA in Communication, MA in Teaching. Teaching Licensure for 7-12 Language Arts and Social Sciences.
- Focused on student-centered learning (growth/future paths), skill application, and goal setting.
- Interested in advancing student's ability to communicate effectively and appropriately, while openly expressing their views. My hope is to create productive and informed citizens.
- I have an affinity for big dogs, photography, and am currently enthralled in researching my family's ancestry.



Ellen Dutton, Ed.D

Curriculum Director, Science

- High School and College Science Educator for 30+ years
- Doctorate in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment for Science Education
- Author of *A Tree for a Year* (2020, Brandylane Publishers)
- Avid gardener, nature lover, and beginning Bridge player



Jolene Zywica, PhD

**Senior Director of Learning Strategy
Opportunity Education**

- Leads research, design, and evaluation efforts. Provides support to school leadership and staff
- Involved in Quest Forward Learning since its inception in 2014
- Prior experiences: PhD in Learning Sciences and Policy, Post-doctoral researcher at Carnegie Mellon University, Literacy Coach in Chicago Public Schools, Teacher in Pittsburgh H.S., Afterschool and summer program designer and facilitator, researcher
- Swimming, camping, cooking, gardening, tball coach

Thank you for joining us.

Please introduce yourselves in the chat box.

Your Name, Your Location and School/Organization, Your Role

The webinar will be recorded and available. All webinar registrants will receive a follow-up email that will include the webinar slide deck, recording, and other resources mentioned during the presentation.



In the next hour, you will...

1. Learn new ways to infuse your high school with skills practice, so students are better equipped to thrive in their world after graduation, no matter their path.
2. Learn how Quest Forward schools use a skills-focused curriculum with tangible examples of what has proven to work, and what hasn't.



Need: A Better Learning Model for High School

Students

From passive consumption and one-size-fits-all learning



To differentiated, student-directed, best-fit learning and growth supported by engaged teachers

Curriculum

From content-focused memorization and testing



To project-driven, student-directed academic and skills development

Assessments

From pervasive quizzes and summative grades



Authentic evaluation of both work product and work process

Quest Forward Learning™

An Integrated Solution





**SKILLS-FORWARD
CURRICULUM**

**FEEDBACK-FOCUSED
ASSESSMENTS**

**INTEGRATED LEARNING
MANAGEMENT PLATFORM**

All supported by extensive teacher professional learning and coaching, and change management support.

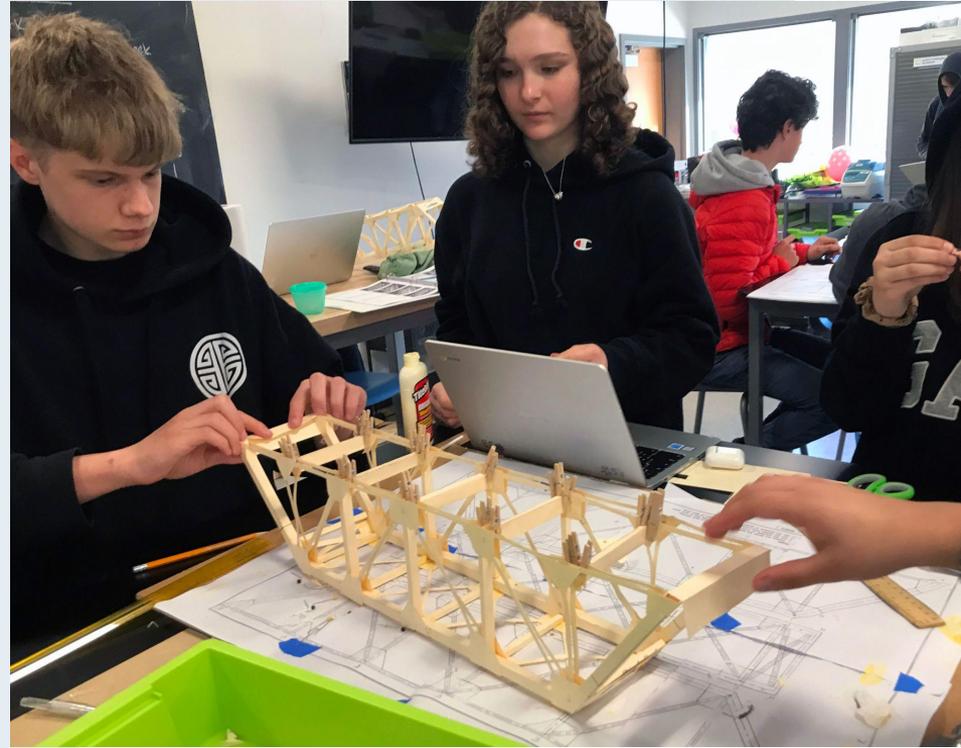
A young Black woman with braids and glasses is looking through a microscope in a classroom. She is wearing a blue hoodie with a yellow and white graphic. The microscope is white and grey, with a label that reads "AO Scientific Instruments".

 Opportunity Education

Build Skills for Lifelong Learning

Transform Content Instruction into Sustained Skills Practice

We know that
skills are
valuable.





1. Students need more than academics.
2. Learning, executive functioning, and socioemotional skills support academic, professional, and personal success.
3. Employers seek skills, not just degrees.





There's debate about who should teach these skills.

Only 42% of high school teachers surveyed said it was important to teach mindset, character, and socioemotional skills in high school.



3 Skills Frameworks



Essential Habits

Self skills associated with how a student thinks, approaches the world, and how they interact with others:

-  **Express Curiosity**
-  **Learn from Setbacks**
-  **Solve Problems**
-  **Manage Yourself**
-  **Communicate and Collaborate**
-  **Live an Integrated Life**



Learning Skills

Academic skills often focused on in school — but also important throughout life — organized into 5 groups:

-  **Investigate**
-  **Analyze**
-  **Reason**
-  **Communicate**
-  **Learn Who You Are**



Work Skills

Executive functions that focus on how a person works and accomplishes goals effectively:

-  **Focus**
-  **Work Efficiently**
-  **Plan and Achieve Goals**
-  **Manage Time and Resources**
-  **Organize**
-  **Document and Take Notes**



Learning Skills

- Practiced in everything students do.
- Skills growth is the prime outcome from the program.
- Emphasize the importance of process and method of learning just as much as the final product itself.





Learning Skills



- 5 groups
- 12 skills



MYTH

Content isn't important.

FACT

Content matters.
It is the context for practicing skills.



MYTH

I can't take a skills-forward approach because of requirements from my district or state.

FACT

The Quest Forward curriculum is aligned to standards like CC and NGSS.

How are skills built
into the curriculum?

How are they
envisioned in
course design?



Methodology + Curriculum

5 Principles

1. Learning Requires Action
2. Learning Improves with Practice
3. We Learn Better Together
4. Learning Happens Everywhere, and Always
5. Learning Drives Personal Growth

3 Skills Frameworks



Academic Standards

Common Core State Standards, NGSS, C3

Quest Forward Courses

- Natively digital
- Relevant topics and resources
- Focused on mastery

9 English

9 Social Sciences

11 Biochemistry 1

9 Mathematics

Skills and Backwards Design



- The curriculum design is intentional, with learning goals based on specific skills.
- Thinking *first* about the specific skills and *then* about the evidence or artifact that can demonstrate those skills.
- From there, quest learning activities are planned that are best suited to allow students to develop, practice, and apply these skills and thus be successful in accomplishing the overarching learning goals.



10 Integrated Science: Waves: Sound & Light Level 1

Lightning, Then the Thunder



Science



Discovery Quest



Elizabeth Lehnertz



speed of light, speed of sound, wavespeed, Mechanical Waves, Electromagnetic Waves



5 Activities



Statistics

Students collaborate in a group to compose a survey question

Analyze and identify patterns from the collected survey data

Reflect on how questions of probability can be answered by their respective data set

Share their survey results in a final project report



English

Students begin by establishing meaning from a chosen text.

Next, they interpret the author's point of view and assess the author's argument.

Then, students take a position supported by reasoning.



Social Sciences

Students investigate the global issue linked to US coffee consumption

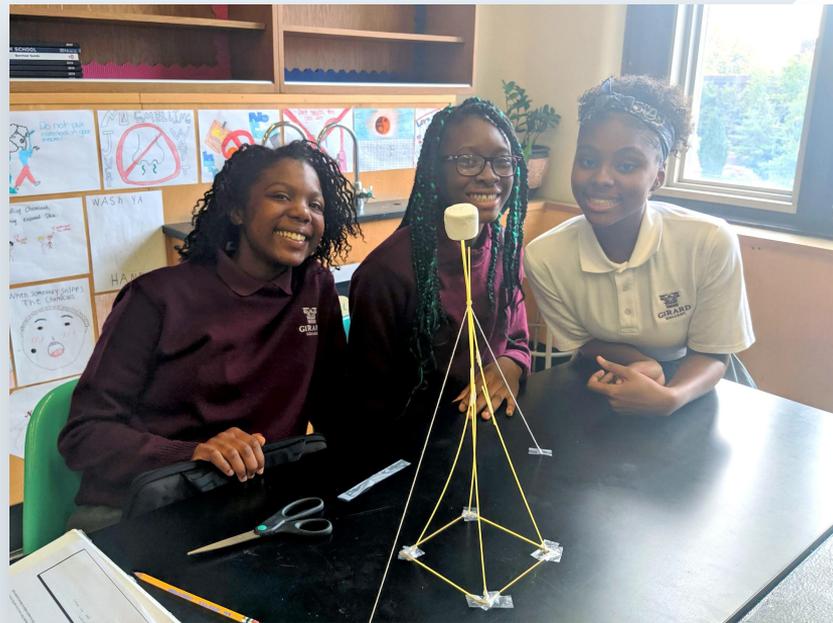
Ask questions about where their local coffee is produced

Establish meaning of fair trade

Compose a summary of what they discovered

Examples from Quest Forward Classrooms

If you aren't planning with the skills first, then what are you really planning?





1. Orient new students to the practice of skills

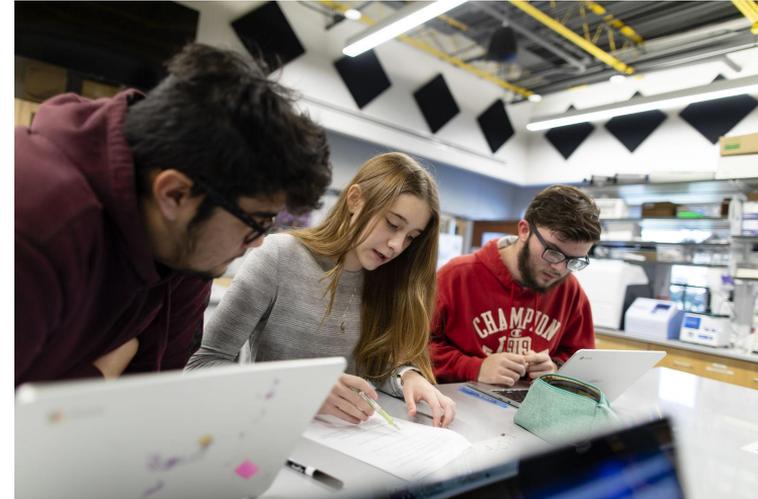
- a. Look for the skills gained through the learning processes
- b. Skills-driven vs. traditionally content-driven





2. Frame the curriculum around skills

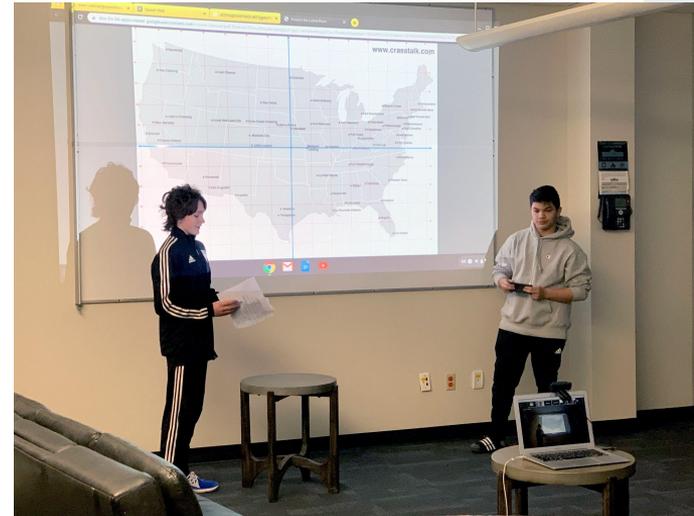
- a. Create focal point for term
- b. Quest-based skill assessment
- c. Activity-based focus skills





3. Reinforce within the class setting

- a. Introduce at beginning of a unit, project, or activity.
- b. Connect skill to relevancy
 - i. To content
 - ii. To the real world / larger picture



Focus Skills



- A specific skill applied to a course activity with differentiated or individualized guidance to students on how they can practice/apply the skill.
- Guidance can be from Evidence Statements or mentor discretion based on student needs.

The screenshot shows a digital learning interface. At the top, there is a progress bar with five dots, the third of which is highlighted. Below the progress bar is a title 'King Coal' and a subtitle 'Explore how coal is mined.' A blue button with a diamond icon and the text '+ Apply Focus Skill' is visible. Below this, there is a paragraph of text: 'We now know that coal is one of the biggest sources of energy in the world today. But people don't get access to it in the simple ways they did in prehistoric times.' This is followed by another paragraph: 'Explore these resources about the process of modern coal mining.' Then, a prompt says 'Answer these questions in your notebook:' followed by a bulleted list of three questions: 'How has coal mining changed between the early twentieth century and today?', 'What are the most efficient processes?', and 'What are some of the drawbacks of modern methods?'. At the bottom, there are two video thumbnails. The first is titled 'How They Do It: Coal Mining' and the second is titled 'Photos: A Historical Look at Coal'.



What's Your Position?



Express your own position on civil disobedience.



Focus Skill



Collaborate

As a team develop your debate. Each team member must participate in both the research portion and the team verbal debate portion. Additionally, during the debate, collaboration time will be given to respond to resolutions presented.



Reconsider Your Opinion

Review and reconsider your opinion of civil disobedience.

Focus Skill



Assess Arguments

Take a step back from "your side" of the argument. To make an argument strong, it is best to look at the other side to counter their argument in a debate. Look for the most viable arguments for the other side and embed them in your team's debate.



Help Students Understand the Value of Skills through Practical Application



Examples: Student Work



IS THE COLD WAR REALLY OVER?

"The Iron Curtain" 1949 - 1991

The political, military, and ideological barrier made by the Soviet Union after World War II, was created in order to seal itself and its "dependent" eastern and central European allies off from open contact with the West and other noncommunist areas. This was not actually a physical wall in most places, but was supposed to separate the communist and capitalist countries within Europe for ease of tension, but ended up causing more tension in the sense of "tensions." The Iron Curtain had already fallen in 1951 when the Soviet Union dissolved into its component republics, which lifted the Iron Curtain, and ended the Cold War.

Start Of The Non-Aligned Movement - 1961

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was formed and 23 countries met together to remain neutral. They also focused on giving smaller countries a voice and a way in politics. Members of NAM were not allowed to be allied with any of the "Great Powers" - basically the USA or USSR so it was started in fear of a war between them.

NAM still exists today and continues to give small countries a voice through banding together and meeting yearly. They still require members to not be allied with bigger countries, but the rules are more lax than before.

How The Soviets Fought The Cold War - 1960

Planning for quick defeat of NATO - the end goal for the Soviets in the cold war was a quick takeover of NATO in a non-nuclear war. Quick victory was vital to prevent United States from being able to retaliate with nuclear arms. In 1960 General A. Gaidukovich suggested the concept of attack as following border engagements of the opposing sides with a subsequent anticipated advance of Soviet troops into the territory of the enemy. After the fall of Gaidukovich in the mid 60's the Soviets decided to in the 1970's to match the United States power in intercontinental missiles and nuclear arms which then led to the famous arm race.

Start of Cold War - 1947

The Cold War started after WWII when Nazi Germany surrendered, but underlying tensions spilled over from that war. These tensions started off with hoarding of the best most powerful countries in the world: The United States and The Soviet Union, regarding who had the most power politically (liberal democracy vs. totalitarian/communism), military, economically, and nuclear weapon wise. Though, not much nuclear weapons of war were used to fight the war.

The Fall Of The Soviets - 1989

The Soviets were fighting strong up to the point of the destruction of the Berlin Wall in 1989. That created floods of people to leave from these communist parties and free elections ousted Communist regimes in eastern Europe. This caused disunion to fall apart with the fall of the Soviets, the end of the war let apart freeing entire populations from communist states. For without the people accepting communism, there is no way to be so powerful. A lot of countries had already announced that they would no longer be part of the Soviet Union before these events had already happened.

Skills Practiced

- Ask Questions
- Assess Arguments
- Take a Position

Examples: Student Work



The screenshot shows a web browser displaying a portfolio for Paa Yaw. The page has a clean, modern design with a white background and blue accents. At the top left, the name 'Paa Yaw' is followed by the title 'STUDENT/TEEN ENTREPRENEUR'. On the right, there are navigation links for 'ABOUT ME', 'RESUME', and 'CONTACT'. The main content area features a circular profile picture of Paa Yaw, a large 'Hello' greeting, and a quote from Charles R. Swindoll. Below the quote are two buttons for 'RESUME' and 'BLOG'. A bio paragraph follows, and at the bottom right, there is a blue 'Let's Chat!' button with a speech bubble icon.

Paa Yaw / STUDENT/TEEN ENTREPRENEUR

ABOUT ME RESUME CONTACT



Paa Yaw

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT/ ENTREPRENEUR

"I keep my personal life private, so don't think you know me. You know what I allow you to know." -Drake

Hello

Blessed, Entrepreneurial, Intelligent, Joyful, Focused, Straightforward

"LIFE IS 10% WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU AND 90% OF WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT" - CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

RESUME BLOG

Born in Accra, Ghana, I moved to the state of Nebraska at a young age with my parents. I have three sisters and two wonderful parents of whom I am so honored to have. As a young child, I have been raised in a heavily Christian family and that led me to become a Christian at the age of 6. From a young age, I have always been an entrepreneur originally reselling things around my home on various online platforms. Today, I run

Let's Chat!

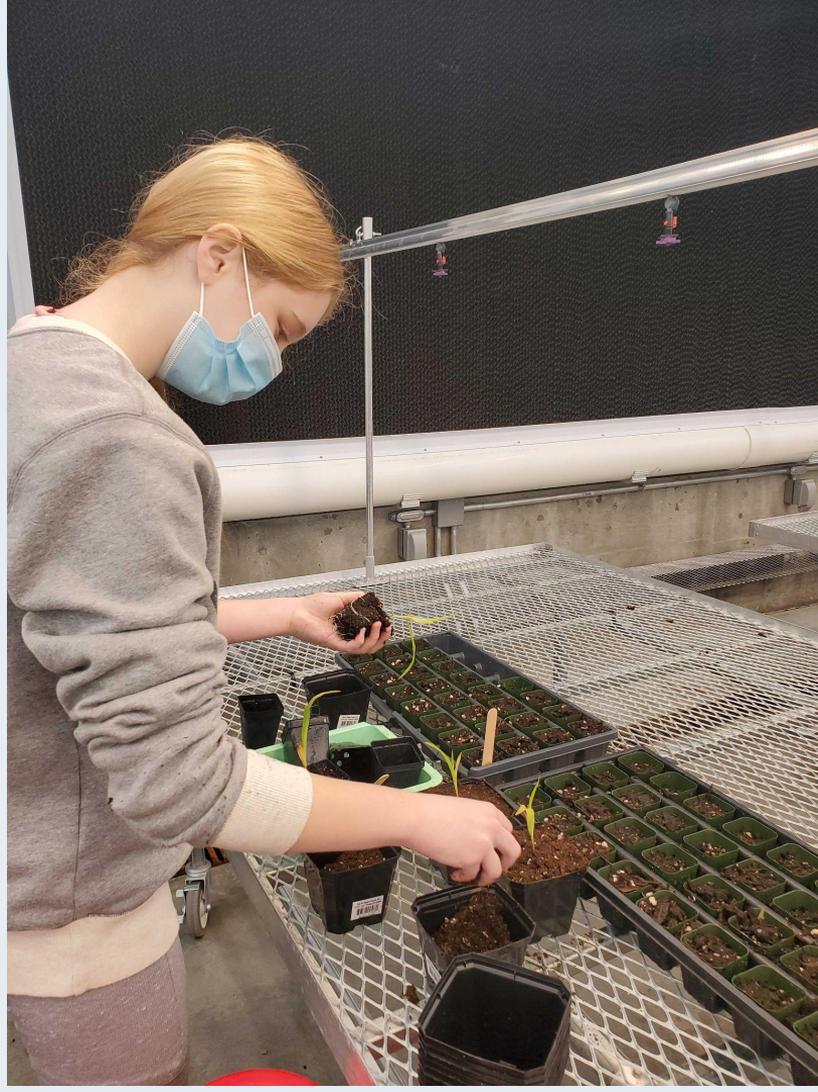
Skills Practiced

- Ask Questions
- Be Creative
- Share

In Their Own Words

Quest Forward Academy isn't about memorization of content, but rather your deeper understanding of that content and giving us the skills we need to be successful adults.

— Libby, STUDENT
QUEST FORWARD ACADEMY OMAHA



Skills Feedback and Assessment



Skills Check

- Can be recorded at any time or frequency
- Both teachers and students record skills checks
- Develops student awareness and metacognition

Skills History

ii Social Sciences

Ask Questions

Examples:

- Record simple observations about a text, source, or object using a graphic organizer or other given tool.
- Develop simple questions based on texts, sources, or observations.



Skills Check



Social Sciences Level 1
Compass of Our Country



Social Sciences  Select a skill 



[+ Add Skill](#)

Finish



You can shift the focus to skills no matter the curriculum you are using.

1. Identify skills
2. Talk about them daily
3. Tell students which skills they're practicing and how. Be explicit.
4. Help students to identify skill goals and to reflect on their skills.
5. Provide feedback that is framed around skills and habits.

Q&A

What would you like to learn more about?



1

Mark your calendars. Sign up for the next webinar on tracking student growth without tests.

www.opportunityeducation.org/webinar-growth

2

Learn more about Quest Forward Learning, and how it helps high schools to transform.

www.opportunityeducation.org/transform



Opportunity Education

www.opportunityeducation.org

3

Contact us to find out if
Quest Forward Learning
could fit your unique school.

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Thank you.



Opportunity Education

Opportunity Education is a non-profit foundation developing and supporting life-changing learning programs for young adults worldwide. Since 2005, we have supported over 1 million students in 11 countries.

We help school leaders to shift their school's work from content instruction and testing to student skills practice and growth within a rigorous academic program that meets the highest standards.

