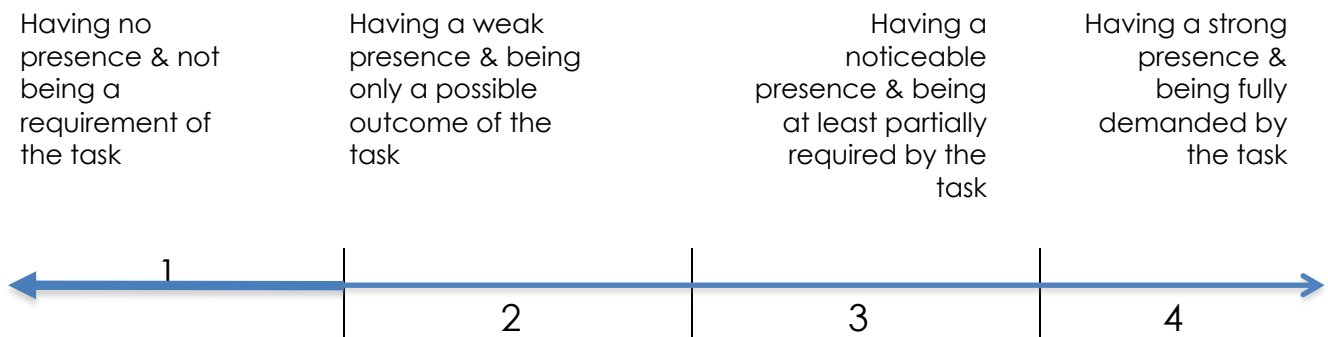


# CREATING POWERFUL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

The four criteria below can be useful in shaping the design of “understanding performances” so that they more effectively promote the kinds of authentic intellectual engagement that can lead to deeper understanding. Each of these qualities may exist to a greater or lesser in the various tasks, activities, and assignments we as teachers create for students. As such, each criterion represents a continuum ranging from:



**Novel Application:** Applying, organizing, interpreting, evaluating, or synthesizing prior knowledge and skills to solve novel problems or form new judgments so that one’s skills and knowledge are sharpened, deepened, and enhanced—not merely practiced.

**Meaningful Inquiry:** Engaging in various modes of disciplinary thinking to develop new personal understandings and insights that go beyond the obvious and extend one’s current level of understanding of the topic.

**Effective Communication:** Expressing, representing, justifying, supporting, and communicating ones ideas, understandings, methods, and processes effectively using disciplinary tools, symbols & language.

**Perceived Worth:** Producing discourse, products, or performances that have some sense of personal meaning and value beyond merely “doing work for the teacher.” The activity is imbued with purpose. At the highest level, such efforts may even have utilitarian, aesthetic, or social value that transcends the classroom and connects students’ learning to the larger world.

Note: These criteria draw from Fred Newmann’s 2001 work on the nature of Authentic Intellectual Work along with ideas about understanding performances as represented in the Teaching for Understanding Framework (Blythe, 1998).