FIGURE 1. Criteria for Powerful Assignments

Assignments that Advance Readiness for Researching, Analyzing, Planning, and Evaluating

1. Students conduct background research and develop options for completing the assignment, drawing from technical documents and knowledge of highly skilled workers in the field.

2. Students follow a problem-solving process used by experts in the career field.

3. Students reflect, problem-solve, analyze, plan, and experience a productive struggle.

Assignments that Address Technical Readiness

1. Students use existing knowledge to advance their ability to learn new software in completing an assignment.

2. Students learn and use work-related technology and technical skills to complete assignments.

3. Students learn to work as a team to successfully address the project or problem.

4. Students work both independently and as a team to contribute to the learning of others, learn from other students and teachers, and learn from adult mentors in the field.

Assignments that Allow Students to Self-Reflect on Personal Goals

1. Students explore and reflect on their interests, aptitudes, and educational and career options based on new insights gained from the learning experience.

2. Students keep a journal that documents their work, contains their reflections about the new knowledge and skills they've developed, and identifies gaps to be addressed in their readiness for both career and postsecondary studies.

Assignments that Address Academic and Career Readiness

1. Students apply grade-level literacy, mathematics, and science knowledge and skills to complete the work.

2. Each student prepares a written final report, and each team develops a team report based on individual student reports.

3. Students present a final oral report to an authentic audience consisting of employers and postsecondary partners who review students' work.