



## Twelve Steps to Beautiful Work

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Here are twelve progressive layers of scaffolding that teachers might employ to help students achieve high quality—and beauty—in their work.

1. **Assignment.** “Make a poster showing what you have learned about ancient Greece.”  
*What kind of work might you expect from students? What else would they need?*
2. **Components.** “Your poster must be 2 ft. by 3 ft. It must represent culture, politics, religion, or architecture. It must include an example of how that aspect of ancient Greece affects our culture today. There must be a title and captions for each illustration/photo explaining why it is important. There must be a map of ancient Greece.”  
*How might this poster be higher quality than the first? Would describing the components be enough?*
3. **Characteristics of a quality product.** “Your poster must be organized, balanced, creative, and pleasing to the eye. It must use color, space and borders effectively.”  
*How would this help increase the quality? What else would be needed?*
4. **Models.** Use samples of exemplary student work to show what quality looks like. What does “organized” look like? Balance? How can color enhance meaning? What is effective use of space?
5. **Design rubric.** Describe different levels of quality. Look at student work and professional models to name the attributes of weak and strong work. Identify 4, 3, 2, and 1 levels.
6. **Mini-lessons and workshops.** Teach skills needed to complete the product. Offer lessons on organization, relevant content, balance and color, word choice, sentence fluency, etc.
7. **Self-assessment.** Help students assume responsibility for their own learning. They can assess themselves on the rubric.
8. **Feedback from others.** Students can learn how to give effective feedback, based on the rubric, that is kind, helpful, and specific.
9. **Multiple drafts.** Students focus revision on one aspect at a time. They get feedback after each revision.
10. **Conference with teacher.** Students get feedback from the teacher before producing final drafts.
11. **Exhibition.** Publicly display work to peers, to the community, to experts in the field.
12. **Reflection.** What did I do well? Where did I meet the learning targets? Where did I fall short? What do I need to work on to reach them next time?