

## Content Tip: SmartSkills



**DEFINITION:** SmartSkills are the levels of thinking expected of students to complete a Dynamic Lesson Plan and standards-based instruction or assessment tasks.

**GUIDELINES:** Use the templates in this Content to select the SmartSkills levels for planning, teaching, and assessing your standards-based instruction and assessment activities. Read the following background information for learning more about "SmartSkills" and how to use them in TaskBuilder.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**How can every student become a lifelong learner?** Each time that you use a Dynamic Lesson Plan or standards-based instruction task you say to each student: "You get smarter when you complete my learning activities, because you not only learn subject matter, but you also learn how to apply it in real world settings."

#### TaskBuilder Tips:

SmartSkills help you to focus on three integrated learning levels to develop and assess thinking skills in your students. Moreover, they will enable your students to discover or learn something for themselves thereby creating new knowledge.

1. **At the first level your students learn to acquire data.** This means they learn from instructional activities about data in content areas such as art, mathematics, language arts, science, social studies, physical education, technology, and so forth.
2. **At the second level, your students learn to visualize data as information.** This means they learn from instructional activities how to arrange, organize, and store data learned in level one to create patterns and meaning for applying information at level three.
3. **At the third level, your students learn to create knowledge.** This means they learn from instructional activities how to apply information learned in level two to make decisions, solve problems, and construct solutions -- all of which create new knowledge for each student.

The more you use all three of these levels in your Dynamic Lesson Plan or standards-based tasks, the smarter your students will become. Most school reform programs throughout the country expect and assess student performance at the third level.

**HOW DO SMARTSKILLS WORK?** Trace each example below across the levels to see how each evolves from data to information to knowledge. Select the level(s) in the SmartSkills template that you expect your students to perform, construct, or do in your Dynamic Lesson Plan or standards-based task.

#### Acquiring Data

The process of receiving, gathering, or generating words, numbers, sounds, images, odors, colors, and subject matter content, skills, concepts, and processes to

#### Visualizing Information

The process of arranging, organizing, and storing data to create patterns and meaning for applying information.

#### Creating Knowledge

The process of applying information to make decisions, solve problems, and create solutions that result in new knowledge.

use as a basis for visualizing information.		
1. The receipts from charges on a credit card (Mathematics)	1. Monthly credit card bill showing charges relative to a credit limit (Mathematics)	1. Using the annual credit card summary to prepare a tax return (Mathematics)
2. Observations of weather conditions (Science)	2. Color-coded weather map (Science)	2. Deciding when and where to take a weekend vacation (Science)
3. Musical notes (Fine Arts)	3. Musical compositions (Fine Arts)	3. Selecting musical compositions and performers for a wedding
4. Ingredients in a food product (Health)	4. Nutrition label on food products (Health)	4. Deciding the types of food to eat (Health)
5. Brainstorming and drafting ideas for a new product in a software company (English)	5. Comparing the written features and benefits of the new software product with competing products (English)	5. Writing a sales letter to persuade customers to buy the new software (English)

**SMART SKILLS TEMPLATE**

**- Data students will acquire in your standards-based task:**

1. Vocabulary:
2. Numbers:
3. Images:
4. Odors:
5. Colors:
6. Content:
7. Skills:
8. Concepts:
9. Processes:
10. Other:

**- Data that are visualized as information in your standards-based task:**

1. Arranging:
2. Organizing:
3. Storing:
4. Creating patterns:
5. Creating meaning:
6. Other:

**- Visualized information that becomes new knowledge in your standards-based task:**

1. Making decisions:
2. Solving problems:
3. Creating solutions:
4. Other:

**Sources:**

1. *Learning expectations of the 21st century* by LearningFRONT.
2. Davis, S. (1996) *Future perfect*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.

**For more information visit:** <http://www.learningfront.com>

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