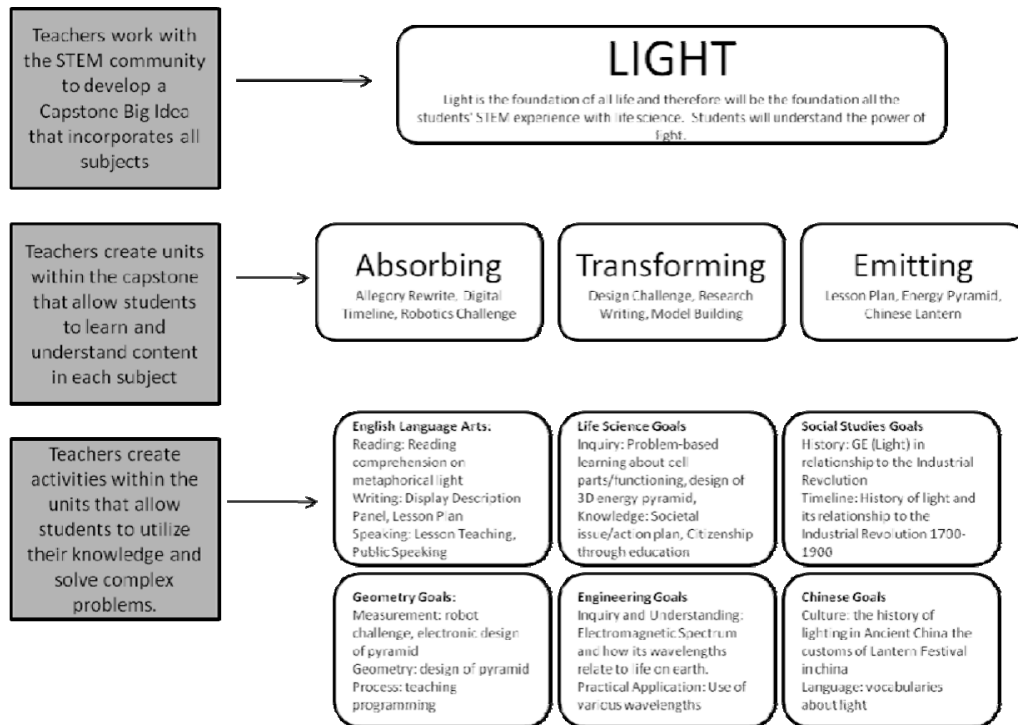


Project-Based Learning

“Project-based Learning requires students to go through an extended process of inquiry in response to a complex question, problem, or challenge. While allowing for some degree of student “voice and choice,” rigorous projects are carefully planned, managed, and assessed to help students learn key academic content, practice 21st Century Skills (such as collaboration, communication & critical thinking), and create high-quality, authentic products & presentations. “ (Buck Institute for Education, 2010).

- Projects, or “Capstones” are created to engage and motivate students through hand-on transdisciplinary learning experiences.
- Each capstone is organized around a specific theme and essential questions. Teachers work together to plan the instruction and class schedule for each week of the capstone. This often means that students don’t attend classes the same way every day. Because the teachers are working together, rather than in traditional departments, schedules are very fluid and flexible.
- Capstones incorporate benchmarks from every subject area.
- Students learn state-mandated benchmarks as well as 21st Century Skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving, collaboration, agility and adaptability, initiative and entrepreneurialism, effective oral and written communication, accessing and analyzing information, and curiosity and imagination (Wagner).
- Given the same guidelines for a specific capstone, each student may use their unique ideas, designs and choices to obtain their desired outcome which may vary dramatically from other students.
- During a typical school schedule, performance is variable while time is constant. At MC² STEM High School performance is the constant while time is the variable.
- Some students may take a little longer than other to complete given tasks in a project and others may be given more challenging options to pursue if they complete a task in a shorter amount of time.



Wagner, Tony. *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need--And What We Can Do About It*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2008. Print.

Buck Institute for Education (2003). *Project Based Learning Handbook: A Guide to Standards-Focused Project Based Learning for Middle and High School Teachers*.