

## High School Engineering Design

At the high school level students are expected to engage with major global issues at the interface of science, technology, society and the environment, and to bring to bear the kinds of analytical and strategic thinking that prior training and increased maturity make possible. As in prior levels, these capabilities can be thought of in three stages—defining the problem, developing possible solutions, and improving designs.

**Defining the problem** at the high school level requires both qualitative and quantitative analysis. For example, the need to provide food and fresh water for future generations comes into sharp focus when considering the speed at which world population is growing, and conditions in countries that have experienced famine. While high school students are not expected to solve these challenges, they are expected to begin thinking about them as problems that can be addressed, at least in part, through engineering.

**Developing possible solutions** for major global problems begins by breaking them down into smaller problems that can be tackled with engineering methods. To evaluate potential solutions students are expected to not only consider a wide range of criteria, but to also recognize that criteria need to be prioritized. For example, public safety or environmental protection may be more important than cost or even functionality. Decisions on priorities can then guide tradeoff choices.

**Improving designs** at the high school level may involve sophisticated methods, such as using computer simulations to model proposed solutions. Students are expected to use such methods to take into account a range of criteria and constraints, to try and anticipate possible societal and environmental impacts, and to test the validity of their simulations by comparison to the real world.

Connections with other science disciplines help high school students develop these capabilities in various contexts. For example, in the life sciences students are expected to design, evaluate, and refine a solution for reducing human impact on the environment (HS-LS2-7) and to create or revise a simulation to test solutions for mitigating adverse impacts of human activity on biodiversity (HS-LS4-6). In the physical sciences students solve problems by applying their engineering capabilities along with their knowledge of conditions for chemical reactions (HS-PS1-6), forces during collisions (HS-PS2-3), and conversion of energy from one form to another (HS-PS3-3). In the Earth and space sciences students apply their engineering capabilities to reduce human impacts on Earth systems, and improve social and environmental cost-benefit ratios (HS-ESS3-2, HS-ESS3-4).

By the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students are expected to achieve all four HS-ETS1 performance expectations (HS-ETS1-1, HS-ETS1-2, HS-ETS1-3, and HS-ETS1-4) related to a single problem in order to understand the interrelated processes of engineering design. These include analyzing major global challenges, quantifying criteria and constraints for solutions; breaking down a complex problem into smaller, more manageable problems, evaluating alternative solutions based on prioritized criteria and trade-offs, and using a computer simulation to model the impact of proposed solutions. While the performance expectations shown in High School Engineering Design couple particular practices with specific disciplinary core ideas, instructional decisions should include use of many practices that lead to the performance expectations.