Vermont's Shift Towards Proficiency
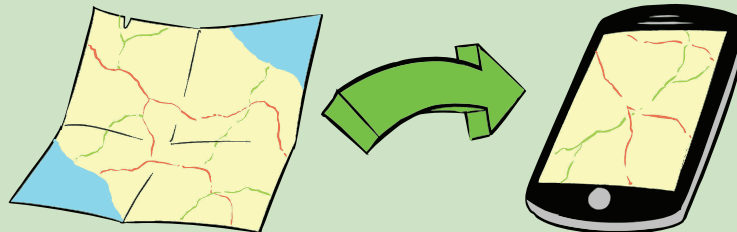
What does it mean to be competent or proficient at something?
Proficiency is both understanding material and the ability to apply and demonstrate it.

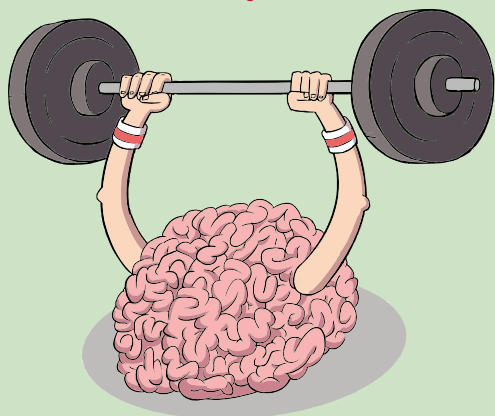## WHY move to a proficiency-based system?

The world is changing so fast that schools today are preparing students for:

• Jobs that don't yet exist,

• Technologies that haven't been invented,

• Solve problems we don't even know are problems yet.

Schools are developing new methods of teaching and assessment to keep up with and prepare students for this rapidly changing world.

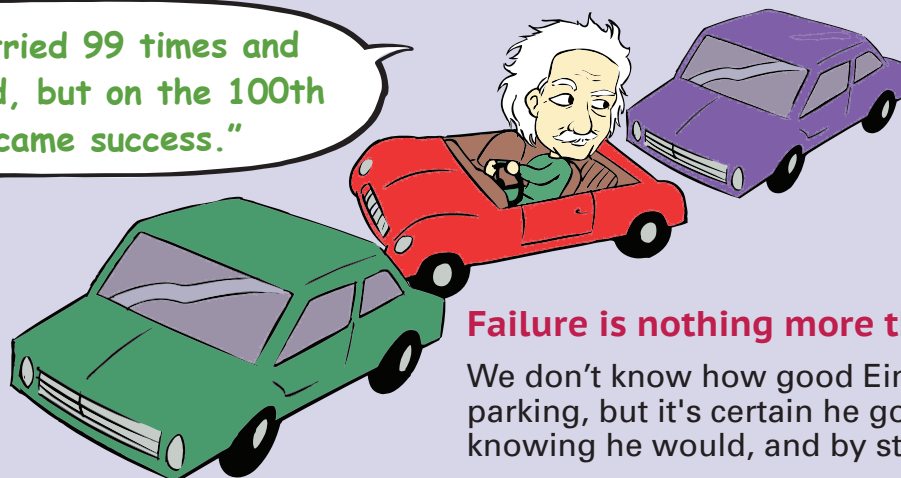### Proficiency-based learning honors what we now know about learning & the brain:

• We all learn in different ways and at different paces.

• All students have the capacity to learn.

• We build our capacity to learn the same way we strengthen our muscles - with practice, time, and support.

• Proficiencies FULLY capture what students have learned or the skills that have been mastered. Numerical grades, alone, do not provide this level of understanding.

WHAT does proficiency-based learning look like?

Proficiency-based learning gives every student the opportunity to learn at their own pace, as they move toward mastery, through lots of practice, learning by mistakes and ongoing feedback.

"I have tried 99 times and have failed, but on the 100th time came success."

Failure is nothing more than information.

We don't know how good Einstein was at parallel parking, but it's certain he got better at it by knowing he would, and by sticking with it.

Learn the rules of the road.

(Knowledge)

+

Practice driving the car with adult supervision and coaching.

(Skills)

=

Obtain your license.

(Proficiency)

A proficiency-based system puts the learner in the driver's seat:

- Students can either slow down or speed up their learning.
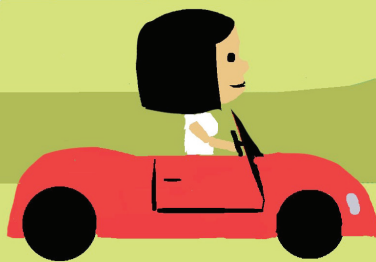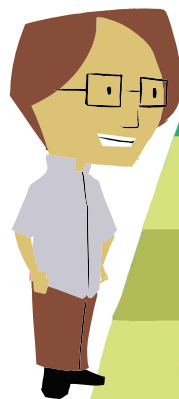- Students can choose among multiple pathways to reach graduation. (Provisions of Act 77)

GRADUATION = Demonstrated Proficiencies

Proficiency-based learning provides a map to graduation: it identifies the knowledge and skills (learning goals) needed to reach the destination.

Each student advances towards learning goals and graduation at his or her own pace, choosing pathways that best suit their learning.

Some will head straight up the mountain, while others will follow a more winding trail. All will advance with support and practice.

Learning Goal Reached

Just like learning to drive a car, teachers are guides throughout the journey.

The Result?

A richly diverse and high-functioning society!

Proficiencies allow schools to shift the emphasis away from acquiring a fixed body of knowledge (that is readily accessible with a quick computer search) toward students building and demonstrating their own capacity to learn. With these skills, students reach the goal of graduation and are equipped to pursue learning for their entire lives.

In this way, our communities benefit from more talent than they've ever had access to before.

For more information, visit http://shapingourfuturetogether.org/