



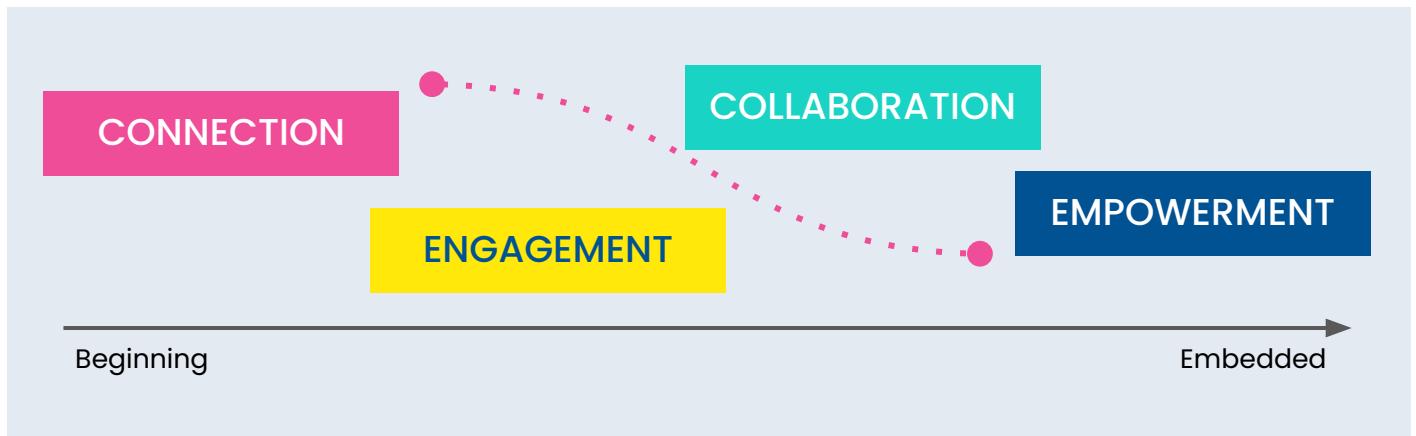
The Authentic Learning Matrix

Tool for educators and coaches

It is critical for learners to develop skills and competencies in authentic contexts where they solve problems that matter to them. Project-based learning, maker learning, and community-based learning all provide authentic learning opportunities, but can be hard to implement with fidelity without the proper support and enabling conditions in place.



This tool is designed to support teams to develop plans for advancing learners through an Authentic Learning continuum, from connection (transactional engagements with the community) to empowerment (authenticity is embedded in learning).



BEFORE YOU BEGIN...

Consider: How might your school empower learners to...

- create real products for authentic audiences?
- engage with community members beyond the classroom?
- work on interdisciplinary projects?
- meaningfully engage in collaborative group work?
- reflect both on their authentic learning process and product?

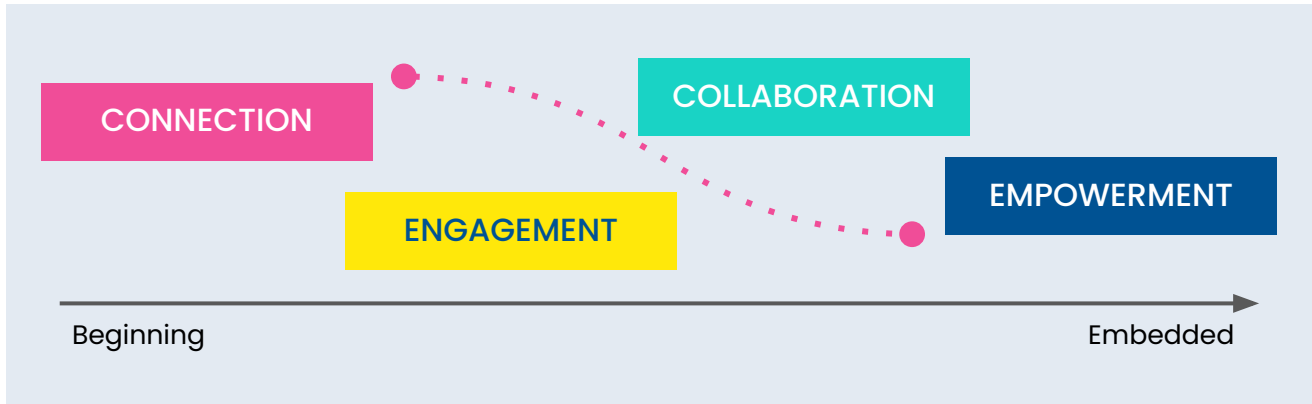
Tool: Authentic Learning Matrix (page 1 of 2)

Identify where you are currently in each row to spark conversations about how you will move to the right to deepen authentic learning and empower learners.

	CONNECTION	ENGAGEMENT	COLLABORATION	EMPOWERMENT
Administration + Leadership	No official support, but not actively blocking authentic learning from occurring.	Curious about what it looks like in practice and discussing how it could work in practice.	Supports integration with time, resources and/or an official teacher champion.	Serves as a champion of authentic learning by dedicating resources, supporting with policies, and expecting integration.
Faculty + Staff	One champion or a small group aware of school models that embrace authentic learning.	Pockets of authentic learning happening (one or two impact projects per year).	Interest in authentic learning has spread beyond a small group. Teacher champions embedding real-world learning regularly.	Authentic, real-world learning and partnerships are embedded in the school's culture.
Students	Service learning projects, internships, and/or field trips occur, but are perceived as add-ons to school.	Begin to see the possibilities of authentic learning.	View self as a valuable contributor and change agent, actively prioritize authentic learning, and ask for more.	Actively seek out partnerships and design new authentic learning experiences. See evidence of their work significantly impacting their community.
Community	Loose community partnerships such as service learning, internships, or field trips exist.	Some consistent community partners exist and school is connected to the community.	Formalized partnerships and connections in the community, which sees students as valuable contributors.	Strong partnerships through which the community sees tangible evidence of impact stemming from students.
Pedagogies + Practices	Awareness of project-based learning, design thinking, and maker pedagogies. Teacher champions occasionally integrating.	Engagement in professional learning on PBL, design thinking, & maker pedagogies. Teacher champions occasionally integrating.	Scaffolded professional learning supports all teachers. Authentic student work is regularly showcased.	All faculty/staff have a deep understanding of pedagogies that support real-world learning. Student work is evidence of community impact.
Curricular Integration	Authentic learning happens in specific maker-centric classes. The learning is not tied to curriculum.	Authentic learning happens across the school with connections to class content, but rarely lead to real-world impact.	Several teachers deeply integrate and connect real-world issues with their curriculum.	Authentic real-world project work is visible across the entire school. Curriculum is shaped by the authentic learning experiences.

Tool: Authentic Learning Matrix (page 2 of 2)

Using the matrix on the previous page, reflect on where you are, where you want to be, and how you'll get there.



WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

WHERE DO YOU HOPE TO SPARK CHANGE?

WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO GET THERE?



MORE STRATEGIES TO TRY

- ❑ Train your students to be expert problem finders. Take them on a walk around the school to spot opportunities. Is the lunch line too long? Is drop-off chaotic and disorganized?
- ❑ Invite someone from the community to campus and have them bring a problem they're wrestling with at work (disconnected employees? a stuck product?). Invite students to come up with possible solutions for them to try out.
- ❑ Feature student artwork in a local museum. Invite parents and members of the local community to a pop-up art exhibit featuring their work. This will help students see how their work matters beyond the classroom.