

Community Connection Heat Index

Leveraging Community Connections to Amplify Authentic Learning

Consider the following menu of options as you design learning experiences for the students in your pathway. The following options are not intended to be followed from top to bottom but instead as a “choose your own adventure” where you mix and match what might work best for your students, your curriculum, the time of year, and your comfort level.

MILD = Easy-Entry Projects

GUEST SPEAKERS

Provide examples of real-world perspectives from individuals doing the work; a method to deepen and reinforce the learning happening in the classroom; and a source of inspiration, motivation, and enhanced engagement

Framework to provide guest speakers:

- Introduction: who you are and explanation of your current work
- Storytelling: your journey to get to your current state, upcoming projects, and/or advice to students
- Q & A from students

FIELD TRIPS

Provide experiential learning relevant to the unit of study/project that lasts one day or one class period

Framework for field trips:

- Welcome and Introduction: overview of venue and purpose for visit
- Interactive Opportunities: tour and/or hands-on experience
- Q & A from students

STUDENT-LED INTERVIEWS

Provide opportunities to deepen learning, practice communication skills, and take the learning beyond the classroom walls

Students prepare to interview a community member for pathway project work, career exploration, or capstone work by utilizing the following resources:

- [Field Guide to Human Centered Design: Interview Guide](#) (by IDEO.org)
- [Empathy Interviews](#) (by Stanford d.school)

WORKSHOPS

Provide opportunities to learn from industry experts, bridging theory and practice

When community partners elect to provide a workshop for your students, consider the following options to make the most of this opportunity...

- Design the workshop alongside the community partner to ensure opportunities for student engagement, i.e. hands-on activity, a Q & A, interactive slides, exposure to latest tools, etc.
- Design a #ProTips document to give to community partners that outlines structures to consider for their workshop

and what they need to know about their audience (your students)

PROJECT WORK (within the school community) 🔥

Provides deeper learning that amplifies motivation and engagement by meeting students' desires for real-world projects and practical application

Use the design thinking process and project management tools (like this [Kanban Board](#)) to design projects to be done within the school community. Some examples of project work within the school community include the following...

- Business students can design and run a coffee shop or student store at your school
- Construction students can redesign or enhance a space within the school like the media center, computer lab, hallway, classroom, etc.
- Pathway learners can partner with other pathway learners for an interdisciplinary project (ex: culinary students + media graphic design students = cookbook project)

🔥🔥 MEDIUM = Slightly More Advanced Projects

FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITIES 🔥🔥

Provide a chance to critique work with industry standards from industry and community partners

Invite an authentic audience into your pathway (students from other pathways, staff members, and/or community and industry partners) to provide meaningful feedback in some of the following ways...

- Feedback panels for student presentations
- Gallery walk of in-process work or final products
- 1:1 feedback on in-process work
- Project tuning protocol for project ideation ([full version](#), [lightning round version](#))

Examples of feedback structures to utilize with an authentic audience include...

- [Glows & grows](#)
- [Praise, question, polish](#)
- [Feedback Capture Matrix](#)
- [TAG](#)

JOB SHADOWS 🔥🔥

Provide invaluable hands-on experience and a clearer understanding of career paths within an industry

Consider the interests of your students and set up job shadow opportunities so students can learn what they like and don't like within your pathway industry. Some examples of job shadows include...

- Automotive students can shadow an auto mechanic, a car detailer, automotive engineer, service advisor, etc.
- Business students can shadow a marketing manager, financial analyst, project manager, supply chain analyst, etc.
- Aviation students can shadow a pilot, aircraft maintenance technician, air traffic controller, etc.

MENTORS 🔥🔥

Provide deeper learning opportunities through an ongoing professional relationship

Framework for educators for mentor involvement:

- Welcome and Introduction: overview of purpose and 'get to know you' activities to build rapport
- Goal Setting and Structures: student sets goals for project work and establish logistics for regular check-ins
- Mentor Coaching
- Celebration: opportunities to reflect together and individually on learning and growth

Possible Mentors: college students, community members as regular volunteers in the classroom, industry partners as project or capstone mentors, former students, etc.

PROJECT WORK (within the district) 🔥🔥

Provides deeper learning that amplifies motivation and engagement by meeting learners' desires for real-world projects and practical application

Use the design thinking process and project management tools (like this [Kanban Board](#)) to design projects to be done within the school district. Some examples of project work within the school district include the following...

- Culinary students catering Board of Education dinners
- Networking and Cybersecurity students creating tutorial videos for the district IT Department
- Aviation students providing drone footage for various high school marching band practices and football games
- Coding students creating apps for various school coffee shops, student stores, etc.

🔥🔥🔥 SPICY = Bring on the Heavy Lift

LEARNING EXHIBITIONS 🔥🔥🔥

Provide a culminating opportunity to share learning and growth with an authentic audience

Design an event where all students share processes and products from their projects or capstone work with an authentic audience composed of families, community members, district leadership, industry partners, etc.

- Reference this [Exhibition Toolkit](#) from Share Your Learning

WORK-BASED LEARNING 🔥🔥🔥

Provides an opportunity to gain hands-on experience and an understanding of the practical aspects of the industry

Consider the interests of your students and set up work-based learning opportunities so students can learn what they like and don't like within your pathway industry. Some examples of work-based learning include...

- Early Childhood Education students work every Wednesday in a district or community early childhood classroom
- Audio Production students run the sound for local theater performances
- HVAC students work as a service technician assistant for a certified HVAC technician

FIELD WORK 🔥🔥🔥

Provides deeper learning opportunities through sustained, multi-day project work in the field

Consider your curriculum to design opportunities for place-based learning, which emphasizes hands-on, real-world learning and encourages interaction with the community to solve local issues. Some examples of projects involving field work include...

- Natural Resource Management students can make observations, collect water samples, and study aquatic life in a local river to investigate the impact of pollution and human activity on local ecosystems
- Construction students can conduct a site assessment, design scale drawings, and build a community garden
- Business students can partner with local businesses to create a business plan for a startup or conduct a market research project

PROJECT WORK (within the community) 🔥🔥🔥

Provides deeper learning that amplifies motivation and engagement by meeting students' desires for real-world projects and practical application

Use the design thinking process and project management tools (like this [Kanban Board](#)) to design projects to be done within

the community. Some examples of project work within the community include the following..

- Business students research and design a social media campaign for a local business
- Construction students design and build dollhouses to show sustainability measures in partnership with the city
- Advanced Manufacturing students design and build a bike rack for the Parks and Rec Department