

LADDER OF REAL WORLD LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Want to determine if your project is “real” enough? This ladder can be used to help teachers assess their project design based on the real world nature of the project’s learning context, audience, type of activities, and the application of digital tools.



	PARTICIPATE	ACTIVATE	EMPOWER
CONTEXT	Investigations take place primarily in the classroom setting	Investigations take place at the school-level, local level, or address a larger issue of students’ interest	Investigations take place in a real world setting; intention is to produce real results (i.e. creating something purposeful for their community) Students work alongside experts, researchers, community members, and other stakeholders
AUDIENCE	Students present to their classmates	Students present to a real audience outside their classroom	Students find a relevant audience, and then engage them in helping to solve the problem.
TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	Online research; use of news articles & primary sources. Expert visits class and lectures on their subject-area Teacher designates how students will present their work Field trip to museum/ lecture-based or docent-led; simulations	Observation of a problem; surveys; data analysis. Students conduct interviews (i.e with a community member or expert). Teachers provide students with a selection of tools to choose from for sharing work. Active out-of-classroom experience in the field, involved in doing real work as part of the experience	Ethnographic research studies that intends to define a real need. Student-planned and directed experience or program. Students identify the tools and platforms necessary to publish work in a real forum: online, local newspaper, public event, etc. Students work alongside expert in collecting and analyzing research.
USE OF TOOLS	Web search, informational apps Newspapers, magazines and books Image capture, Video & Sound recordings	Collaborative tools: Wikispaces, Google Drive Survey tools, Interview tools Sharing images, videos and other documentation for feedback and analysis	Build or redesign a space/ place Create a mobile app or game for the community Build a website for a real audience Present a plan to stakeholders (i.e. school board)