Real-World Challenges Playlist Guide

Getting Started

Welcome to the Real-World Challenges Playlist! Perhaps we should call it the "More to Come: Real World Challenges Playlist." More than 10 new Plays are in process for this Playlist, but completing those videos became challenging when the pandemic closed down schools. We are working diligently to finish this series and will have more choices posted for you soon. Happily, the options currently available for your review are first-rate, including one option that is thriving in the midst of COVID-19. Take a look and let us know what you think! And as you give your students the opportunity to connect their learning to the real world, we want to hear about it!

Navigating this Playlist

There's no implied order or sequence in the Plays offered below. And we're confident you and your students will come up with all sorts of great ideas for initiatives that are tied to the real world. Our overarching advice is to start with challenges that can be completed in a couple of days or so, and go from there. Below, we've included a brief description of each Real-World Challenges Play, along with suggestions for how to use them. As you move through the Playlist and the individual pages where the Plays reside, you'll find more details and supports, including reflection questions, additional resources, and ideas for activities.

One note about resources for this Playlist and approaches to real-world challenges generally. You'll see us pointing occasionally to the great work of organizations that are leaders in the world of PBL and provide comprehensive packages for school districts that can afford that model. In contrast to these larger, more scripted programs, the examples we offer are small steps you can adapt easily to your specific needs. All situations are different, and there are many approaches to creating real-world challenges for students. As always, choose the path that works best for you!

The Plays

1) [What School Could Be: Real-World Challenges](#). *What School Could Be* contains many examples of real-world challenges that have been implemented successfully by schools across the United States. Read the first chapter for free, and explore ideas from other organizations to get you started thinking about the possibilities.

2) [Career Exploration / Digital Explainer](#). The pandemic is opening up new opportunities for Career Exploration days! Educators and students are thinking creatively and moving beyond the boundaries of the traditional school presentation to bring career options into focus like never before. This Play is full of great ideas for using the virtual school world to your advantage in connecting students with career mentors and expanding the range of professions represented. The silver lining? After we are back in school buildings, these ideas still will be solid gold.

3) [Do Something Cool](). The name says it all. In this Play, you'll learn how to connect student learning to real-world issues by asking your students to "do something cool." How? Dedicate time (up to two days) at the end of each term, and charge students to solve a problem by defining what they want to learn and how they will learn it. Students explore shared interests, interact with the outside community, and celebrate their achievements.

4) [What Do Students Want to Learn?]() Why not ask them? Virginia's Former State Superintendent for Public Instruction shares a simple but powerful activity that transformed a middle school. Educators asked what students wanted to learn and worked to bring those real-life requests into their school. This Play is a great way to introduce classrooms, grades, or an entire school to the benefits of real-world challenges.

5) [Civic Engagement](). When we all vote, we are a stronger democracy. Preparing our students to be informed and active citizens includes making sure their voices are heard outside the classroom. This Play introduces When We All Vote, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to increasing student voice in elections by registering young voters. Students build community and civic engagement as they learn about voting from their peers. Young people lead in all of this organization's activities. You can incorporate their work into history and civics classes, school events, and lunch schedules.

6) [Share Your Learning/Exhibition](). Exhibition allows students to present their work to an audience beyond the teacher and classroom. Connecting with the world outside the classroom makes the learning process more meaningful and engaging. Learning exhibitions can happen at many different times and settings in the school year. This Play guides you in setting up an Exhibition event that works for your unique needs.

7) [Digital Exhibition](). If you're confined to interacting virtually, we offer insights on how virtual exhibitions can be extraordinary. In fact, this option is more appealing than in-person exhibitions in many settings.

Additional Resources: One resource you should check out now is [Deeper Learning Hub Courses]()
The Deeper Learning Hub has partnered with expert project designers to create a diverse catalog of excellent online project-based courses for Grades 4-12. We'll be adding this resource to a new Play page soon, but it's worth your time to review it now.

The Promise

Thank you for your vision and your mission. We believe in you. We believe in the urgency of this work and in your desire and ability to innovate and make change happen. You know that

life-ready is not an outcome on a standardized test. It is what happens when we prioritize student agency, voice, creativity, and engagement. We are here to support your efforts to prepare your students for their futures, not our past. We want to hear from you. Contact us at WeCare@whatschoolcouldbe.org.