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Contributions to the Community

A teacher does not simply go to work and teach content material. He/she preps the minds of young students so that they may be successful in life, not just their school courses. Being able to offer students the opportunity to expand their learning and apply concepts to the real world will give them the opportunity to experience real world problems and solutions.

I hope to give back to my community by assigning at least one Project Based Learning (PBL) project every year. PBL learning starts with a real world problem, usually developed around a local community, and allows the students to present their projects to an authentic audience. Involving the community in these projects will draw attention to the needs of the school and also show the success of the students' hard work.

During my PBI class, our students made a new logo for their school (in which they then scaled up to make a poster as well) because the assistant principle had been looking to change it for some time. The head principal was their authentic audience and all of the logos were presented in front of the school leaderboard panel. The hope was to persuade the panel to adopt one of their logos for use next year. By bringing in the school board and district leaders, the students were motivated to do their best work and the school and district were also given a chance to monitor classroom success as well as have great options for their new logo.

Being able to incorporate the students in real world problems involving their own community and school districts will help them gain critical thinking skills and also help the community by getting valuable feedback and ideas from young, fresh thinkers; the students.

Had we been there longer, we would have taken this project one step further and had the students manufacture t-shirts with the winning logo (calculating cost, ROI, sales, etc.). Selling t-shirts would help raise money for the school and involve the community further strengthening the bond between school, districts, and the community.

Readying students for real world situations will help the community graduate strong, college/work-ready individuals. Many students are not given enough credit for their ability, and providing them the opportunity to stretch their minds will give them confidence in the world that lies ahead.