



Authenticity: Transforming Your Teaching Approach with the Authentic Learning Framework



Mariah Warren, Shayna Pond, Danny Mattox, Patricia Turner, Janis Slater, Brittany Bowens, Laura Halstied, Patricia McDaniels-Gomez, Samaya Williams, Evalyne Tracy

Published by K20 Center

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Time Frame 180 Minutes

Essential Question(s)

- How does authentic teaching engage students in meaningful learning?
- How do teachers support authentic learning in the classroom?

Summary

This professional learning activity asks participants to reflect on meaningful learning experiences through the question, "What makes learning meaningful?" Participants build up a definition of meaningful learning as they progress through the activities. Participants will experience a lesson that models the components of the Authentic Learning Framework, look at the research on authentic learning, and then reflect on how the lesson they experienced modeled the framework's components. Participants will then consider and discuss how the Authentic Learning Framework can be applied in their own teaching practice.

Learning Goals

- Experience a shortened version of a model lesson featuring multiple components of the Authentic Learning Framework.
- Identify and explain how the activities in the lesson demonstrate each component of authenticity.
- Apply the Authentic Learning Framework to the classroom.

Attachments

- [Authenticity Job Aides—Authenticity Transforming Your Teaching Approach with the Authentic Learning Framework.pdf](#)
- [Authenticity Practitioners Brief—Authenticity Transforming Your Teaching Approach with the Authentic Learning Framework.pdf](#)
- [Components of Authenticity—Authenticity Transforming Your Teaching Approach with the Authentic Learning Framework.pdf](#)
- [Critical Thinking Cube Net—Authenticity Transforming Your Teaching Approach with the Authentic Learning Framework.pdf](#)
- [Presentation Slides—Authenticity Transforming Your Teaching Approach with the Authentic Learning Framework.pptx](#)

Materials

- Presentation slides
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Sticky notes (2 stacks per table)
- Authenticity Practitioner's Brief (attached; option 1; 1 per person)
- Components of Authenticity (attached; option 2; 1 per person)
- Authenticity Job Aids (attached; 1 per person)
- Critical Thinking Cubes (attached; 1 per table)
- Mirror, Microscope, Binoculars Padlet
- Paper and pens
- Materials for the model lesson of your choice

15 minutes

Engage

Go to **slide 2**. Ask participants to think about their most meaningful learning experience, and write on a piece of paper a list of characteristics or adjectives describing what made that learning experience meaningful for them.

After two minutes, each person at a table can share their experience and their characteristics list with their table group. After each person at the table has shared their experience, determine 3-5 common characteristics between the meaningful learning experiences that were shared.

Move to **slide 3**, and have each table choose a representative who will stand up with their group's list of shared characteristics. Then, as a whole room, conduct the [Stand Up/Sit Down](#) strategy.

1. Have one standing representative at a time from each group read one item from their list.
2. Write this word on a large piece of chart paper, whiteboard, or other place that is visible for the whole room. This will serve as an [Anchor Chart](#) and be revisited later in this activity to construct a shared definition of authentic learning.
3. Have all the other representatives mark this item off their own list if it's too similar to something they already have.
4. Have the next representative read a word from their list. Write this word down on the chart paper, and have all other representatives mark this word from their list if they have it as well.
5. Ask representatives to sit down when all of the characteristics they have on their list have been stated.

Go to **slide 4** to highlight the session objectives briefly. This will provide a roadmap of where they will go together during the session and will let participants know what to expect from the session.

Facilitator's Note

Emphasize that we are moving shortly into a model lesson where they will experience a learning activity designed using the Authentic Learning Framework as if they are the students. They may put on a student hat as they participate, but they should also keep their teacher eye in the back of their mind to observe some of the strategies and take note of how this approach may be different from others they've experienced or tried out themselves.

Move on to **slide 5**, and play the teacher testimony. This brief video will provide an emotional hook into the value of using this framework. Move to **slide 6**, and revisit the Anchor Chart after the video. Ask participants if they noticed any of the characteristics from our list showing up in this testimonial. Ask if there are any characteristics of note in the video that we don't have on our list yet.

75 minutes

Explore

Facilitator's Note

We have included [Monster Monday: The Good the Bad and the Sparkly \(HS ELA\)](#) as our model lesson in this activity. Be sure to download and prepare the materials attached to this lesson in advance. However, you may choose a different model lesson to fit your participant needs if you are working with teachers who are all in a different content area, teach a different age level, have already seen this lesson, or are working under different time constraints. All of these might be reasons to select a different model lesson. Here is a list of model lessons that have been vetted as exemplars of authenticity from a variety of subject areas, age levels, and different audiences/situations:

- [What is a GMO?](#) (Middle School ELA and Science)
- [What is History?](#) (HS History)
- [How eggceptional are we?](#) (Middle School Science)
- [Unlocking Answers](#) (Middle School ELA)
- [Born This Way](#) (HS Social Studies)
- [Going Viral](#) (Middle School Math)
- [Keep Your Eye on the Ball](#) (HS Physical Education)
- [Traditional Transformations: Part 1: Translations: Seminole Patchwork](#) (HS Geometry)
- [Learning About The Past: Comparing Primary And Secondary Sources](#) (Elem. History)
- [The Three Little Purposes: Using 'The Three Little Pigs' to Teach Author's Purpose](#) (Elem. ELA)
- [Multiplying the Three Sisters](#) (Elem. Math)

Begin the model lesson with the title on **slide 7**, and remind participants that the content is designed for high school students. The topic is not as important for them to focus on so much as the approach that is being used to teach the topic. Move on to **slide 8** and **9** to introduce the essential question and learning objectives.

Tech Integration Note

You can make a copy of the [Vampires ASN Menti](#) linked in the slides. Prior to facilitating, you will need to update the links, access code, and QR graphic in the slides. Also be sure that you have the menti results link open in a new tab to share with participants in real time.

Begin the [Always, Sometimes, Never](#) activity on **slide 10**. In this activity, participants will respond to statements about vampires as if they are always true, sometimes true, or never true. The purpose of this activity is to activate prior knowledge. They will see responses from the entire room so that they can compare their own assumptions about these tropes with the group's assumptions as a whole. They might be surprised that everyone has different experiences or impressed that the whole group has had very consistent experiences informing them about vampires. Then, move to **slide 11** defining "trope." This will lead into the next activity on **slide 12**, where participants will follow the [Affinity Process](#) and write as many characteristics of vampires as they can think of on one piece of paper, until they can't think of any more. Once they've run out of ideas, they can compare their notes with those of an [Elbow Partner](#) and see if there are some broad categories into which they can fit their combined characteristics. They can use another blank piece of paper to label the categories of tropes they identified. Then have each set of partners at a table compare their categories and determine how they can combine them together into groups. Time the steps of the affinity process using **slides 12-15**.

Move on to **Slide 16**, and hand out the "Notes About Vampires" graphic organizer. Explain that many of the tropes brainstormed in the last activity will be visible in action as they watch a few movie and tv show clips as well as read excerpts from novels about vampires. As they watch or read each piece, participants should jot down which tropes they see.

Play the videos on **slides 17-19**. Be sure to pause for a moment after showing each clip, and ask participants to flip over their handout and read about the author of that work. Note any connections the participants wonder about between the author's influences and the way they wrote their vampire characters and used these tropes in their work.

Introduce the "Notes About Vampire" handout with **slide 20**. Display **slide 21**, and hand out the three reading excerpts, having groups of three [jigsaw](#) the readings. This means that each person in the group will read a different excerpt and then share their notes with their group members. Use the same instructions on taking notes in their graphic organizer for the readings as for the videos.

Once the groups have completed taking and sharing notes on the reading, move on to **slide 22**, and begin to handout the set of cards for the timeline [Card Sort](#). Have participants group the cards based on what year in the timeline they believe they fit into.

1. Arrange the dated cards in order.
2. Place title covers to the date they were published.
3. Place vampire tropes under the title cover it matches with; some tropes may be used more than once.

The goal for this activity is for students to take the knowledge they have accrued at this point and combine it with potential political, economic, and historical influences on how vampires have been represented through literature and media. Once groups are finished sorting, share the answers on **slide 23**.

Facilitator's Note

Be sure to print and cut out sets of cards for this activity in advance.

Display **slide 24**. Depending on how time is going, have participants complete this activity or describe it to them as a final assessment of learning (display example products of this activity on **slides 25-28**). Students would complete a [One-Pager](#) where they create a poster on chart paper or digitally that illustrates and answers the questions, "How do these authors address the same topic?" and "How did these authors reach different conclusions due to the time period in which they wrote?"

If you choose not to conduct the one-pager activity, use the Exit Ticket on **slide 29** to take an assessment of learning.

Teacher's Note

Slide 30 contains a link to a digital version of the reading and timeline activities if you prefer to facilitate digitally instead of with paper materials.

Note the end of the model lesson by showing the standard that was addressed on **slide 32**.

45 minutes

Explain

Move on to **slide 33** to show the four components of the Authentic Learning Framework and provide a very brief overview. At this time, begin handing out the Authenticity Job Aids and the reading material of your choice for the authenticity framework (recommended: either the Authenticity Practitioner's Brief or the Components of Authenticity, both attached to this lesson).

Have participants get into groups based on which of the four components their reading is about. As a group, they will create a [Frayer Model](#) poster about the component they have been assigned.

- Student-centered Learning
- Construction of Knowledge
- Inquiry-based Learning
- Real-world Connections

Display **slide 34** with the instructions for the activity, and provide each group with a piece of chart paper and marker(s). Each group will make a poster demonstrating their component through four main segments of information:

1. Definition: Write their own definition for the component.
2. Main characteristics: List 3-5 characteristics that are essential to this component.
3. Draw a picture: Sketch a scene or symbol that represents their component.
4. Describe: Give an example from the model lesson where they saw this component represented.

Provide 15 minutes for groups to create their posters. Have groups that covered the same topic get together, compare their posters, and synthesize the most significant aspects of their component.

Do a [Gallery Walk/Carousel](#) where each group stops at each other's set of posters and takes notes of things they notice and wonder about what they see. At this point, they may begin to notice that activities done during the lesson covered more than one component and that aspects of each component support one another. Each group can share one notice and one wonder with the whole room.

Hand out the reflection tool, and go through each component, having someone share out something from the model lesson and how it supported that component until all of the components are covered.

Finally, revisit the Meaningful Learning Experiences Anchor Chart from the beginning of this session. Have each table group pick something from the list and share which component of authenticity it fits into and their reasoning for why.

30 minutes

Extend

In table groups, have participants take turns rolling the provided Critical Thinking Cube and answer the question it lands on. Provide enough time for each person to have a turn or two.

Prompts provided for this [Critical Thinking Cube](#) are:

- **Describe:** What are students doing in an authentic classroom?
- **Apply:** How do you see authenticity used in your role at your school?
- **Compare:** How is authenticity different from non-example practices of authenticity in your role?
- **Analyze:** What steps need to be made to develop authenticity in your role? (How do you currently lesson plan? What resources/school climates need to be considered?)
- **Synthesize:** In your role, brainstorm activities that would be authentic experiences for your students.
- **Arguments:** What reservations do you have about implementing authenticity?

After all the turns have been completed, hold a whole table discussion where, as a group, participants summarize what they discovered about authenticity during this activity.

15 minutes

Evaluate

Create a padlet, a board with sticky notes or individual note cards, that can be shared verbally using the [Mirror, Microscope, Binoculars](#) strategy. Each participant will answer the following three prompts on their own:

- **Mirror:** How has the authentic framework changed your thinking about meaningful learning?
- **Microscope:** (pledge): How can the authentic framework be applied to your classroom/practice?
- **Binoculars:** How can the authentic framework affect your school or community?

Research Rationale

At its heart, authentic learning aims to infuse learning with purpose and meaning so that students develop the skills necessary to fully engage with the world at large. Authentic learning experiences increase positive emotions around learning, garner higher perceptions of relevance and long-term understanding, and activate student engagement in learning and intrinsic motivation to learn (Nachtigall et al, 2022; Parsons et al., 2021; Jeter et al, 2019; Kuhlthau, et al., 2015). Students with more positive attitudes toward learning see improved achievement (Freedman, 1997), and when students put more effort into their learning, it improves their long-term retention of the content (Schmid & Bogner, 2015). Authentic practices create a school setting that integrates with the real world to make the transfer of skills easier for learners when they enter the workforce (Osher et al., 2020).

Resources

- Jeter, G., Baber, J., Heddy, B., Wilson, S., Williams, L., Atkinson, L., & Gam, G. (2019, September). Students at the center: Insights and implications of authentic, 5E instruction in high school English language arts. In *Frontiers in education* (Vol. 4, p. 91). Frontiers Media SA.
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Affinity process. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/87>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Always, sometimes, or never true. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/145>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Anchor charts. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/58>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Card sort. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/147>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Critical thinking cube. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1583>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Frayer model. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/126>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery walk/Carousel. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Jigsaw. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/179>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Mirror, microscope, binoculars. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/3020>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). One-Pager. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/72>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Stand up, Sit down. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1771>
- Kuhlthau, C. C., Maniotes, L. K., & Caspari, A. K. (2015). *Guided inquiry: Learning in the 21st century*. ABC-CLIO.
- Nachtigall, V., Shaffer, D. W., & Rummel, N. (2022). Stirring a secret sauce: A literature review on the conditions and effects of authentic learning. *Educational Psychology Review*, 34(3), 1,479–1,516. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-022-09676-3>
- Osher, D., Cantor, P., Berg, J., Steyer, L., & Rose, T. (2020). Drivers of human development: How relationships and context shape learning and development. *Applied Developmental Science*, 24(1), 6–36.
- Parsons, A. E., Heddy, B., Wilson, Scott N., Williams, L. A., Atkinson, L.K. & Garn, G.A. (2021). Making ‘Brain Food’: Converting photosynthesis into a positive learning experience through authentic instruction. *Journal of Biological Education*, 55(3), 293-305, DOI: 10.1080/00219266.2019.1682640
- Schmid, S., & Bogner, F. X. (2015). Effects of students’ effort scores in a structured inquiry unit on long-term recall abilities of content knowledge. *Education Research International*, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2015/826734>