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Shaping Community - Teamwork and Critical Thinking

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UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: **Shaping Community - Teamwork and Critical Thinking**

Grade Level: **8th**

Subject/Topic Area(s): **Advisory/ Teamwork and Critical Thinking**

Designed By: **Alexander Serna-Wallender**

Time Frame: **18 sessions**

School District:

School:

School Address and Phone:

Brief Summary of Unit (Including curricular context and unit goals):

By the end of this unit students should be able to effectively work with any number of people as members of a team. Students will be able to recognize the consequences of their own actions and how those affect a larger group. Additionally, students will be able to develop the skills need to navigate conflict that arises in group settings. Along with that, students will develop their critical thinking skills to effective engage in problem solving. All of this is leading up to students being able to, as a group, identify an issue in their community and work towards addressing that issue together.

This unit is based on the experiential education model. It is designed to get students active and learn through doing. This unit is designed to be used in an advisory type class and can be implemented over a series of weeks and doesn't need to happen in a quick succession of days.

Unit: Teamwork and Critical Thinking

Grade: 8th Grade

Stage 1: Desired Results

Established Goals (Standards)

NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards – 21st Century Life and Career:

- 9.1.8.C.1- Determine an individual's responsibility for personal actions and contributions to group activities.
- 9.1.8.C.2- Demonstrate the use of compromise, consensus, and community building strategies for carrying out different tasks, assignments, and projects.
- 9.1.8.A.1- Develop strategies to reinforce positive attitudes and productive behaviors that impact critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- 9.1.8.A.2 -Implement problem-solving strategies to solve a problem in school or the community.

Understandings

Students will understand that...

- 1) Their actions have consequences for themselves and for others.
- 2) They can develop and practice strategies to work more effectively as a group.
- 3) Their critical thinking and problem solving skills can be honed through collaboration.
- 4) They can apply their critical thinking skills to solve a social problem in their community.

Essential Questions

How do your actions affect yourself and others?

What can you do to work more effectively with others in groups?

What role does critical thinking play in your everyday life?

How can you use critical thinking to tackle a problem you care about in your community?

Knowledge

Students will know...

- The basic emotions and how to respond to them
- Techniques for building consensus.
- Productive behaviors that improve critical thinking.
- The basic steps of problem-solving.
- The techniques for collaborating effectively with others.

Skills

Students will be able to...

- Be aware of their own feelings
- Identify the affects of their actions
- Recognize how others are feeling
- Respond appropriately to another person's feelings or suggestions.
- Compromise with others.
- Build consensus as a group
- Work as a team to complete a goal
- Identify a problem and work towards a solution.

Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

Performance Task:

Make A Difference Project

Students will be divided into small groups that focus on a particular problem that they recognize in their school or community. They will collaborate as a group to complete three phases on this project. Phase 1: Research the particular issue that their group is focused on, both locally and on a broader more global scale. Phase 2: Find and coordinate an opportunity to serve with a local organization focused on that issue or come up with their own service project related to that issue. Phase 3: Present their research and their service experience to a group of peers, teachers, and community members.

Other evidence:

- This unit is designed on the experiential education model, learning through doing. It is also designed for an advisory setting where the tracking on grades is less important. That being said, much of the assessment that will take place throughout this unit will be in the form of individual and group reflection. Also, a specific group's ability to accomplish the goal or challenge set before them in an activity is a key measure of their ability to master the objective/theme for the day. Even when not explicitly stated in stage three, it is essential to debrief each of the activities, with questions as simple as: 1) What was the point of the activity? 2) What did you learn? 3) What was difficult and why? 4) What would you do differently the next time around? 5) What can you take away from this activity and apply in other settings in class or at home?
- Additionally, each session will end with a time of journaling and reflection that will allow students to make connections through all of the activities. This will also allow the teacher to see and gauge students thinking to either adjust course for the following session.

Stage 3: Learning Activities

(Steps taken to get students to answer Stage 1 questions and complete performance task)

Session 1: Group Introductions

Essential Question: How do your actions affect yourself and others?

Objective: SWBAT get to know one another and establish group norms and expectations.

Engage: Name Web – Students will go around the circle each with a long piece of webbing. They will wrap it around their fingers, and with each wrap share something about them (a favorite thing, interesting, fact, experience, etc.)

Engage: Whomp'um – As a way to decrease inhibitions and continue working on getting to know each other. A student will stand in the middle of the circle with half of a pool noodle. Their objective is to tap the name of the person called in the circle, before that person taps the name of the next player.

Explore/Explain: Full Value Contract – This is the time for our entire class to work together to explore and explain what we need from each other to be successful throughout the year. We will use butcher paper to create a document that articulates our needs and expectations from each other, and explicitly state what we all can agree to when working together as a group. This will be a living document that we will revisit throughout the year and hold each other accountable to as we go along.

Evaluate: Journal – Why is it important to set expectations and norms as a group?

Session 2: Collaboration

Essential Question: How do your actions affect yourself and others?

Objective: SWBAT share ideas and work collaboratively as a group.

Engage: Group Juggle – Standing in a circle, we'll start by trying to define the word collaboration. After discussing what we think that would mean we will collaboratively pass an object around the circle in a particular order, calling out names, as we go. We will then set a goal as a group for how to improve our time and consistency, electing the thinking of everyone participating. At the end of this activity is when we will take more time to see if people have anything they would like to add to our original explanation of collaboration.

Explore: Line Up Log – Next all the students with their feet along a long piece of rope. Their goal will be as a group, without talking and without stepping off the rope, rearrange themselves in specific orders: age, height, birth month, alphabetically.

Explain: Path to Success – As we go through life, we make good and not so good choices, and it is with the help of friends and companions along the way that we are able to adjust course and find our way back. This activity will have the group try and travel through a series of 25 tiles laid out on the ground. There is only one correct pattern/ way through the tiles and it will take the trial and error, the memory of the group, and individuals will to be wrong for the betterment of the entire group.

Evaluate: Journal – What does it mean to work collaboratively with others? Provide an example?

Session 3: Cooperation

Essential Question: How do your actions affect yourself and others?

Objective: SWBAT demonstrate shared leadership and create results.

Engage: Have You Ever – Standing in a circle, we'll start by trying to define the word cooperation. After discussing what we think that word might mean and how it could be different from collaboration we will then try to learn a little more about one another to perhaps cooperate more affectively. We'll have one student in the middle. They will ask the group "Have you ever..." and any one in group who has done that thing will need to switch positions across the circle, with one person ending up in the middle. After multiple rounds of basic get to know you questions, students will be asked to switch the questions to one related to things that either annoy them about working with others or things they really enjoy. Sample prompts of these will be provided.

Explore: Turnstile – This initiative has students move from individual successes and goals to larger group success in goals. Students have to pass under a turning rope without getting hit. The first round they have to go on their own, but in successive rounds the numbers of students who have to go at the same time. This requires students to communicate and cooperate about how to get underneath the rope.

Explain: The Village – This activity has similarities to the full value contract from session one. Broken into groups of 4 to 6 each group will work cooperatively to create a "village." They will work to determine 20 ideals for their village that would make it work well and write or draw those on their paper. Next they will determine what hinder them from living up to those ideals. Lastly, they will each draw their own building and establish for themselves a goal they want to make in relation to working with others in the class

Evaluate: Journal – How are collaboration and cooperation different? How are they similar? What advantages do they provide?

Session 4: Empathy

Essential Question: What can you do to work more effectively with others in groups?

Objective: SWBAT identify others feelings and understand how to respond appropriately.

Engage: Sculpting Emotions –After going around the group and asking students how they know how others are feeling, introduce the word empathy and how it relates to being aware of others feelings. Then provide each student with a container or play dough. Have them complete a couple of rounds, sculpting something that brings them joy, something that makes them angry, and how they feel when they see a loved one they haven't seen in a long time.

Explore: Emotions Charades– From there provide each person with a feelings card. Each member of the group will get up and try to act out or express the emotion on their card. It is then the rest of the group's goal to guess what emotion they are trying to refer to. In the second round give all the students a different emotion card. This time as they get up it is their job to try and describe a situation that would make them feel that particular emotion and the groups job is to again guess what that emotion might be. In this round have students elaborate on how to respond to someone who is feeling that particular emotion.

Explain: Feel Card Stories – Dividing the group into pairs, give each group three feelings cards. With those cards have them create a short story using those feelings words. Then have them share their story with the group. In the end have them reflect on which ones were easy to write about and which emotions were not? And why they might have connected with some better than others?

Evaluate: Journal – How does have empathy, understanding others feelings, make you able to work more effectively with others?

Session 5: Active Listening

Essential Question: What can you do to work more effectively with others in groups?

Objective: SWBAT demonstrate actively listening to others.

Engage: **Active Listening Brain Storm** –Have students brainstorm what it means to actively listen to others and have them model good active listening. Afterwards go over some of the key steps to being a great active listener and ask they why that might be in important.

Explore: **Back Talk**– In this activity the group is again broken up into pairs. One partner will be facing the board and the other facing the back wall. The partner facing the board will be shown a picture and it is their job, using just their words, to get the partner facing the back wall to accurately recreate the picture on the board. The role of the drawer is to listen keenly to the descriptions being given. The drawer cannot talk, they can only listen. Debrief this activity by asking about what went well and what didn't and what parts of the active listening brainstorm did they have to use.

Explain: **Blind Polygon** - All but one student will receive a blindfold. After putting on the blindfolds students will be given a rope to hold on to. Without letting go of the rope students will be directed by their teammate who can see to form various shapes using the rope.

Evaluate: **Journal** – How does listening make you a more effective group mate?

Session 6: Consensus

Essential Question: What can you do to work more effectively with others in groups?

Objective: SWBAT build consensus with others in their group.

Engage: **What is Consensus?** – Give students a set of cards. Each card has a variety of situations on them, and the resolution to the problems mentioned in the cards. Have the students sort out the cards in to two categories, one where consensus is reached and one where consensus isn't reached.

Explore: **Five Finger Consensus** – This activity teaches students that there is various levels of consensus. It allows them to explore how they feel about various outcomes to problems by fully agreeing, five, or fist, blocking a decision, causing the group to come up with a new solution.

Explain: **Survival Story/Batten Down the Hatches** – Set up a situation where students imagine being stranded. Give each student a list of supplies and have the students rank their top 15 items. After having divided them into groups of four, review the ideas of reaching consensus and developing a win-win mentality. Ask each group then to reach consensus on the top five items. If they accomplish that they have the try for their top ten. Have each group share out their top five.

Evaluate: **Journal** – What are the advantage and disadvantages of trying to reach consensus?

Session 7: Compromise/Conflict Resolution

Essential Question: What can you do to work more effectively with others in groups?

Objective: SWBAT compromise with others and resolve conflict between group members

Engage: **ABCDE of Conflict Resolution** –Ask students what the most common types of conflict they face are. Ask them next, how they often resolves those conflicts. Next, introduce them to the ABCDE of conflict resolution model.

Explore/Explain: **Role Play**– Divide the class into pairs, and give them each a role play scenario. Have each group come up with a solution to the scenarios before they come up and act them out. After each group acts out their scenario have members of the class not acting propose solutions to the problem presented. After they have shared have the presenter, act out the solution they came up with and discuss the similarities and differences between their purposed solution and the class's solutions.

Explore: **Cross the Line** – From there have the class stand along another piece of rope, and let them know that they'll be participating in another activity that will help them work to build understanding and appreciation of one another, which allow them to better work through conflict together and amongst each other. You will read a series of prompts that ask the students to "cross the line if..." these prompts should start of fairly innocuous and transition to more serious topics and experiences. After each question students shouldn't respond but simply look around to see how other classmates respond. Debrief students experience and thoughts after the last question is asked.

Evaluate: **Journal** – What role does compromise play in working with a group?

Session 8: Compromise/Conflict Resolution

Essential Question: What can you do to work more effectively with others in groups?

Objective: SWBAT compromise with others and resolve conflict between group members

Explore: All Aboard – This activity will require the entire group to stand on top of a box together, for long enough to sing simple song. This will require them to both think through a solution, but also work through their frustration at each other, and compromise their ideas to find a suitable result.

Elaborate: Conflict/Compromise Solutions– Give each student two index cards and have them write a conflict they have experienced at school on one and a conflict they experience at home on the other, make sure they don't write their names on the cards. Collect all the cards and break the class into threes. Give each triad six cards and have them try and work through a solution to the issue mentioned on the other side of the card. Have each group share out some of the solutions they came up with.

Evaluate: Journal – How can you apply the ABCDE of conflict resolution to any problem, relation or concrete?

Session 9: Problem Solving & Critical Thinking

Essential Question: What role does critical thinking play in your everyday life?

Objective: SWBAT use critical thinking to solve a problem.

Engage: Three Letter Word – Give each student two or three letters. Give them 45 seconds to form a three-letter word with one or two other people. Do this for a couple of rounds and then begin to increase the challenge by making it four, five or six letter word rounds,

Explore: Human Knot – Have everyone in the group stand in a circle and reach out their hand and grab two different people's hands across the circle. Having done this everyone in the circle should be linking hands. It is now the group's job to unknot themselves without letting go of anyone else's hands.

Explain: ABCDE of Problem Solving – Using the same model from the previous session have students share and reflect on how the ABCDE model can be used to problems set before them.

Elaborate: River of Life – Set two boundaries across the room. Give the group a set of tile square, one less than their total number. Their challenge is to cross the span between the two boundaries without touching the ground, only stepping on the squares, and they must stay in contact with the squares at all times. They must start over if someone steps on the ground. They must work collaboratively to come up with a solution that accomplished their task.

Evaluate: Journal – What was one way you worked through a problem today?

Session 10: Problem Solving & Critical Thinking

Essential Question: What role does critical thinking play in your everyday life?

Objective: SWBAT use critical thinking to solve a problem.

Explore: Zen Counting – The group will be in a circle with their backs to each other. The goal of the group is to count to ten without saying the same number, looking at each other's, or going in consecutive order around the circle.

Elaborate: Marshmallow Challenge – After that, divide the group into small groups of four and present them with the challenge of constructing the tallest, free standing structure they can, using only the supplies provided, marshmallows and pasta sticks. Have them develop a plan and then attempt to implement it using a variety of trials and errors?

Evaluate: Journal – What was one conflict you faced with members of your group today? How can you improve upon that moving forward?

Session 11: Problem Solving & Critical Thinking

Essential Question: What role does critical thinking play in your everyday life?

Objective: SWBAT use critical thinking to solve a problem.

Explore: Change Five Things – The key to good problem solving is paying attention and being aware of the small details. In this activity students will be paired up they are to take a good look at their partners

and observe everything they can about their appearance. Next, you'll have them turn away from their partners and have each of them change five things about their appearance. You'll then have them turn back around and see if they are able to deduce the five things that changed.

Elaborate: Great Egg Drop – After that, divide the group into the same small groups of four again and present them with a new challenge. This time they are to construct a protective container for an egg. The egg is going to be dropped from the height of 10 feet and it is their goal to make sure it doesn't crack. They can use any number of supplies provided to construct their protective shell. Make sure they work to develop a plan and that every member of the group is involved in the implementation and decision making process.

Evaluate: Journal – How can you take the problem solving skills that you used in the last two challenges and apply them to situations at home?

Session 12: Social Awareness

Essential Question: How can you use critical thinking to tackle a problem you care about in your community?

Objective: SWBAT identify a problem in their community that they care about.

Engage/Explore: Personal Value Shield – Provide each student with a copy of the Personal Value Shield. Have them use their shields to explore the things that they care about and the things that their classmates care about.

Explain: Introducing Make a Difference Project – Give each student a copy of the Make a Difference Project sheets. Walk them through the assignment and explain the expectation you have for them. Additionally, share the rubrics for each part of the assignment and tell them how they will be evaluated.

Elaborate: Identifying problems in our community – Set tables in the classrooms up with a series of questions eliciting students' understanding about their home and school communities and what they see as the problems in each. Have them go around and respond to the questions. Afterwards have them share out some of the things they noticed that were written down, and develop a list of issues in their school or community they could work on addressing. Have them then choose the top three issues that they are interested in.

Evaluate: Journal – What was one of the issues in your community that you were passionate about trying to solve and why?

Session 13: Make a Difference Project

Essential Question: How can you use critical thinking to tackle a problem you care about in your community?

Objective: SWBAT implement problem-solving strategies to solve a problem in school or the community

Evaluate: Phase 1 Work Day

Session 14: Make a Difference Project

Essential Question: How can you use critical thinking to tackle a problem you care about in your community?

Objective: SWBAT implement problem-solving strategies to solve a problem in school or the community

Evaluate: Phase 1 Work Day and PSA Presentation

Session 15: Make a Difference Project

Essential Question: How can you use critical thinking to tackle a problem you care about in your community?

Objective: SWBAT implement problem-solving strategies to solve a problem in school or the community

Evaluate: Phase 2 Work Day

Session 16: Make a Difference Project

Essential Question: How can you use critical thinking to tackle a problem you care about in your community?

Objective: SWBAT implement problem-solving strategies to solve a problem in school or the community

Evaluate: **Phase 2 Work Day**

Session 17: Make a Difference Project

Essential Question: How can you use critical thinking to tackle a problem you care about in your community?

Objective: SWBAT implement problem-solving strategies to solve a problem in school or the community

Evaluate: **Phase 3 Work Day**

Session 18: Make a Difference Project

Essential Question: How can you use critical thinking to tackle a problem you care about in your community?

Objective: SWBAT implement problem-solving strategies to solve a problem in school or the community

Evaluate: **Phase 3 Work Day**

Make a Difference Overview

“The purpose of life is not to be happy - but to matter, to be productive, to be useful, to have it make some difference that you have lived at all.”

~Leo Rosten

The Make a Difference Project promises to be a memorable experience. You will have the opportunity to choose an issue and work to improve the world in some way. The project will have multiple phases. Dates are subject to change, but students will always have ample warning.

Before the first phase you will put down three problems or issues that you see in your community that you would like to help address. Based on that information you will be put into a group of four that shares concern about the same issue. Once you have been broken into your groups your first step is to talk through a plan about of action for group roles and implanting each phase. You’ll meet with me before the end of the first day to discuss this plan.

Phase 1: Research

Once you have become acquainted with your group members, you will individually research the issue you have chosen to become well-informed about how this problem manifests itself globally and locally. You will use the Phase 1 Handout to help guide this research. Your group will then create Public Service Announcement campaign using print media, describing the issue that you are exploring. During research, ask yourself, “What could I do to help?”

Phase 2: Research in Action/Community Service

Your group will have two choices.

The first is to find a local agency, from the list of preapproved agencies I have provided, through which you can perform community service related to your topic. Coordinating this step can be challenging. Every member of your group needs to be present for at least one hour of service through the local agency. While involved with the agency, ask yourself the questions, “How is this agency contributing to the solution of the issue?” and “What else could be done to support the cause that isn’t already being done?” Each member of the group will write a short individual reflection on this service opportunity.

The second option is for your team to develop and execute a project, which is intended to benefit the cause you’ve be assigned. This can take on the form of organizing a drive here at school raising money for a specific organization. Be very intentional about your timeline and how you are going to get the word out about your project. Be asking yourself along the way “how is my project making a difference?” if you choose this option you need to develop a timeline that shows me you have an implantable plan as a group.

Phase 3: Reporting the results of your research and service

Finally, you will present your research and the results of your service project to the class and then to an audience of your peers, parents and local community members. You will create visuals for your presentation, and you may choose the type of presentation tool (PowerPoint, Google Presentations, Prezi, SlideRocket, etc.) You will be graded according to a rubric.

Phase 1 Handout:

Using the research resources provided online by the school library website, along with the collaboration of your group, answer the following questions. Then as a group use this information to develop your Public Service Announcement.

What is your issue?

Why do you care about this issue?

What does this issue look like in my area?

Provide some data related to the issue in this area?

What are some organizations that are working to address your issue locally?

What are they doing to address the issue?

What does your issue look like either in the United States or around the globe?

Are there areas that it is more of an issue? Less of an issues?

What organizations are working to do something about it at a larger level?

What are they doing to work on this issue?

What are five things people should know about your issue?

Why should people care?

What is something that can be done to address your issue?

Phase 1 Rubric:

Make a Difference PSA Poster

OBJECTIVES	Outstanding (-0)	Satisfactory (-10)	Below Standard (-20)	No credit (-30)
1: learned about your issue locally and globally	The Phase 1 handout was completed with detailed information about your issue on a local and global level. The answers to the questions were well thought out and showed interest and mastery of your issue.	The Phase 1 handout was completed with basic information about your issue on a local and global level. The answers to the questions were complete but simple and showed only a surface exploration of the issue.	The Phase 1 handout was incomplete, but did have some of the information provided.	
2: PSA Contents	The PSA shows a firm grasp on the issues related to your cause and presented them in a clear and concise manner.	The PSA shows a general understanding on the issues related to your cause and presented them in a manner that was slightly muddled but still effective.	The PSA shows a limited understanding on the issues related to your cause and presented them in a haphazard manner.	
3: PSA Appearance	The PSA is aesthetically pleasing and well organized. Students clearly went above and beyond.	The PSA is easy to read and organized.	The PSA is sloppily put together and difficult to understand	

Comments:

Phase 2 Rubric:

Make a Difference Documentation

OBJECTIVES	Outstanding (-0)	Satisfactory (-10)	Below Standard (-20)	No credit (-30)
1: made a difference	A variety of authentic artifacts (photos, Thank You notes, receipts, testimonials, etc.) shows clearly and consistently that your group completed all tasks (including delivery of money or goods to the target organization) and made a substantial difference.	A variety of authentic artifacts (photos, Thank You notes, receipts, testimonials, etc.) shows clearly that your group completed most tasks and made a slight difference.	Only a few artifacts exist. Group made minimal impact on the community.	
2: worked together	A variety of appropriate artifacts (photos, video, slide shows, timeline, reflections, testimonials) shows clearly and consistently that your group worked together.	A variety of appropriate artifacts shows that most members of your group worked together on most projects.	There is limited evidence to prove that all members of the group worked on the project.	
3: learned something	A variety of appropriate artifacts (reflections, testimonials, PSAs) shows clearly and consistently that every member of the group learned a great deal through this project (about themselves, their topic, and their fellow group members)	A variety of appropriate artifacts shows that some learning occurred: from some people, and/or to some extent.	Limited evidence shows that group members learned something.	

Comments:

Phase 3 Rubric:

Make a Difference Presentation Rubric Grade: _____

OBJECTIVES	Outstanding (-0)	Good (-4)	Poor (-8)
Teaching the topic	The group teaches the audience important facts about the topic, both on a <u>local</u> and <u>global level</u> , including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current events, • interviews with experts, and • their own service learning experiences. Examples are relevant and recent. Sources are credited.	The group teaches the audience important facts about the topic, locally and/or globally. Sources are inconsistently credited.	The group teaches the audience some facts about the topic. Sources are not credited.
Describing the work	Using detailed documentation, specific examples, and elaboration, the group explains planning, expectations, implementation, and results.	The group tells the story, but without appropriate documentation of their own work (photos, video, documents, etc.)	The story is difficult to understand, because portions are left out or poorly described.
Impacting the community	The group persuades the audience that their actions made a significant and long-lasting impact on the community.	The group persuades the audience that their actions made an impact on the community.	The group seems to have made very little impact.
Reflecting on learning	Each person in the group reflects individually on what he or she has learned during this process: about self, others, group work, and the topic.	Each person in the group shares individual reflections.	Sharing of reflections is minimal.
Presenting style	Students always speak loudly and clearly, with few verbal distractors (“like”, “um”), have good eye contact and confident body language.	Students sometimes speak loudly and clearly with good eye contact and confident body language.	Students are difficult to understand and/or body language is very distracting.
Sharing the Presentation	The presentation is shared equally among all participants, who take turns speaking and using the technology.	The presentation is unbalanced among the participants.	The presentation is very unbalanced: some speak much more than others.
Visualizing	Visuals are aesthetically impressive and communicate extremely well. Technology choices and use create a smoothly-flowing presentation with a strong impact.	Visuals communicate well. Technology choices and use create a smoothly-flowing presentation.	Visuals and technology choices distract from the presentation.

Comments: