

2009

20 Exemplary Service-Learning Projects

Chicago Public Schools Service-Learning Initiative

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceprojectsummaries>

 Part of the [Service Learning Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

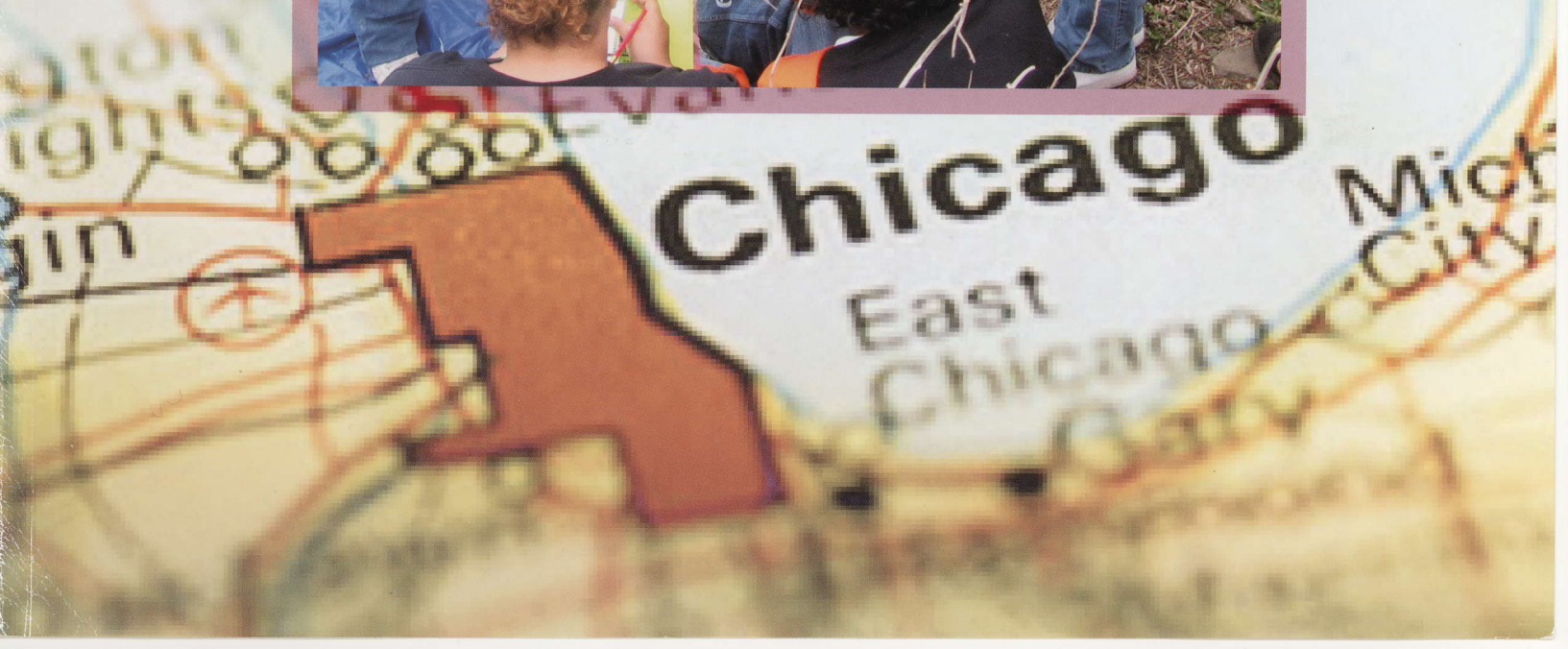
Chicago Public Schools Service-Learning Initiative, "20 Exemplary Service-Learning Projects" (2009). *Project Summaries*. Paper 23.
<http://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceprojectsummaries/23>

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Service Learning and Community Engagement Examples at DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Project Summaries by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.



20 Exemplary Service-Learning Projects

Chicago Public Schools Service-Learning Initiative



20 Exemplary Service-Learning Projects

In 1998, Chicago Public Schools became the largest school district in the country to require that students do service to their community as a graduation requirement. Since that time, hundreds of thousands of students have provided millions of hours of service to Chicago's neighborhoods and communities.

While those numbers are impressive, a change in thinking about service began in 2002 that has led to a change in thinking about classroom practice. CPS shifted from a service as an individual volunteer experience to service-learning as a classroom teaching and learning strategy that enables students to learn important civic action skills while enhancing academic and social development. The results have been astonishing. Teachers across the district and across the curriculum have worked closely with their students and partnering community organizations to generate hundreds and thousands of service-learning projects that engage and serve the community while strengthening the civic, academic, and social development skills of our students. During the 2005-06 academic year alone, more than 20,000 students participated in classroom-integrated service projects.

20 Exemplary Service-Learning Projects is a compilation of imaginative, rigorous, engaging projects that engage community partners, connect deeply with classroom curriculum, and involve student voice in the preparation and implementation of the projects. The projects represent every curricular area and several are cross-curricular, demonstrating that service-learning is a great connecting strategy. Service-learning connects students with their communities, connects classroom learning with contemporary community issues, connects students and teachers in profound ways, and connects academic disciplines in creative, organic ways.

Chicago Public Schools identifies service-learning as an important tool to build productive and engaged citizens. We expect that each project will help enhance the civic skills (leadership, communication, problem-solving), civic knowledge (community issues and organizations, public policies and policy makers), and civic attitudes (commitment to the common good). But what else can service-learning do? *20 Exemplary Service-Learning Projects* demonstrates that through service-learning, students:

- Strengthen academic skills and knowledge;
- Develop stronger relationships with their peers and their teachers;
- Explore possible career opportunities;
- Encounter people, places, and things previously unknown to them;
- Make a positive contribution to their communities;
- Change their attitudes about themselves and other people;
- Develop a deeper commitment to their own learning; and
- Change the world.

Service-learning is an important classroom strategy for all of these reasons.

Volume Format

20 Exemplary Service-Learning Projects is a documentation of creative projects across the city of Chicago. Each project has emerged organically in response to very real issues in Chicago's neighborhoods and communities. Each project embodies the organic intersection of teacher, student, curriculum and community that embodies effective service-learning.

As you use this volume you will notice that each project is described in a specific layout format.

- The main headings (dark blue) name the project, the content area, and school.
- The sub headings (light blue) break the project into parts including preparation, action reflection, learning standards, and lesson plans.
- The boxed text in the upper left hand corner is a brief description of the project itself.
- Quotes from teachers, students, and community partners (light blue) are sprinkled across the pages.

We hope that you find *20 Exemplary Service-Learning Projects* to be informative and inspiring. We also hope that you find an idea in this volume that speaks to you and encourages you to think about using service-learning in your classroom, your school, or in your community. If you do, write us and tell us your story. We would love to include it in subsequent volumes.

Table of Contents

Project	School	Content	Page
Social Justice Academy	Kelvyn Park High School	English	6-7
Social Justice Newsletter	Juarez Community Academy	English	8-9
Exchange Neighborhoods	Kelvyn Park High School	English	10-11
Community Food Drive	Chicago Discovery Academy	English	12-13
Junior Achievement	Taft High School	World Languages	14-15
Food and Nutrition	Roosevelt High School	World Languages	16-17
Paper Recycling	School of Entrepreneurship	Science	18-19
Gage Park River Study	Gage Park High School	Science	20-21
Green Team	BEST High School	Science	22-23
Katrina Relief	Hubbard High School	Science	24-25
Freshman Health Fair	Senn High School	Science	26-27
Urban Watch	Washington High School	Science	28-29
Student Leadership	Curie High School	Social Studies	30-31
Neighborhood Mural	Mather High School	Social Studies	32-33
Genocide Curriculum	Northside College Preparatory	Social Studies	34-35
Life Stories	King College Preparatory	Social Studies	36-37
Disability Awareness	Curie High School	Special Education	38-39
Community Thrift Store	Vaughn High School	Interdisciplinary	40-41
Hunger in America	Richards Career Academy	Math and English	42-43
Park Use Analysis	Senn High School	Math	44-45

Project Description

Kelvyn Park High School's Social Justice Academy offers Freshman and Sophomore students a language arts curriculum that allows them to encounter real life issues and then generate projects that develop and enhance their critical thinking skills. Lorraine Hansberry's Raisin in the Sun and Pam Munoz Ryan's Esperanza Rising are just two literary works that introduce students to contemporary themes of social justice in their community.

Working in groups throughout the year to read, discuss, research, and write reflectively and then develop service projects that are important to their community, students address the issues of immigration, education, and gentrification. Gentrification, in particular, is a problem that students have experienced firsthand as communities are uprooted by the forces of housing development. One service project generated by the students helped to get a citizen's referendum passed that called on the alderman to slow the process of gentrification in their community and provide for more affordable housing.

“The hardest part of the project was trying to cooperate with uncooperative people, actually getting them to open their doors during our door-knocking campaign. But the best part was getting people to vote yes on the referendum. It's great to know that gentrification is going to stop in our neighborhood. I'm happy to have made a difference.”—Student

Preparation

A Raisin in the Sun, Lorraine Hansberry's play set in 1950's Chicago, introduces students to the problem of affordable housing that is so real in so many Chicago neighborhoods. Following a reading of the play, students conducted action research on housing in Chicago during the 1950's and contemporary housing issues today. In order to understand the local perspective on housing, students also conducted interviews in the community with neighborhood parents as well as with tenants at the Lorrington Apartments who had joined together to buy their building in order to prevent it from being purchased by developers intent on raising prices in order to make a large profit.

Lesson Plan

Set in Chicago during the 1950's, Raisin in the Sun addresses the problem of affordable housing. After reading the Hansberry play, students conducted comparative research about the cost and supply of housing in Chicago during the 1950s and today. Students then participated in an affordable housing campaign with the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, a local community organization working to preserve affordable housing and slow gentrification. Students participated in a door-knocking campaign to help get a citizen referendum passed.

At the culmination of the referendum campaign, students were organized into three groups for their community action research project. The three groups were: (1) Housing Stories –students interviewed individuals and families living or who had lived in the community to learn more about the housing situation; (2) Gentrification and Small Businesses – the students met with business owners to learn about the impact of gentrification on their work; and (3) Discount Mega Mall – the students interviewed small vendors in the mega mall who were being forced out of business because of the forces of gentrification. The class used the following strategies to conduct their community research: class discussion, background readings, Internet research, field trips, videos, surveys and survey analysis, interviews, guest speakers, and a research paper. Each student group prepared and presented their findings at the annual convention of the Logan Square Neighborhood Association.

Action

Students participated in a local affordable housing campaign seeking to slow gentrification and encourage development of more affordable housing. Students knocked on doors in their community to encourage residents to vote in favor of a citizen referendum directing the alderman and city to slow high-priced development and increase affordable housing. Students also produced a multimedia presentation based on their community research and presented their video at the annual conference of the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, an organization dedicated to working with working class and low-income families in the community.

Kelvyn Park High School

Learning Standards

- 1.B.4c Read age-appropriate material with fluency and accuracy.
- 1.C.4c Interpret, evaluate, and apply information from a variety of sources to other situations.
- 2.B.5b Apply knowledge gained from literature as a means of understanding contemporary and historical economic, social and political issues and perspectives.
- 3.C.4a Write for real or potentially real situations in academic, professional and civic contexts.
- 3.C.4b Using available technology, produce compositions and multimedia works for specified audiences.
- 4.B.4a Deliver planned informative and persuasive oral presentations using visual aids and contemporary technology as individuals and members of a group.
- 5.A.4b Design and present a project using various formats from multiple sources.



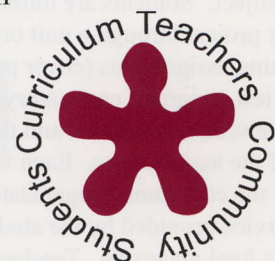
“I think it is so important for students to take their learning outside of the classroom, especially when addressing issues of social justice. If we conclude our curricular units with only analysis of the problems in society—however sophisticated that analysis is—the students generally tend to withdraw from the topic. If I can’t change it why should I care about it? This type of curriculum leads to despair, or worse, apathy. The key to making the curriculum matter is action. What I saw happening during this project was students starting to believe in their own political agency.”—Teacher

Reflection

Students are taught the three principles of community action research: Research, Action, Reflection. Community action research helps students take real issues in their community as curriculum, learn about those issues, take action, and then reflect while working toward positive change. Students wrote a weekly reflection essay during the project and responded to the following questions: What happened this week? How is the research going? What did I learn about the issue and the research? What problems our group experiencing? What other questions has this research made me consider? Students were also guided in reflective discussion throughout their service project.

Teacher Contact:

Jesse Senechal
senechalkp@hotmail.com
773/534-4200
Maura Nugent
mocon5@yahoo.com



Social Justice Newsletter

Project Description

Benito Juarez Community Academy sits in the middle of the Pilsen neighborhood. Since the Great Chicago Fire it has been a gateway for immigrants, and since the 1960s, it has been home to generations of immigrants from Mexico. The community has a rich culture and heritage that is embodied in its community organizations. These organizations assist new immigrants and other community members with employment, childhood and adult education, citizenship, legal issues, etc. Juarez has built strong relationships with dozens of community organizations and has tapped into these relationships to create the Social Justice Newsletter, a service-learning project deeply integrated with curriculum. During the third quarter of their first year at Juarez, every freshman in the Reading in the Language Arts program participates in a ten-week curriculum-integrated service-learning project called the Social Justice Newsletter. Working in small groups, students choose volunteer opportunities from among more than 50 community organizations. The service experience becomes the text for the creation of eight written artifacts which will be included in their own Social Justice Newsletter.

“Social responsibility does not just happen on its own - it must be modeled and taught. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Theresa, John Dewey, Paolo Friere, and Benito Juarez would be proud of the lessons our students learn from implementing this project.”

—Teacher

Preparation

Preparation, action and reflection are neatly interwoven throughout the ten weeks of this organically integrated service-learning project. Students are introduced to the Social Justice Newsletter project through a unit organizer that outlines the major writing assignments (cover page, organizational profile, interview, epigram, cover story, survey and graph, poem, movie review, advertisement, and the newsletter itself) and the purpose of the assignments. Each writing assignment relates directly to the community organization chosen by the students and the service provided by the students, and becomes part of the group's final magazine. Teachers introduce students to the community organizations and students set up their first visit to the site.

English (Reading in the Language Arts)

Lesson Plan

Freshman level students are introduced to the Social Justice Newsletter, a third quarter unit on persuasive writing, through a unit organizer that outlines the written documents required, the skills gained, and a timeline for the project. Students gain knowledge about different forms of persuasive writing. All of their writing is based on the community organization and the issues addressed by that organization. Students conduct primary research and then use their writing skills to create a newsletter that documents the work of a community organization. Through the project, students discover how others react to their beliefs as they use the art of persuasive writing. Student writing attempts to persuade readers to adopt their point of view.

Each Juarez freshman in the RLA class is expected to work as part of a team to create a “social justice newsletter” based on a particular social justice issue addressed by a local community organization. Working in groups, students choose a community organization where they will volunteer. Once the relationships have been established, students must complete eight written artifacts that relate to the organization and the issues it represents. Students must complete and incorporate into their newsletter a profile of the organization, interview of a staff member or client, cover story about the value of the organization, survey and graph of organizational services, poem, review of a movie that relates to the organizational work, an advertisement of the organization's services, an organizational brochure and an epigram.

Students learn to use MS Publisher software to create a newsletter of professional quality. Students display their newsletter in the school library and all freshman students have a chance to vote for the social justice newsletter that best meets established criteria.

Action

Students must volunteer at a community organization of their choice (student groups sign up for their first, second, and third choices or identify an organization with which they are familiar) for at least ten hours. Organizations address animal welfare, social justice, environmental education, youth programs, and citizenship issues. Student groups meet with organizational representatives, set their own schedules and work plans, and then report back to their teachers. Each academic component of the Social Justice Newsletter relates to the service experience and community organization.

Benito Juarez Community Academy

“The Social Justice Newsletter project helped us to be more responsible. In the end you really have to step up to keep your promises to do your work. If you let yourself down, you let everyone down. But if the teacher sees that you’re responsible, he’ll let you do more group work.”

—Student

Learning Standards

- 3.B.4a Produce documents that exhibit a range of writing techniques appropriate to purpose and audience.
- 3.B.4b Produce, edit, revise and format work for submission and/or publication using contemporary technology.
- 5.A.4b Design and present a project using various formats from multiple sources.
- 5.C.4a Plan, compose, edit and revise information for presentation to an audience.



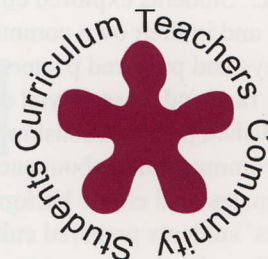
“By helping someone, it made me feel better. When I was little, I wanted someone to help me. Now I know how good you feel when you help someone else. I felt pretty happy that I would help others, and later realized that I wasn’t only helping the people at the organization, but that I was helping myself.” — Student

Reflection

Students, working in groups, produce a social justice newsletter. Each group’s newsletter is displayed in the Juarez library and all freshman RLA students have an opportunity to vote for the magazine that best meets the established criteria. Prizes are awarded to the winning entries. The magazine itself is an excellent reflection tool as students produce written documents about the service experience in a variety of formats.

Teacher Contact:

Dr. Richard Gelb, Juan Carlos Ocon, Rus Bass-Ehler, Laura Lemone, Dr. Peter Merwin, Anna Ruiz, Teresa Sosa
773-534-7030



Neighborhood Exchange

Project Description

After reading the books Monster and Night in their English class, Kelvyn Park students deliberated on issues of race and class. Monster tells the story of a 16-year-old African-American male who has been imprisoned for being an accomplice to a crime. Night describes the Holocaust experience in Nazi Germany during World War II. The literature study served as an excellent prequel to a partnership with Brooks College Preparatory High School mediated by Hostelling International Chicago and its Exchange Neighborhoods program. Exchange Neighborhoods provides a structured opportunity for students from two schools with contrasting ethno-cultural identities to carry out a cultural exchange project. Each participating school hosts and educates their peers from a partner school about the cultural, social, racial, and political realities within the host school's neighborhoods and community. The goal of the Exchange Neighborhoods program is to break down stereotypes held by young people from differing backgrounds and neighborhoods throughout Chicago.

English, Reading in the Language Arts

Lesson Plan

Ms. Zamiara introduced the problems of race and class and helped her students to analyze character development, plot techniques, and historical context in the novels Monster and Night. After examining their own views on race and culture, students analyzed how these views played out in the context of the texts they were studying. The class then worked toward a deeper understanding of culture, utilizing curriculum prepared by Hostelling International Chicago. The 13 lessons helped students come to a definition of culture, understand the features of culture, examine the "invisible" aspects of culture as well as understand what it means to be different, to be an American and to explore generalizations. Finally, students learn about interpreting behavior within and across cultures, face cultural misunderstanding, and encounter a "foreign" culture. Subsequently, students made real-life connections with a school in an area distinct from their own, communicated with fellow students in an ethnically different neighborhood and reflected upon the implications of these activities. Students completed the experience by linking to the lessons they learned from their own cultural exchange to the texts originally studied.

"The students went in to the program a little fearful and with some negative feelings. They left the program wanting to be friends with the new people they had met. I think they were a bit surprised at how their stereotypes broke down. They came away with appreciation and respect. The program also proved that it is possible to learn a lot and have a blast doing it." — Community Partner

Preparation

Night and Monster along with cultural learning curriculum provided the foundation for students to examine race, class, and culture. Students explored culture and racism through the novels and in their own communities and subsequently wrote essays and prepared posters and oral presentations about how race and class played out in the texts. Students then established peer relationships with Brooks College Prep and communicated about each other's communities, school climates, and ethnic backgrounds. Both Kelvyn Park and Brooks' students prepared cultural learning experiences for each other. Students sought to share the most important aspects of their culture in order to create new avenues of understanding.

Action

Kelvyn Park and Brooks students hosted their partner school for a day of cultural exchange. When 25 Kelvyn Park students visited Brooks – located on the Southeast Side and with a predominantly African-American student body – their pen-pals welcomed them, took them on a tour of the school, and presented them with various posters depicting their families, cultural history, and community/school traditions. Kelvyn Park students – mostly Latino and living on the Northwest Side – reciprocated the hospitality with stations highlighting Latin American dance, food, holidays, and historical events. Following the neighborhood visits, both groups of students spent an overnight together at Hostelling International Chicago in downtown Chicago. During the overnight, students cooked and engaged in multiple reflection activities together.

Kelvyn Park High School

“It was really cool learning about another culture and great welcoming them [Brooks students] to our own. Leaving was really sad. We were like a family by the end.” — Student

Learning Standards

- 1.B.5b Analyze the defining characteristics and structures of a variety of complex literary genres and describe how genre affects the meaning and function of the texts.
- 2.A.4b Explain relationships between and among literary elements, including character, plot, setting, theme, conflict and resolution and their influence on the effectiveness of the literary piece.
- 2.B.5b Apply knowledge gained from literature as a means of understanding contemporary and historical economic, social and political issues and perspectives.
- 3.C.5a Communicate information and ideas in narrative, informative and persuasive writing with clarity and effectiveness in a variety of written forms using appropriate traditional and/or electronic formats; adapt content, vocabulary, voice and tone to the audience, purpose and situation.
- 4.B.5a Deliver planned and impromptu oral presentations, as individuals and members of a group, conveying results of research, projects or literature studies to a variety of audiences (e.g., peers, community, business/industry, local organizations) using appropriate visual aids and available technology.
- 5.A.5b Research, design and present a project to an academic, business or school community audience on a topic selected from among contemporary issues.

Reflection

In their own schools, students reflected individually and in small groups throughout the ten-week project. They wrote essays, discussed their experiences, reactions, and fears. During their overnight experience at Hostelling International Chicago facilitated several reflection activities including the creation of a scrap book that documented the collective experience. One reflection activity in particular engaged each student group in creating a poster about the other school based on ten words that describe the other school. The posters were presented to students from the partner school in the morning with time for honest reflection. Students also complete a post-project assessment survey.

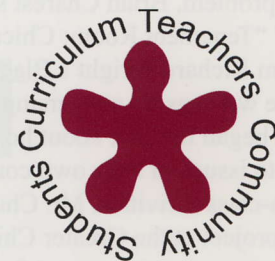


“Initially my students were afraid to get off the bus in a neighborhood they had never visited, but as soon as they got the courage, they couldn’t wait to keep on exploring a new community.” — Teacher

Teacher Contact:

Heather Zamiara
heather_zamiara@yahoo.com
773-534-4200

Megan Johnson, Education Coordinator
Hostelling International
mjohnson@hichicago.org
312-583-2221



Hunger Awareness Campaign and Food Drive

Project Description

Chicago Discovery Academy, a small school within a school on Chicago's Southeast Side, uses the city as a classroom. Teachers throughout the school use service-learning as a strategy to explore the city while providing important service. In Brian Charest's classroom, students connect their literature studies to important social issues. After reading the poem "Tenement Room: Chicago" and excerpts from Richard Wright's Black Boy as part of their American Literature class, students from Chicago Discovery Academy began to explore the issue of hunger in their own community. They also brainstormed ways of addressing the problem of hunger on a local level. Following a service project at the Greater Chicago Food Depository where students sorted food products, students organized a food drive at their school, educated other students about hunger through a hunger awareness campaign, and wrote letters to public officials advocating that public officials address the problem of hunger.

"Students really came alive and took on this issue with great passion and dedication. It can be difficult to engage all your students in a project in a special education setting, but through this service to the school and community we were able to accommodate all learning styles and each student found a task that he/she adopted with great success."—Teacher

Preparation

In order to encourage students to reflect on hunger in their community and consider ways of making positive changes to a local problem, Brian Charest's English class read Frank M. Davis' "Tenement Room: Chicago," a poem, and excerpts from Richard Wright's Black Boy. Students reflected upon these writings by conversing in pairs and small groups. They also began to think about how to connect these literary materials to issues in their own community. Subsequent to these in-class activities, Mr. Charest's class completed a service project at the Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD), where students sorted fruit and canned goods to be distributed to food insecure individuals in Chicago.

English/Special Education

Lesson Plan

The purpose of the unit is to encourage students to reflect on hunger in their community and to consider ways of making positive changes to a local problem. Students engage the problem of hunger through literature, specifically by reading "Tenement Room: Chicago" and Richard Wright's Black Boy and engaging in small group conversations to reflect on these writings. Students also learn about poetry by examining literary devices and themes. In order to accommodate all learning styles the teacher incorporates writing, reading, art, and kinesthetic learning. Students gain hands-on experience at the Greater Chicago Food Depository as well as a chance to create collection boxes, posters, and other food drive materials.

Students gain insight into hunger in their community as well as the service agencies that provide relief for the food insecure of Chicago. Students also learn to write reflections, identify and analyze problems in their community, and research ways in which they might solve them. Through their study of poetry and literature, students identify themes, forms and other literary devices. They also learn correct letter writing format by writing and sending letters to public officials.

Students learn to write reflections on works of literature and about their own actions. They understand how agencies distribute food in their community and gain the ability to take direct action by getting involved with local organizations to help prevent hunger. Students also learn to organize a food drive and a campaign to raise awareness about hunger in Chicago. Students produce a poster about hunger for presentation to the class and other advisories in order to raise awareness about hunger and to promote the schoolwide food drive.

Action

The first exposure to service for students is a trip to the GCFD, following which students organized a semester-long food drive and hunger awareness campaign. The group set its collection goal at one can per student and staff member. Twenty-two students made food collection boxes which were set up in visible locations throughout the school. They designed posters educating other students and faculty members about hunger and displayed these in hallways and the cafeteria, and they presented their work to their peers in order to drum up more support for the food drive. Having exceeded their initial goal of 400 cans of food, the students wrote letters communicating their concern about hunger/food insecurity within their communities to local public officials and began planning the next stage of their work.

Chicago Discovery Academy

“I like to help other people - it’s something that I’d never done before. I am planning on doing this next year.”—Student

Learning Standards

- 1.C.4c Interpret, evaluate and apply information from a variety of sources to other situations (e.g., academic, vocational, technical, personal).
- 1.C.5f Use tables, graphs and maps to challenge arguments, defend conclusions and persuade others.
- 2.B.3a Respond to literary materials from personal, creative and critical points of view.
- 2.A.4a Analyze and evaluate the effective use of literary techniques (e.g., figurative language, allusion, dialogue, description, symbolism, word choice, dialect) in classic and contemporary literature representing a variety of forms and media.
- 2.B.5b Apply knowledge gained from literature as a means of understanding contemporary and historical economic, social and political issues and perspectives.
- 3.C.5b Write for real or potentially real situations in academic, professional and civic contexts (e.g., applications, job applications, business letters, resume, petitions).
- 5.A.5b Research, design and present a project to an academic, business or school community audience on a topic selected from among contemporary issues.

Reflection

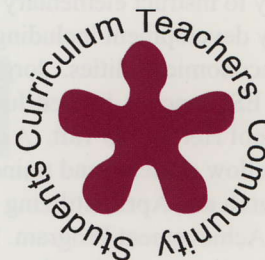
Reflection was continuously built into the various stages of the service project. After reading literary excerpts in class, students discussed various strategies to solve the hunger problem on a local level. Students also wrote reflections after reading works of literature, visiting the GCFD, and completing the food drive. After their visit to the Greater Chicago Food Depository, they discussed the experience and next steps they would take. Finally, upon completing the food drive, the group designed ways to improve their publicity strategy, recruit more students for the GCFD next year, and improve upon any actions taken this year.



“It is always wonderful to see just how eye-opening an experience this is for the students. Many of them walk away thinking about hunger within their own communities and school in a way that they never have before.”—Community Partner

Teacher Contact:

Brian Charest
briancharles3@yahoo.com
773-535-7947



High School Heroes - Junior Achievement Program

Project Description

Junior Achievement's High School Heroes program trains high school students to teach K-3 classrooms about community development. Two classes of juniors at Taft High School along with their teacher Jorge Berne partnered with Junior Achievement (JA) to teach about community development at two feeder elementary schools. Working alongside JA volunteer coordinator Michelle Carrillo, Mr. Berne's students planned for the execution of the program and recruited other students, received training and curricular materials from JA, practiced teaching through role-play, and conducted continual reflection. The service project took place at Garvy and Thorp Elementary Schools with Taft students leading activities for classrooms filled with 28-35 active, eager and engaged pupils.

"I was really nervous at first. My partner and I stayed up most of the night to prepare. When we got to class though, the students were really excited and had lots of questions. They even hugged us when we left. By the end of the day, we were tired but still very excited. The [elementary school] students really looked up to us, so we had to be good role models. Now we know what Mr. Berne goes through every day; we appreciate how hard it is. We are definitely doing this again next year."—Student

Preparation

The "High School Heroes" program is a Junior Achievement program that provides high school students with the opportunity to instruct elementary school students about community development including social, political, employment and economic realities. Jorge Berne, a World Language and ESL teacher, invited Junior Achievement to bring "High School Heroes" to Taft. A core group of students recruited fellow students and trained together for several days in March and April, utilizing curriculum provided by the Junior Achievement Program. Students prepared for their classroom presentations by rehearsing and evaluating teaching and classroom management techniques.

Spanish/ESL

Lesson Plan

Junior Achievement Program provides teachers and students with a classroom curriculum to be implemented in a sequence of four lesson plans. First, students have the opportunity to learn about "Ourselves." Volunteers read compelling stories aloud and accompany these with at least five hands-on activities to demonstrate helping, working, earning, and saving. Next, students become familiar with "Our Families." This unit emphasizes the roles people play in the local economy and engages students with activities about needs, wants, jobs, tools and skills, and interdependence. During the third unit, high school teachers expand to a concentric circle of "Our Community," exploring the interdependent roles of workers within a community, the work they perform, and how communities function. Finally, the group delves into "Our City" by studying careers, the skills people need to work in specific careers, and how businesses contribute to a city.

JA staff help interested teachers implement the program. High school students spend time reviewing the curriculum, rehearse teaching the curriculum, evaluate and improve their teaching technique and then lead classroom activities at local feeder schools. Teachers interested in participating in the Junior Achievement Program should contact:

Michelle Carrillo
mcarrillo@jachicago.org
651 West Washington, Suite 404
Chicago IL 60661
312-715-1300x230

Action

In May a total of 50 students taught general and special education classes for two days at Thorp and Garvy Elementary Schools. Taft High School students spent the entire day, in teams of two or three, in elementary school classrooms numbering 30-35 pupils. JA had provided the students with hands-on activities and lesson plans directly correlated to the Illinois Learning Standards. Students taught about roles in the community including potential careers, the fundamentals of community economic transactions, and the basics of community development, covering topics such as economic sectors and zoning issues. Both high school and elementary students learned about practical community development issues through the four JA lessons: (1) Ourselves; (2) Our Families; (3) Our Community; and (4) Our City.

Taft High School

“It was so inspiring to see so many young people from Taft High School possess the desire to teach. Each and every JA High School Hero did an outstanding job. I know they will be truly remembered by all the primary graders at O.A. Thorp and Garvy Schools.”

—Community Partner

Learning Standards

- 4.A.4a Apply listening skills as individuals and members of a group in a variety of settings (e.g., lectures, discussions, conversations, team projects, presentations, interviews).
- 4.B.4a Delivered planned informative and persuasive oral presentations using visual aids and contemporary technology as individuals and members of a group.
- 5.C.4a Plan, compose, edit and revise information for presentation to an audience.
- 15.E.4b Describe social and environmental benefits and consequences of production and consumption.
- 28.B.4a Engage in extended conversations in a variety of situations.
- 28.B.4c Recognize and use nonverbal cues in various formal and informal settings.
- 28.D.5b Make impromptu presentations in a variety of academic, social and work situations.

Reflection

Reflection is a constant component of the students’ service, both on an individual basis and in small/large groups. Students evaluate each other’s performance during teacher trainings, debrief immediately after teaching at the elementary schools, write essays about the experience, and discuss successes and possible changes with one another and their teachers. By completing the reflection essays, students became eligible to win \$500 college scholarships from Junior Achievement. Several Taft students won these awards. This year’s pilot group plans on training next year’s cadre of young teachers and continuing with the program for as long as possible, even hoping to expand to a greater number of students.

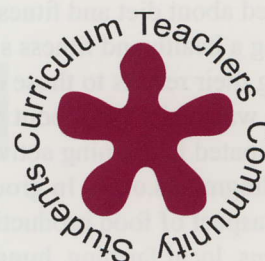


“They [the students] were the main characters—I was just the facilitator. Teaching other young people really gave them an appreciation for the teaching profession. It not only brought them closer as a group, but changed my dynamic with the students for the better. I couldn’t be any prouder of them—this is the happiest moment in my six years of teaching.”

—Teacher

Teacher Contact:

Jorge Berne
jorgeberne@yahoo.com
773-534-1000



Food, Nutrition, and World Hunger (La nourriture, les nutriments, et la faim mondiale)

Project Description

French II students at Roosevelt High School gained more than just a vocabulary lesson about food and dining customs. Students also learned about nutrition, compared diet and physical activity between French teens and themselves, and discussed the causes and actions being taken by groups working to fight world hunger. Through a variety of learning activities including games, group research projects, questionnaires, films, and discussion of contemporary articles in French, students prepared to address the problem of food awareness and hunger in their community. Students participated in a day of service at the Greater Chicago Food Depository and then researched and prepared information, brochures, and other resources to educate their peers, faculty, and community members about local food pantries, local farming, and community gardens, and hunger issues for World Hunger Awareness Day on June 6, 2006.

**“We should do this again next year!
When do we get to come back to
the Food Depository?”**

**It doesn't take much to feed
people, maybe we could all be
more careful about the way we use
food and even the types of food we
eat.”—Student**

Preparation

Students prepared for their project by learning the vocabulary and concepts of food, health and nutrition. Students also learned about diet and fitness regimens in France by completing a health and fitness survey in French and then comparing their results to those of French teens. Students also watched a film about food gleaners in France and participated in learning activities about hunger (see www.feedingminds.org). In groups, students researched a specific aspect of food production including community gardens, local farming, hunger issues, and local food pantries.

World Languages

Lesson Plan

Nitya Viswanath leads a four-week unit in her French II class on food, health and nutrition. Classroom learning in these areas lays the foundation for a consideration of the problem of hunger and a subsequent service-learning project. Part 1 introduces students to food and dining customs by utilizing images and word games including fill-in-the-blank, word scrambles, crossword puzzles, and quiz games. During Part 2 students examine articles on basic nutrition from the www.feedingminds.org website. Students keep a food journal for one week, listing foods and nutrients. Students write a paragraph in French comparing what nutrients they consumed compared to recommendations for daily consumption. Part 3 introduces students to the problem of world hunger. Students read news articles about non-profit groups and their work to fight hunger in Africa and Latin America. Students write about what these groups do to combat hunger. Students also accessed guided online research sheets (www.actioncontrelafaim.org), and completed questionnaires about heroes and local activism. Finally, students viewed the film “The Gleaners and I” (*Les glaneurs et la glaneuse*) to get a deeper understanding of hunger action and agricultural development. During the final part of the unit, students complete two action projects: service at the Greater Chicago Food Depository and presentation of hunger-related topics at the school's World Hunger Awareness Day. Students researched food pantries, community gardens, school cafeteria nutrition and then prepared their displays. The display incorporated two important guiding questions: (1) Why do we need to be concerned about world hunger? and (2) What can we do to resolve world hunger?

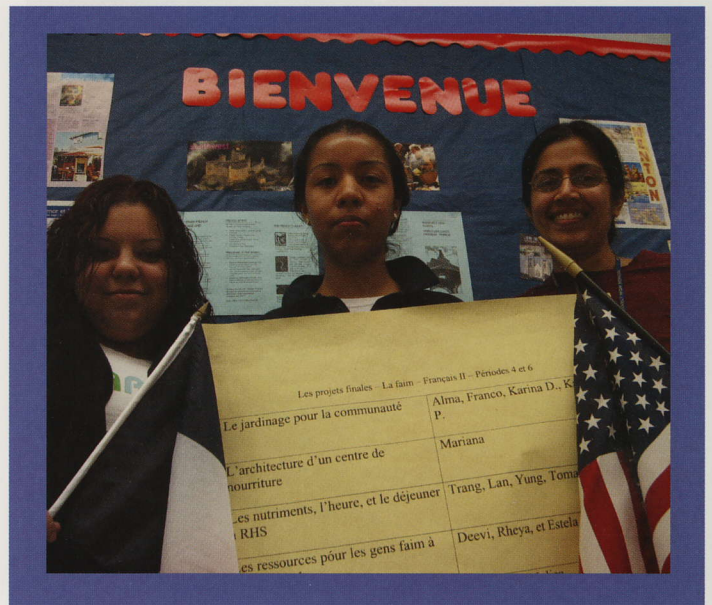
Action

Students participated in a day of service at the Greater Chicago Food Depository. The students also researched and prepared materials for presentation and distribution at a schoolwide recognition event for World Hunger Awareness Day on June 6. The materials educated students, faculty, and community members in multiple languages about local food pantries, community gardens, hunger, and local farming options.

Roosevelt High School

Learning Standards

- 28.C.4a Comprehend key vocabulary as well as the main message of complex written materials without the help of visuals.
- 28.C.4b Demonstrate understanding of written materials by organizing information and concepts.
- 29.A.5 Analyze and interpret manners and customs within the social, academic, and work environments of selected target language societies.
- 30.A.5d Use the target language to analyze and contrast diet, nutrition, and physical fitness regimens in areas where the target language is spoken with those of the United States.



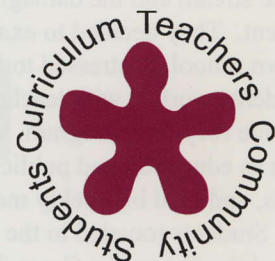
“It has been an eye-opening experience. I feel like I’m seeing a new side to my kids. I’m seeing that they care for other people and for the world. And the students are more engaged because they want to make sure that they’re doing quality work because so many others will see their product. I had a chance to see my students work in groups and take a real interest in contacting community members outside the school to get more information. I also loved preparing for this unit, finding authentic materials and current news articles to use with the students, as well as working through the more complicated reading material with them. None of them gave up! It allowed all of us to step out of the usual pattern of class work and try something new.” —Teacher

Reflection

Students wrote a one-page writeup of their project in French. Additionally, students completed reflective writing assignments 1-2 times each week about what they had done in class during the week and their progress on the project. Finally, students completed presentations about their research which they displayed at the World Hunger Awareness Day event.

Teacher Contact:

Nitya Viswanath
mlleviswanath@yahoo.com
773/553-5400



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!

Environmental Science/ Biology and Social Science

Project Description

Chicago Public Schools uses paper. Tons and tons of paper. Virtually all of it can be used again through recycling efforts. Paper companies stand ready to purchase recycled paper and more and more Americans should be aware of recycling and using recycled products as part of their school, office and home routines. Enter students committed to preserving their environment! After seeing how much paper was being wasted and not recycled at their school, a group of environmental science students got together and decided to do something. Working together with two adult sponsors, the students designed and implemented an entirely student-run recycling program at the School of Entrepreneurship, one of the four small schools at the South Shore campus. As the students continuously evaluated and modified their recycling program, and teachers helped make curricular connections in the classroom, the group expanded to form its own club – the Recycling Club – and currently has efforts underway to expand into the other small schools on campus and even into neighboring community organizations.

Lesson Plan

Lisa Michalak incorporated recycling education and information very smoothly into her Environmental Science and Biology curricula. While teaching units on current environmental issues, environmental pollution, and the composition of the earth's atmosphere, she included activities on recycling and efforts at mitigating such pollution. Interested students met with Ms. Michalak outside of class to establish the recycling club.

To enhance their learning, Ms. Michalak introduced a land use component to the project by asking students to work in small groups to design an environmentally sound way to utilize land. Each student group was assigned a set amount of land in a specific geographical area (e.g., China), and were charged with developing an environmentally sensitive land use plan. Students interviewed architects, educators, environmentalists, and community organizers to create a presentation on how to make their piece of land a marketable one, and then shared their findings with their teachers and peers.

“There was always just so much paper being thrown out, especially at the end of the school year. We can't afford to waste like that, when the earth is in as much trouble as it is. We are young. If we don't take care of it, nobody else will.”—Student

Preparation

In Environmental Science, students learned about the amount of paper and other recyclable materials entering the solid waste stream and the damaging consequences on the environment. They decided to examine recycling efforts at their own school. Distressed to find little action taking place, students worked with teachers to plan and coordinate a schoolwide recycling program. They developed specific tasks such as education and publicity and regular classroom collections, and held bi-weekly meetings to monitor their progress. Students traveled to the Blue Bag Recycling Facility and the Center for Green Technology to learn more about the recycling efforts and emerging strategies around green technology.

Action

Students began by working with Allied Waste Management and Abitibi—two paper recycling companies—to set up collection bins in their parking lot. They initially set up collection boxes in only some of the school's classrooms, and eventually expanded to having boxes in all rooms. Students collected boxes on a daily basis, using a rotation of four to five club members each week. The Recycling Club met every other week to measure the amount of paper collected, to reflect upon their progress as a group, and to make any changes necessary to their methodology and schedule. Students advertised the program to their peers at events like freshman orientation and presented their work at conferences.

School of Entrepreneurship

Learning Standards

- 11.A.4c Collect, organize and analyze data accurately and precisely.
- 11.A.4f Using available technology, report, display and defend to an audience conclusions drawn from investigations.
- 11.B.5c Build and test different models or simulations of the design solution using suitable materials, tools and technology.
- 11.B.5d Choose a model and refine its design based on the test results.
- 11.B.5f Using available technology, prepare and present findings of the tested design solution to an audience that may include professional technical experts.
- 15.C.4b Explain the importance of research, development, invention, technology and entrepreneurship to the United States economy.
- 16.E.5b Analyze the relationship between an issue in world environmental history and the related aspects of political, economic and social history.



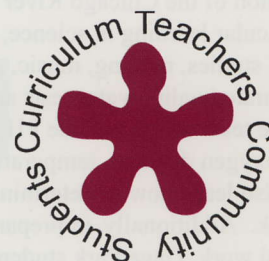
“After the initial co-planning, we just stepped back and the students took the program over completely. It was absolutely amazing to watch them take such ownership of this project and to witness the amazing success they have had.”—Teacher

Teacher Contact:

William Weeks
willwee22@rcn.com
Lisa Michalak
lmarie_76@yahoo.com
773-535-6190

Reflection

In addition to the bi-weekly evaluation and reflection the students conducted as a group, they connected their environmental work to other classes and issues including completing a land-use lesson that helped students understand how to develop land in an environmentally sensitive way. Students also evaluated their own work as part of the reflection process. After analyzing data on the number of students they were reaching and the amount of paper they were collecting during the first year of the project, the members of the Recycling Club expanded their collection to more classrooms within the school. Students, under the guidance of Mr. Weeks, have also reflected upon ways to reach out to the other small schools at the South Shore campus and to community organizations in the area. Efforts are currently underway: (1) to work with a marketing teacher at the School of Entrepreneurship in order to design a marketing campaign for the neighborhood; (2) to set up a Saturday drop-off of paper by small and local businesses; and (3) to collaborate with business teachers and students to design, market, and sell three-compartment garbage cans in schools.



Gage Park River Study

Environmental Science, Biology

Project Description

Gage Park is a neighborhood high school on Chicago's Southwest Side. It serves 2,000 students evenly split between African-Americans and Latinos. Students have come to recognize Gage Park as educationally challenging and as a safe haven for young people. One of those demanding, yet safe locations in the school is Patricia Parson's Environmental Science classroom. The room is chock full of pictures and projects demonstrating the experiential learning taking place in the class.

For the past ten years, Patricia Parsons has ignited a passion for the environment through a study of the river that leads to water testing and analysis, participation in River Rescue Days, an annual Coastal Clean Up at Lake Michigan beaches, stewardship days in the Lake Calumet area, and dozens of educational activities designed and implemented by the students themselves for peers, elementary pupils, and parents. The purpose of the Gage Park River Study, which has grown from a classroom enterprise to a schoolwide club, is to provide opportunities for students, community members, and teachers, working as a team, to identify and solve real world environmental problems of Chicago's water shed.

“Using the Chicago River as a context for learning and service, Patricia Parsons has invigorated student learning. Gage Park students learn about the Chicago River and become teachers themselves, sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm with hundreds of students and teachers at local congresses, festivals and teacher training events. Their work has helped forward the mission of Friends of the Chicago River by increasing awareness of the river.”—Community Partner

Preparation

Students prepare for service by learning about the historical, social, and economic factors that have played a role in the current condition of the Chicago River watershed. Studies include cross-curricular learning in science, mathematics, language arts, social studies, reading, music, and art. Students learn how to run accurate quality water tests and to understand the meaning of these tests which include PH, dissolved oxygen, biochemical oxygen demand, temperature change, turbidity, etc. Students also learn how to determine discharge and flow rate of the creek. Additionally, in preparation for their outreach and educational work, Gage Park students design learning activities in English and Spanish about the river and other conservation matters.

Lesson Plan

Students begin their annual inquiry into the local watershed participating in the annual Coastal Clean Up sponsored by the Alliance of Great Lakes. The event takes place just two weeks into the school year at lake-front beaches and introduces students to Lake Michigan directly, an incredibly important component of the local water shed. Students now move to a study of the Chicago River with curricular resource support from Friends of the Chicago River. Students study the history of the Chicago River, learn about life cycles and food chains, and how to read maps along the water shed.

Students also study the sources of water pollution and how to conduct basic water quality testing. Prior to conducting water shed stewardship activities, students are trained in safety procedures and observe ways to test water safely using gloves and goggles. After initial visits to the river where habitat assessment, clean up and water quality testing take place, students begin to work on their presentations and learning activities. Each year students present at the annual Chicago River Student Congress and conduct multiple learning activities for peers and younger pupils.

Contact the following organizations for excellent resources to learn about and support a high quality water shed:

Alliance of Great Lakes	312/939-0838
Friends of the Chicago River	312/939-0490

Action

The action component has three parts: (1) Students conduct various tests for water quality of the Chicago River and report their findings to a local organization; (2) Students participate in multiple river and lakefront assessment and clean up projects by joining the Alliance of Great Lakes, Friends of the Chicago River, and the Calumet Stewardship Initiative in citywide stewardship activities; and (3) Students design presentations and conduct educational activities for various groups to educate about the local water shed. Gage Park students present their findings at the annual Chicago River Student Congress, conferences, and at local feeder schools where younger pupils learn about the wonders of a cleaner river through fun activities.

Learning Standards

- 11A.5c Conduct systematic controlled experiments to test the selected hypothesis.
- 11.A.5e Report, display and defend the results of investigations to audiences that may include professionals and technical experts.
- 12.B.4a Compare physical, ecological and behavioral factors that influence interactions and interdependence of organisms.
- 12.B.5a Analyze and explain biodiversity issues and causes and effects of extinction.
- 12.B.2b Compare and predict how life forms can adapt to changes in the environment by applying concepts of change and constancy.
- 13.B.5c Design and conduct an environmental impact study, analyze findings and justify recommendations.

“When you learn from firsthand experiences, you look at things in a different light. When we’re outside, it’s not just coming from the book. We can see it and know that it’s true. If you see the problems with the environment and you’re learning at the same time, you understand the harm to the environment and that you can do something to help.”
—Student

Reflection

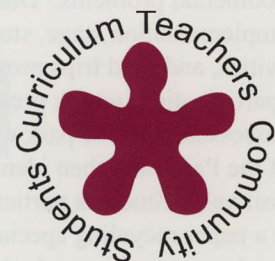
The Gage Park River Study includes a number of creative reflection strategies. At each visit to the Chicago River, students complete a river habitat survey and draw the ecosystem. They also write original poetry and reflection stories about their visits. Students write cinquins poetry to help them learn new vocabulary encountered during their field visits. Students also gather in groups of six to generate reflection text for a notebook that accompanies students throughout the project experience. River Study students have also become well-versed in their presentation skills as they present at conferences and congresses and conduct educational activities throughout the year.



“It’s a different way of learning. I like to see the light come on in the students’ eyes as they get excited about learning. The students help each other and this kind of excitement and help spills over into other classes. This is a place where everyone can shine—not just the top five percent. We have students from all walks of life. Many students come initially because of the “trip,” but they continue because they really enjoy the learning. They build a support system for each other.”—Teacher

Teacher Contact:

Patricia Parsons
parsonspatricia@yahoo.com
773/535-9230



Green Team

Environmental Science and Biology

Project Description

BEST High School was founded in the late 1990s as CPS reorganized large schools into small schools. The Bowen Environmental Study Team High School (BEST) offers students a chance to learn about and impact their natural and social environments. BEST places a strong emphasis on service-learning, recognizing the teaching strategy as a way to engage students in hands-on learning that connects school and community.

Environmental Science and Biology students at BEST participate in a variety of environmental restoration and social justice projects in their communities on Chicago's Southeast Side. Many of these projects are planned and implemented with local and citywide environmental organizations. Student groups implement a paper recycling program, monitor and restore local biodiversity by adopting a local beach, remove invasive plant species and restore local ecosystems in the area, maintain their own backyard through a student-run garden on school grounds, and conduct regular park assessment and stewardship activities in a park just south of the school.

“At first I thought that this project would be boring, but I worked the whole time. I didn't like sitting down. It was fun working with other students. If I hadn't gone, I would have never learned what I did about the environment. Now I want to do something to combine environmental work and computer graphics.”—Student

Preparation

BEST students begin their projects by learning about the history of their community and region and discussing current environmental problems. During the project identification and implementation stage, students participate in lessons, activities, and field trips provided by project partners. Students participating in park preservation activities conduct an initial assessment of the park with a tool provided by Friends of the Parks and then identify an area they can impact positively. Students participating in paper recycling hear from a paper recycling specialist, learn about strategic planning and organization, and take a field trip to the Center for Green Technology and the city's recycling facility.

Lesson Plan

For each service-learning project at BEST, teachers use their own text-based curricular resources and draw upon project preparation resources provided by community organizations. The Calumet Is My BackYard project, for example, provides curricular resources enabling students to explore and learn about environmental biodiversity, action, and leadership. Students learn about the importance of place, ecosystems, environmental leaders, biodiversity and area mapping, and strategies to address environmental problems. Through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, students participate in science experiments testing the efficacy of a beetle on an invasive plant species as a potential biological management strategy.

Friends of the Parks (FOTP) provides a four-lesson curriculum that prepares students to adopt a neighborhood park. Students conduct an initial assessment of their neighborhood park followed by interactive lessons introducing students to the importance of urban trees and biodiversity. Students involved in the paper recycling initiative receive an initial workshop demonstrating how to design an effective recycling program. An environmental educator addresses the process of paper recycling and a field trip to the Center for Green Technology and the City of Chicago's Blue Bag Recycling Facility prepares students to design and implement their own recycling project.

To develop a partnership and/or obtain curriculum from the following organizations, you can contact the following:

Alliance for the Great Lakes
Stephanie Smith
ssmith@greatlakes.org, 312/939-0838
Friends of the Parks
Mary Eileen Sullivan
sullivanme@fotp.org, 312/857-2757 x13
CIMBY, Jonathan Marino,
jonbmarino@gmail.com, 773/553-2024
Paper Recycling
Jonathan Marino
jonbmarino@gmail.com, 773/553-2024

Action

Paper Recycling - Students design and implement a school-wide paper recycling project, including weekly classroom collection by students and weekly pickups of recycled materials by a local business. Adopt-A-Beach – The Alliance for the Great Lakes' Adopt-A-Beach-Program enables BEST students to adopt, assess, and clean up a beach at the Indiana Dunes State Park. Adopt-A-Park - Teachers and students work with Friends of the Parks to adopt a park in the neighborhood and conduct stewardship activities. Calumet Is My BackYard – Students and teachers remove invasive plant species like garlic mustard, phragmyte, and purple loosestrife, replant native prairie grasses, and conduct soil erosion mitigation and biodiversity mapping.

BEST High School

Learning Standards

- 11.A.4c Collect, organize and analyze data accurately and precisely.
- 11.B.4b Propose and compare different solution designs to the design problem based upon given constraints including available tools, materials and time.
- 11.B.4f Evaluate the test results based on established criteria, note sources of error and recommend improvements.
- 12.B.3a Identify and classify biotic and abiotic factors in an environment that affect population density, habitat and placement of organisms in an energy pyramid.
- 12.B.5a Analyze and explain biodiversity issues and the causes and effects of extinction.
- 13.B.3f Apply classroom-developed criteria to determine the effects of policies on local science and technology issues (e.g., energy consumption, landfills, water quality).
- 13.B.4c Analyze ways that resource management and technology can be used to accommodate population trends.
- 13.B.4d Analyze local examples of resource use, technology use or conservation programs; document findings; and make recommendations for improvements.



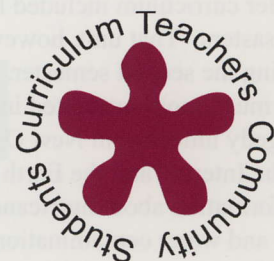
“These programs really cement the link between student leadership and maintaining biodiversity in the region. The service projects we have done with our students push them to apply the knowledge they gain in the classroom to real-world experiences. It’s important to sometimes take our kids out of the classroom in order to help prepare them for what lies ahead.”—Teacher

Teacher Contact:

William Smith
wjsmith@cps.k12.il.us,
773/535-6597
Brittany Kinser
Brittkinser@yahoo.com

Reflection

Students participate in teambuilding activities prior to implementing projects. The activities create a stronger sense of group and community and set the stage for post-project reflection. Students reflect upon their experiences after each workday through group discussion, de-briefing and written reflection activities. The recycling group, CIMBY participants, and other interested students meet on a regular basis to discuss their projects and plan for their workdays. In addition, students create bulletin boards and graphs to display their work to and educate other students about environmental issues in the area, and they have put together an eco-tourism guide for the Southeast Side of Chicago. Students have also been invited to present their work and city conferences.



Katrina Relief

Art, Environmental Science, Chemistry, Business

Project Description

Two days after Hurricane Katrina smashed into the southeastern coast of the United States and decimated the city of New Orleans, Andrew Manno, principal at Hubbard High School, stood before his gathered faculty and asked them for ideas about how the school could respond to the humanitarian disaster. While thousands of Americans pitched in by sending money to relief agencies, some faculty suggested the school take a more personal approach that would involve students, faculty and administration. One teacher with roots in southern Louisiana began to contact colleagues in New Orleans and was able to identify Bonnabel High School, a school demographically very similar to Hubbard. Students and teachers decided to adopt the school, and a year-long relationship began with a variety of connections between the two schools, fundraising activities, support, and learning about hurricanes and the impact on the people of New Orleans.

“This was different from anything we’ve done before. It was a great opportunity to have our own ideas. It was something we were really interested in. We were doing something that we enjoyed and we were helping others. The whole school came together around this effort.” —Student

Lesson Plan

The Katrina Relief project at Hubbard High School was both an interdisciplinary project and a schoolwide project. Environmental Science, Art, and Business classes participated in the project. Student groups such as National Honor Society also participated in the project.

In the Environmental Science class, the teacher presented and discussed issues of environmental impact and water contamination as residents of coastal Louisiana and Mississippi struggled to cope with the immediate and lingering effects of the hurricane. In the Earth Science class, the teacher moved up her unit on natural disasters to enable her students to learn about hurricanes as the disaster was unfolding in New Orleans. Students used Internet resources, newspaper articles, and their own texts to explore the science of hurricanes. Students learned about where and when hurricanes can take place, the technology of levies, and the impact on residents of coastal areas. They also learned about social, political, and humanitarian strategies the communities use or access in the aftermath of hurricanes.

In Art classes, students viewed a video produced by a teacher who had visited New Orleans. Business students took the opportunity to learn software used for greeting card design and then designed their own greeting cards for students at their adopted high school in New Orleans.

Preparation

Kim Vlk, the Environmental Science teacher at Hubbard, recognized an important teaching moment upon returning to school. Her curriculum included learning about weather and natural disasters. That unit, however, was scheduled to take place during the second semester. She felt that her students would be much more interested in learning about hurricanes as the tragedy unfolded in New Orleans. Using newspaper articles, the Internet and the Earth Science text, Ms. Vlk presented information about hurricanes including problems of the levies and water contamination, and discussed the basic concepts about recovery and humanitarian aid.

Action

Three teachers traveled to New Orleans to meet with school leaders and determine the needs of the student body after the hurricane. Subsequently, Hubbard students conducted action projects throughout the year to support their peers in New Orleans while exchanging letters and emails which was coordinated by a classroom teacher. The National Honor Society sponsored a Mardi Gras festival where students made and sold masks. The art class made Christmas tree ornaments from recycled light bulbs. The business class designed greeting cards and sent them to individual students at Bonnabel High. Students did fund raisers to purchase Thanksgiving gift certificates, a pizza party, and graduation gowns. By October 27, the school had already raised \$4,000.

Learning Standards

- 3.C.4a Write for real or potentially real situations in academic, professional and civic contexts.
- 12.E.3a Analyze and explain large-scale dynamic forces, events, and processes that affect the Earth's land, water, and atmospheric systems. Produce documents that exhibit a range of writing techniques appropriate to purpose and audience
- 25.A.4 Analyze and evaluate the effective use of elements, principles and expressive qualities in a composition/performance in visual arts.

“Too often kids aren’t willing to help someone they don’t know. Their response to this project demonstrated they wanted to help people who they didn’t even know. The kids wanted to be involved and weren’t looking for anything in return. They were giving from their hearts. It showed the human side of both teachers and students.”—Teacher

Reflection

During reflection sessions, it became clear that Hubbard students were most impacted by the fact that hurricane victims their own age did not have the most basic human necessities: shelter, food, toiletries. Classroom discussions revealed how much students took for granted and further inspired students to become more involved in continuing support of Bonnabel High School. The Mardi Gras fundraiser dance, for example, is now an annual event. As part of the reflection process, students were asked to write letters to their peers in New Orleans. After learning about the full dimensions of the hurricane, students were asked to complete one-page written assignments in their Environmental Science class about how they might have responded to the hurricane tragedy.

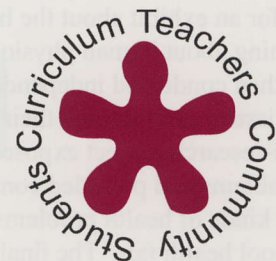


“When school resumed after the hurricane, we certainly did not think it would be the same. With generous hearts like yours, it has become an even more memorable year. The love and spirit your class has shown us has had a tremendous effect on us. Many of us had low days, but after reading the posters from your school, it always brought a smile to our faces. Nobody has cared so much for our loss than ya’ll.” — Community Partner

Teacher Contact:

Aidah Shabbazz	aashabazz@cps.k12.il.us
Kim Vlk	kavlk@cps.k12.il.us
Sari Breslin	sabreslin@cps.k12.il.us
Trish Tepavchevich	tetepavchevich@cps.k12.il.us

773/535-2200



Freshman Health Fair

Project Description

Science teacher Eleanor Flanagin discovered that a great way to bring health issues to life in her Human Physiology class was to make the health problems relevant to her students. Instead of lecturing about a variety of health problems, Flanagin asked her students to brainstorm and research a list of health issues that impact young people. Her students came up with problems like drugs and alcohol, cancer, sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS, body image, caffeine, and diabetes. Working in groups, student conducted independent research and then prepared a health fair for freshman students at the school. At the health fair, each group was required to create a poster board presentation, invent a game that effectively communicated the health problem, and prepare a give-away for freshmen who visited their booth. By having students create the health fair, Flanagin noticed a deeper level of engagement in learning among her students.

“The interaction between seniors and freshmen at our school through this project has been very beneficial. It is the first time that this kind of interaction has happened at our school.” — Teacher

Preparation

In order to prepare for the freshman health fair, students first learned about the basic systems of the body and potential health problems. A field trip to the Museum of Science and Industry for an exhibit about the human body enhanced student learning about human physiology and health. In pairs, students then conducted independent research on a variety of health issues and reported their findings to the class. This mini-research project exposed students to a range of health problems and provided content for them to think about the kinds of health problems that they would present at the school health fair. The final act of preparation was for students to brainstorm a list of health problems that they thought were relevant to the student body at their school.

Science/Human Physiology

Lesson Plan

Students were introduced to the health fair project by learning the basic systems of the body and the health problems associated with body systems, organs, and parts. Ms. Flanagin accompanied her students on a field trip to the Museum of Science and Industry to attend an exhibit about human physiology in order to reinforce the learning. Students also learned about the mechanisms of drug and alcohol addiction during the unit.

Students were then divided into pairs with each small group responsible for researching a disease of their choice. Students researched health problems like diabetes, cancer, sickle cell anemia, and obesity and presented their findings to the class.

Finally, students brainstormed a list of health issues that they believed were relevant at their school. Students named such problems as alcohol and drugs, caffeine, sleep and memory, sexually transmitted diseases, cancer and body image. Working in groups, students were required to conduct independent research in order to prepare relevant information for an interactive health fair for freshman students. Students used numerous resources to conduct their research including the websites of the National Institutes of Health (www.nih.gov) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (www.nida.nih.gov).

Action

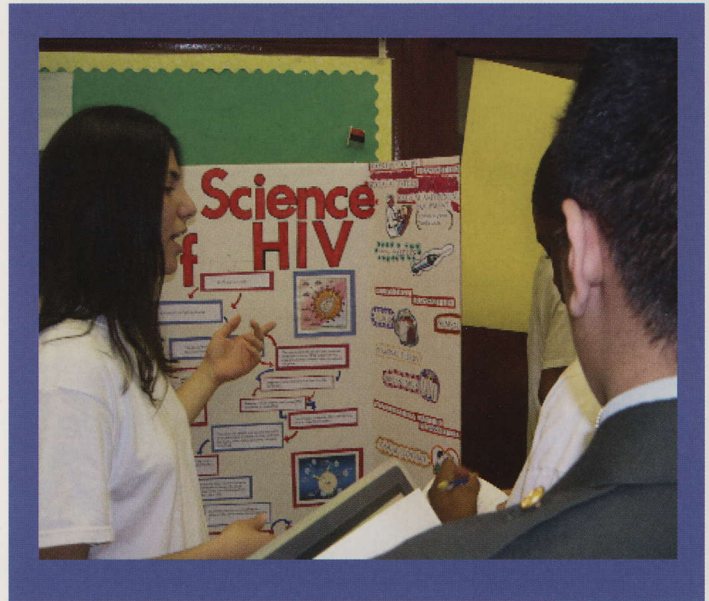
Senior level students created a health fair for freshmen at their school. Each student group focused on one particular health problem and created a poster board presentation that effectively communicated the problems associated with the disease and the risk factors. Students also created a hands-on activity that engaged freshmen physically in the learning process. For example, one student group focusing on calories and obesity asked freshman visitors to organize a meal and then count calories from that meal and evaluate the impact on personal health. Student groups were also required to create a take-away that would remind freshmen of the health problem.

Senn High School

“The project made me realize that the freshmen were in dire need of help. One of them didn’t even know what the immune system was!” — Teacher

Learning Standards

- 4.B.5a Deliver planned and impromptu oral presentations, as individuals and members of a group, conveying results of research, projects or literature studies to a variety of audiences using appropriate visual aids and available technology.
- 5.A.5b Research, design and present a project to an academic, business or school community audience on a topic selected from among contemporary issues.
- 12.A.5a Explain changes within cells and organisms in response to stimuli and changing environmental conditions.
- 22.A.5a Explain strategies for managing contagious, chronic and degenerative illnesses.
- 23.B.5 Understand the effects of healthy living on individuals and their future generations.
- 24.B.5 Explain immediate and long-term impacts of health decisions to the individual, family, and community.



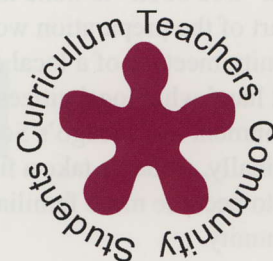
“In the process of developing the service project you get to meet new friends and get along with the teachers too. You also get to learn so many things that you didn’t know before. The most important thing is that you have fun doing it.”—Student

Reflection

Much of the reflection from the health fair project was group conversation and written essays prompted by leading questions based on the group experience. Students also spent a class period evaluating the health fair.

Teacher Contact:

Eleanor Flanigin
edflanigan@cps.k12.il.us
773/534-2365



Project Description

For the past 100 years the environment has had an uneasy relationship with a growing then decaying industrial base on Chicago's Southeast Side. A microcosm of the State of Illinois in its loss of natural wetlands habitat, natural areas around Washington High School have been degraded for decades. Now Washington students are working with the Field Museum through its Urban Watch program to monitor emerging biodiversity in neighborhoods and natural areas around the school. Students learn to identify native flora and fauna with assistance from their Biology and Environmental Science teacher and then monitor the biodiversity of areas throughout the four seasons. The data that the students gather helps the Field Museum track the condition of urban green areas and develop solutions to enhance our environmental biodiversity. Through these activities, the students generate data useful to professional scientists and ecologists tracking changes in urban natural environments.

Lesson Plan

Students begin the unit by learning how to identify plant and tree species. Students learn to use the dichotomous key—a tool that allows the user to determine the identity of items in the natural world, such as trees, wildflowers, mammals, reptiles, rocks, and fish—in order to correctly identify natural vegetation in their community, particularly native trees. Students now go into their neighborhoods and gather ten samples of trees. They will use a tree identification book and the dichotomous key to complete their own book about trees.

Once students are familiar with tree and plant identification, they are prepared to begin their biodiversity inventory. With help from the Field Museum's Urban Watch program, students identify a green space in their community, then gather data about the space. The students will conduct four Biodiversity Urban Surveys over the course of the year. Students will tabulate and submit their data to the Field Museum's scientists as they work to monitor and enhance biodiversity in Chicago's Lake Calumet region.

“We gathered data on species diversity in the test area. We'd square off the areas and every ten meters we'd count the different types of species. Then we'd use equations to calculate diversity in the area...the whole experience made me want to learn about the environment.” — Student

Preparation

Students begin a unit on biodiversity by learning tree and plant identification. The students then work in groups to create a “tree book” to hone their tree identification skills. Part of the preparation work includes attending a community meeting of a local environmental group to learn first hand what local citizens are doing to improve the environment in Chicago's Southeast Side neighborhoods. Finally, students take a field trip to Eggers Forest Preserve to become more familiar with trees and plants in the community.

Action

UrbanWatch, a program of Chicago's Field Museum, provides activities that fit naturally into Environmental Science and Biology courses and provide fieldwork opportunities to augment classroom instruction about ecology. The students monitor and improve the biodiversity of green spaces in their community during their service project. Students spend time removing invasive plant species (phragmite) known to take over entire wetland areas. Containing the phragmite is extremely important in maintaining an area's biodiversity. Students also plant wild flowers and cut invasive brush like the buckthorn. Throughout their service project, which lasts through the four seasons, the students maintain a biodiversity inventory that provides environmental data of an urban green space for scientists at the Field Museum.

Washington High School

“The Urban Watch project helped students become more aware of their own neighborhood...what kind of trees are in the neighborhood, the native wildflowers, the importance of restoration and becoming involved in their community.”—Teacher

Learning Standards

- 12.B.4a Compare physical, ecological, and behavioral factors that influence interactions and interdependence of organisms.
- 12.A.5a Analyze and explain biodiversity issues and the causes and effects of extinction.
- 12.B.5b Compare and predict how life forms can adapt to changes in the environment by applying concepts of change and constancy.

Reflection

Students complete their initial reflection by submitting a report from the community meeting. Students attend meetings of local environmental groups and then use the reflection reports to inform other class members of local action in their community. Students also complete a final written reflection of the service experience.

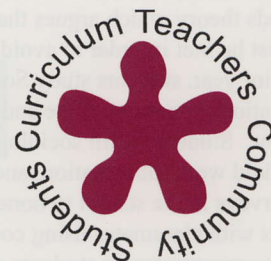


“The program creates a critical link between environmental education and the immediate local spaces in need of ecological preservation. The education-ecosystem connection will help ensure the long-term care and oversight of the Calumet region.

The teachers astounded me with their environmental knowledge and enthusiasm.” —Community Partner

Teacher Contact:

Eva Aseves
emaseves@cps.k12.il.us
773/535-5725



Forefront Student Leadership

Social Studies

Project Description

Curie High School, a fantastically diverse large school on Chicago's Southwest Side, features a unique curricular approach to developing student leaders. A team of teachers collaborated to provide students with hands-on leadership development opportunities through the Forefront Student Leadership program. Beginning in tenth grade, students apply to join the Forefront program which accepts one class of students each year. During the sophomore year, Forefront students focus their leadership studies on conflict and conflict resolution. During the junior year, students focus on the study of Sociology, and as seniors, students build their research and writing skills.

Each year student work is punctuated by at least one activism project that enables students to take what they have learned in the classroom and put it to use in the school and community to press for positive social change. In recent years students have addressed such issues as traffic safety, student achievement and conduct, immigration reform, access to scholarships for higher education, and access to adequate information about reproductive health.

“What a tremendous opportunity for our students...to learn academic content and leadership principles and strategies and for students to take them and run with them. Their research and interaction with powerful people around the city was truly impressive. They were ready for action and made the most of their opportunities.”—Teacher

Preparation

During the sophomore year, students focus on conflict and conflict resolution with a particular emphasis on personal, institutional and international conflict. Students learn John Burton's basic human needs theory which argues that the basic needs of individuals must be met in order to avoid terrorism and war. During the junior year, students study Sociology with an emphasis on socialization processes, crime and deviance, and community involvement. Students learn sociological research methods including field work, observation, and survey methods. Students develop surveys in the school to hone their skills and then share their results with classmates using computer applications. The senior year concentrates on students strengthening their research and writing skills with an emphasis on data gathering strategies and narrative development.

Lesson Plan

In collaboration with Mikva Challenge, a civic leadership organization, Forefront students are guided through a six step “issues to action” plan:

1. Students analyze their community by completing a mapping project and hearing from a community activist.
2. Based on what the students have discovered about the community, they next choose a problem to address.
3. Students now conduct research using the Internet, field observation, conducting interviews or completing a survey.
4. Students conduct a power analysis on the specific issue. Who is the individual who has the power to remedy the problem?
5. Students develop a strategy to address the problem. They are encouraged to establish both short- and long-term goals that are feasible, refine the goals as they move through the project, and establish benchmarks along the way.
6. Finally, the students move into action and implement their strategic plan. The action plan might involve raising awareness about an issue, developing a policy campaign, or meeting with powerful people to get resolution to the problem.

Along the way, students will measure their success against their original goals.

Action

One problem has vexed the Curie student body for years—traffic safety. Curie sits at the intersection of Archer Avenue and Pulaski Road, across the street from the Pulaski stop on the Orange Line and ten blocks from Interstate 55. The school is besieged by heavy traffic every day. Forefront students chose the traffic safety issue because students are placed at risk daily attempting to navigate the busy intersections. Students gathered research from the Board of Transportation and Chicago Transit Authority, conducted surveys among the student body and in the community, and even developed plans to create safe passage ways across Pulaski. They met with school leadership and Alderman Ed Burke to gain a commitment for a transportation study of the intersection which would lead to safer alternatives for pedestrians. The students also hosted two traffic safety awareness days for the student body.

Learning Standards

- 4.B.5a Deliver planned and impromptu oral presentations, as individuals and members of a group, conveying results of research, projects or literature studies to a variety of audiences.
- 14.C.5 Analyze the consequences of participation and non-participation in the electoral process.
- 14.D.5 Interpret a variety of public policies and issues from the perspectives of different individuals and groups.
- 18.A.5 Compare ways in which social systems are affected by political, environmental, economic, and technological changes.
- 18.B.5 Use methods of social science inquiry to study the development and functions of social systems and report conclusions to a larger audience.



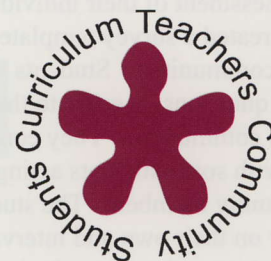
“Experiential learning is a great way to retain the knowledge and skills students have been taught and participation in service-learning has built an enormous sense of pride. The students have ownership over what they’ve done and it demonstrates that they can have a say in what happens to them.”—Teacher

Teacher Contact:

Bill Kuendig
wkuendig@cps.k12.il.us
Scott Engstrom
seengstrom@cps.k12.il.us
773/553-2100

Reflection

Forefront students regularly reflect on their Issues to Action projects through the use of monthly self-assessments. At the beginning of the month, students meet in their project groups to determine what can be accomplished. At the end of the month, Forefront instructors assign evaluation forms to the student groups, and students have to assess the worth of their performance using a point system. They must reflect on what they accomplished and the progress they made towards their yearly project goals. Forefront students at the sophomore level have weekly reflection time for journal writing every Friday. Sophomores conduct weekly discussions using The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens. Teachers also incorporate ideas from Covey’s book to debrief project experiences as well as the high school experience in general.



Community Leadership In Action

History/Social Science

Project Description

Mather High School students can enroll in a Community Leadership class where they learn important leadership skills throughout the year while deepening their understanding of Chicago, its history, and its neighborhoods. The students also identify one community need to research and address through a semester-long service project. Students conduct neighborhood mapping and assessment activities designed to help them develop a deeper understanding of Chicago's communities and lead to potential service projects. Following their initial research, students discuss perceptions about their communities. They also begin to narrow the range of issues they hope to address during their service project.

Based on their work students created a mural depicting both the assets of and challenges facing the communities they had mapped. The mural is now displayed at Hostelling International and provides a youth perspective on Chicago's neighborhoods for international visitors. Following the mural project, students began work on a project for their own community. Students from the leadership class created a new student club called "Fusion" devoted to helping students better understand and celebrate the diverse South Asian, Middle Eastern, and North African cultures.

"We have students at our school of many different nationalities. Hostelling International hosts young people from all over the world, just like at Mather, and we wanted them to know and take away what real Chicago communities are like." —Student

Preparation

As students learned about the history of Chicago and its neighborhoods, they began to prepare a "strengths and needs" assessment of their individual communities. The students created a survey template to be administered in students' communities. Students were encouraged to add their own questions, specific to the unique landscape of their individual communities. They conducted a role-playing exercise with some students acting as interviewers and others community members. The students then set out in pairs, groups, or on their own and interviewed local organization representatives and community members. They began by investigating their own neighborhoods, but soon expanded their search into surrounding areas.

Lesson Plan

The "Community Leadership In Action" draws upon curricular resources provided by Mikva Challenge, an organization dedicated to creating hands-on democracy learning. After spending several sessions developing teamwork and leadership skills, the class turns its attention to the history of Chicago. Students learn about the history of Chicago and the development of its communities by reviewing and analyzing numerous primary and secondary sources including journal entries, photographs, newspaper articles, maps, and poetry to better understand the social, political, and economic forces at work in creating Chicago. In order to gain an experiential understanding of Chicago's communities, students learn how to conduct a "needs and assets" assessment of their communities. Students practice conducting survey interviews in class and then administer the surveys with community members to identify the most pressing needs and most important assets identified by community leaders.

Upon completing the assessment, students share their findings with the class and present to their peers. The next step in the project is to analyze the information and deliberate a course of action to address the needs identified with the assets in place. During the 2005-06 academic year, students felt that individuals from outside their communities tended to have mistaken impressions of the communities. Their goal became to impact the perceptions that "outsiders" have of their communities. After completing a mural of the needs and assets identified, students decided to address tolerance issues in their own school as their subsequent service project. Teachers interested in obtaining civic education materials from Mikva Challenge can contact Brian Brady at mikvachallenge@aol.com or call 312/863-6340.

Action

Having completed the surveys, the students analyzed the data and reflected on how student priorities for their communities compared to the most pressing needs identified by other community members. After spending several class periods on this analysis, the students decided to begin their work by impacting the impression outside visitors have of the city's communities. The students worked to complete a 6' x 5' mural of the Chicago neighborhoods they had studied and donated this artwork to Hostelling International. Based on the principle that it is critical to recognize community assets in order to address community needs, the students devoted half the mural to the most notable assets they selected for each community and used the other half to focus on the challenges.

Mather High School

Learning Standards

- 16.A.5a Analyze historical and contemporary developments using methods of historical inquiry (pose questions, collect and analyze data, make and support inferences with evidence, report findings).
- 16.D.5 Analyze the relationship between an issue in United States social history and the related aspects of political, economic and environmental history.
- 16.E.5a Analyze how technological and scientific developments have affected human productivity, human comfort and the environment.
- 17.C.4b Use maps and other geographic instruments and technologies to analyze spatial patterns and distributions on earth.
- 17.C.5c Describe geographic factors that affect cooperation and conflict among societies.
- 17.D.5 Analyze the historical development of a current issue involving the interaction of people and geographic factors.
- 18.B.4 Analyze various forms of institutions (e.g., educational, military, charitable, governmental).



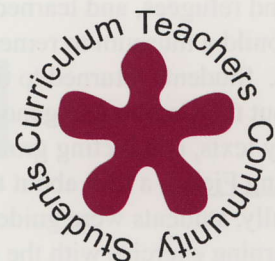
“Planning and implementing service projects with your students allows them and you to get to know one another more holistically. The entire activity brought the students much closer together and fostered a more cohesive classroom dynamic - this impact carried through the rest of the school year. So many of our students had never been downtown and this project gave them the opportunity to explore a neighborhood different from their own. I am very proud of everything they learned about themselves, their classmates, and the city, as well as of the work they accomplished.”—Teacher

Reflection

In addition to completing essays on the value of their experience, students reflected as a group upon the project at various stages of their overnight stay and presentation. They used their experiences and what they had seen during the interview process as a foundation for next steps, which led to the group initially identifying school violence and subsequently settling on a lack of tolerance within the school environment as a pressing need to address within their learning community. The two classes eventually moved on to studying the biological foundation of stereotypes and biases, as well as mapping out their own prejudices and presenting their findings to their peers.

Teacher Contact:

Erin Peterson
erinpeterson99@hotmail.com



Cambodian Genocide Curriculum

Future Leaders Colloquium, World Studies

Project Description

Students at Northside College Prep, a selective enrollment high school on Chicago's North Side, have the opportunity to participate in weekly colloquium sessions. Students choose from a wide variety of fascinating topics that enable them to engage content and experiences not normally available in the traditional high school classroom. One colloquium group, Future Leaders, always incorporates a substantive service-learning project. During the 2004-05 academic year, Future Leaders were invited on a field trip to the Cambodian Association of Illinois to learn about the status of Cambodian refugees and immigrants and about the Association's plans to build a new museum, the Cambodian American Heritage Museum and Killing Fields Memorial. The students came away from the visit with a real desire to participate in the Association's efforts. The Future Leaders Colloquium subsequently partnered with freshman World Studies students to create a Cambodian Genocide curriculum to "stop ignorance and raise awareness." Additionally, students created a virtual tour of the Cambodian Association's new museum. Students also hosted "The Night of a Thousand Dinners," a fundraiser, to support the removal of landmines around the world.

"The students were really involved with the project. They didn't just do something for a grade. Their learning had real application and meaning in the world. Isn't this a better way to educate students by giving them a chance to solve real world problems?"—Teacher

Preparation

Students visited the Cambodian Association of Illinois, a local ethnic association, where they met with Cambodian leaders and refugees, and learned about the organization's plans to build a museum to remember the Cambodian genocide. Students returned to their school and began to learn about the Cambodian genocide using primary and secondary texts, conducting group research, and viewing The Killing Fields, a film about the genocide in Cambodia. Finally, students were guided through a problem-based learning exercise with the entry question: How do we educate people about the Cambodian genocide?

Lesson Plan

The Cambodian Genocide Curriculum service-learning project was a collaborative project including freshman World Studies students and junior/senior level Future Leaders colloquium participants.

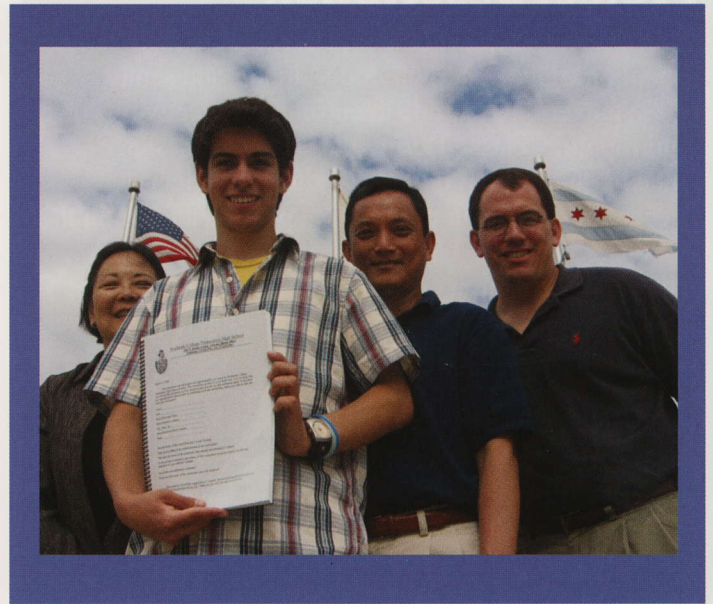
1. Entry Question and Curricular Framework: The project began as a problem-based learning experience with the question: How do we educate people about the Cambodian genocide? Future Leaders pursued the question and brainstormed the development of a curriculum that could be used by other students around the country. Students felt that since they hadn't been exposed to this history, other students might also have limited knowledge. Colloquium students then conducted research to identify the appropriate scope and sequence of a curriculum. They developed a curricular framework with six sections: History of Genocide, Pol Pot, Pre-Genocide Cambodia, Cambodian Genocide, Post-Genocide Cambodia, and World Response.
2. Curriculum Development: Students in four freshman-level World Studies classes were broken into six groups (curricular sections) and asked to research their assigned area, gather appropriate primary and secondary research information, and develop curricular units that would engage high school students.
3. Final Editing and Publication: Future Leaders Colloquium students then evaluated the work of the World Studies students, made appropriate revisions and amendments, made final revisions, and formatted the curriculum into a document that is now available on compact disk or as a hard copy. Both high schools and universities around the country are field-testing the curriculum before final revisions are made.

Action

The Cambodian Association of Illinois (CAI) recently created the Cambodian American Heritage Museum and Killing Fields Memorial to document the journey of Cambodian refugees from the Killing Fields of Cambodia to Chicago's communities. Students learned of this effort and began to talk with CAI staff and their teachers about how they could be involved in the museum's educational efforts. Students created a high school curriculum designed to explore genocide. Students wrote, edited, and published the Cambodian genocide curriculum for use by high schools around the country. Students also created a virtual tour of the CAI museum. Additionally, after watching The Killing Fields, students were moved to host a fundraising dinner to support an international landmines removal effort.

Learning Standards

- 1.C.5c Critically evaluate information from multiple sources
- 3.B.5 Using contemporary technology, produce documents of publication quality for specific purposes
- 3.C.5b Write for real or potentially real situations in academic, professional, and civic contexts
- 4.B.5b Use speaking skills to participate in and lead group discussions
- 5.A.5b Research, design and present a project to an academic, business, or school community audience
- 14.E.5 Analyze relationships and tensions among members of the international community
- 16.B.5b Describe how tensions in the world are affected by different political ideologies



“Part of the satisfaction was that there would be a final project. If students just have a textbook, they aren’t as invested. Students can actually be starting to solve the problems in the community and the world.

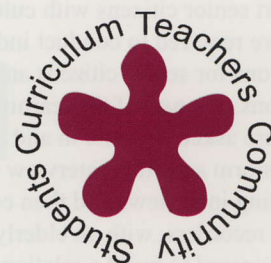
Everyone who got involved knew much more about the Cambodian genocide. Our goal was to stop the ignorance and raise the awareness. The work re-affirmed my belief that you should treat everyone the way that you want to be treated. As an American Jew, I felt connected to the Cambodian people who suffered.”—Student

Reflection

Students in the World Studies class reflected throughout the service-learning project by writing reflections at the end of each class period. Future Leaders students participated in oral reflections during each class and completed a written reflection at the end of the course. Teaching faculty and core students also met for regular formative evaluation meetings during the project. Finally, several students presented their project at local, state, and national service-learning conferences. Reflection and evaluation will continue to be an ongoing aspect of this project as students receive feedback from high school groups around the country that use their new curriculum.

Teacher Contact:

Tim Devine tpdevine@cps.k12.il.us
Leon Lim llim@cps.k12.il.us
Chris Olsen kirtana@rcn.com
773/534-3954



Life Stories

Anthropology/Ethnic Studies

Project Description

King College Prep is a selective enrollment high school on Chicago's South Side. Junior and senior level students are eligible to enroll in an elective Anthropology class. During the second semester, students study a unit on aging in order to gain a deeper understanding of the aging process and cultural responses to aging. Using film, text, articles, and independent research on living options for the elderly, students gain a deeper knowledge of aging and explore aging within their own families.

Following preparation work which includes learning about and studying the aging process in different cultures and receiving training in interviewing techniques, students go to a local senior citizen facility and, in pairs, begin to build a relationship with a senior citizen. Students interview the senior and then collaborate to write a one-page story about the individual. All stories and pictures then become part of a book of stories that is presented to the senior citizens.

“I saw students stepping up. I had never seen that part of them before. I have a great visual of a child growing up. The rest of the year was smooth sailing with my students. It was such a bonding experience.”
—Teacher

Preparation

In the unit on aging students explore how different cultures around the world support their elderly. Through classroom assignments students compare how Americans understand and support senior citizens with cultures around the world. Students are required to conduct independent research on living options for senior citizens and compare and contrast these options. As part of the learning process, elderly family members are asked to come in and address the class. Students then brainstorm sensitive interview questions, receive training in conducting interviews and then conduct their own interview, using tape recorders, with an elderly family member. Students are now prepared to build a relationship with a resident of a senior center and conduct an interview for a biography that will be included in a book presented to the senior citizens.

Lesson Plan

Students are given an overview of aging in different cultures. How do different cultures deal with aging? What options are available? How do other cultures compare to the American strategy for supporting senior citizens?

The first assignment in the unit on aging for students was to identify three living options for the elderly. Students research each of these options, compare and contrast them, and finally develop a paper in which they identify and defend their preferred living option when they become elderly. Extra credit is offered to students who read, review, and bring in articles on aging.

The next assignment is for students to brainstorm and develop questions to ask of senior citizens that are sensitive and respectful. Once the interview questions have been refined, students are required to identify an elderly family member and interview that person using a tape recorder. Students return to class and share new knowledge with each other, reflecting on the process of the interview and the knowledge they have gained about aging.

Students are now prepared to make two visits to a community senior citizen to build a relationship and conduct interviews that will enable students to write a one-page biography. All biographies, drafts of which are shared with the seniors for final review, are included in a book—along with a picture of the senior citizen and the students—that is presented to participating seniors and the center staff. A set of reflection activities takes place throughout the service-learning experience.

Action

Following adequate preparation, students make two visits to the community senior citizen center. During the first visit, students participate with the senior citizens in introductory activities and then conduct the first interview. Students use the stories from the seniors gathered during the interview sessions to compile biographies of the senior citizens. During the second visit, students re-connect with the seniors and brief them on the biographies that they are writing and receive additional information and feedback. Students are now prepared to complete the production of the books. The volume of biographies is presented to the staff and residents of the senior center.

King College Preparatory

“Our seniors were so impressed with the maturity of the students and how much they cared. The seniors were surprised to see students come back a second and third time. A lot of seniors never get a visit...ever.”

—Community Partner

Learning Standards

- 3.A.5 Produce grammatically correct documents using standard manuscript specifications for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- 3.B.5 Using contemporary technology, produce documents of publication quality for specific purposes and audiences.
- 3.C.5b Write for real or potentially real situations in academic, professional and civic contexts.
- 18.B.4 Analyze various forms of institutions.
- 18.B.5 Use methods of social science inquiry to study the development and functions of social systems and report conclusions to a larger audience.

Reflection

A first reflection activity takes place after the initial interview with an elderly family member. Students share new knowledge and insights about the experience. Similarly, students reflect together on the interview experience with an elderly person from the senior center.

Students are also required to write a reflection essay after presenting their stories to the senior citizens. Students were to address their own feelings during the process and reflect on the developing/emerging relationship with the senior. An important activity of the reflection process is a class viewing of Cocoon. This movie explores the fears and perceptions of aging. Students gather at the culmination of the movie to discuss their own attitudes on aging and what they have witnessed and experienced being among senior citizens from their community. A final reflection takes place during class when students are asked to discuss with each other what each of them learned from the experience.

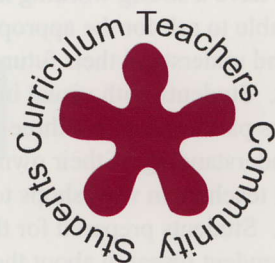


“I didn’t want to do this because I hate nursing homes, but Ms. McDowell forced us to go. Now I realize this was about people. I feel like this project taught me about life, real life.”

—Student Leah Holmes

Teacher Contact:

Judith McDowell
judith-mcdowell@yahoo.com
773/553-1180



Disability Awareness Day

Special Education/ Language Arts

Project Description

Disability awareness started as a request by special education students at Curie High School. Several students had difficulty expressing their individual needs in their classes. The students were also unable to explain their disability to peers and teachers and therefore did not receive the appropriate accommodations. Furthermore, it was difficult for students with disabilities to understand the differences among the various disabilities experienced by fellow Curie students. As the project developed, it became clear that most of the students were not informed sufficiently about their own disability. As they learned about their disability through individual research projects, students were better able to talk about it with their peers and to ask for the appropriate accommodations in their classrooms.

The disability awareness project is a success at Curie High School and surrounding neighborhood private schools. Everyone involved has benefited from the experience. The research, classroom discussions, presentations, and workshops have contributed significantly to the self-esteem and self-confidence of students with disabilities. The project has also facilitated interaction and built relationships among many students and faculty members.

Lesson Plan

The first assignment required students to research their own disabilities. Their research would eventually be presented to other students and faculty members at the school. For their research, students were asked to develop a report which covered the following: (1) The nature of the disability, (2) Appropriate treatments, (3) Appropriate accommodations, and (4) Appropriate educational and career goals given the disability. The students used the Internet, classroom resources, family, and fellow students to research the causes, medicine, and available assistive technology as well as to review multiple studies conducted on their specific disabilities. As students conducted their research, they gathered in the classroom to share their findings.

Students were then required to create a presentation. The special education students decided they wanted to create a way for other students and faculty to experience their life. To create simulations the students decided to use vision simulators to represent different visual impairments, have participants travel in wheelchairs and other participants to utilize their non-dominant hand. During the presentation, the audience members were asked either to keep their goggles on at all times, hands tied or to remain seated in a wheelchair. Students wanted to create an environment that was open to raising and addressing sensitive questions, so they rehearsed asking and answering sensitive questions with each other.

“This project gave our students awareness of their own disability and that it is okay to be different. It also made others—students and teachers—more accepting of their disabilities. It also helped students to be able to express their own needs to other students or faculty. Teachers now have a better understanding of the reasons for classroom accommodations.”—Teacher

Preparation

Special education teachers know many students do not have an adequate understanding of their own disabilities. It is critical to have a strong working knowledge of their disability to be able to ask for the appropriate classroom accommodations and understand their future educational and career prospects. Students with visual impairments and other disabilities participated in a three-week project to develop a deeper understanding of their own disability and to engage peers and teachers in workshops to help them understand the disability. Students prepared for the workshops by conducting independent research about the specific disability and then designed workshop activities for Disability Awareness Days at Curie and local private elementary schools.

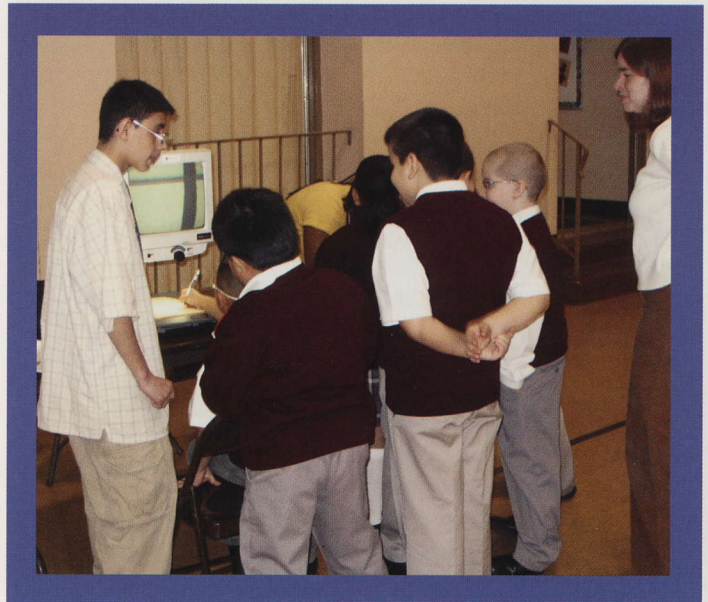
Action

Curie High School Special Education students hosted two Disability Awareness Days at a local elementary school and at their own school for peers and faculty. The student presenters delivered important information about disabilities and helped participants experience a disability by having to complete basic daily living skills with visual impairments. Participants were asked to read assignments from a blackboard and out of a textbook, travel through a crowded hallway, and find an elevator assistant to help them get to another floor. Participants were also able to examine and practice with assistive technology for students with visual and other impairments. Once students completed these tasks, they participated in a question and answer session. The students were allowed to ask the presenters questions regarding their disabilities, lives, and futures.

Curie Metropolitan Academy

Learning Standards

- 2.b.4a Critique ideas and impressions generated by oral, visual, written and electronic materials.
- 4.b.4a. Deliver planned informative and persuasive oral presentations using visual aids and contemporary technology as individuals and members of a group; demonstrate organization, clarity, vocabulary, credible and accurate supporting evidence.
- 23 Understand human body systems and factors that influence growth and development.
- 24 Promote and enhance health and well-being through the use of effective communication and decision-making skills.



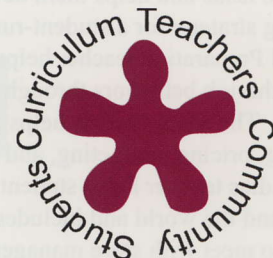
“You get to show people what it’s like to be visually impaired or have different disabilities. They get to know we’re not different, and that we can do everything they can do. It’s a good experience to know what it’s like to be visually impaired and to know what we go through. People do have a lot of questions to ask us but they’re afraid to offend us. This project helped people to open up and ask questions.”—Student

Teacher Contact:

Susan Kroll, Kim Booth, Dr. Maria Ovalle,
Roseanne Bochenek, Liz Nugent
773/535-2100
curievision@yahoo.com

Reflection

Once the presentations were completed, the presenters and participants were asked to complete exit surveys. Presenters were asked to reflect on their performance, how well the information was presented, what they could change, what pieces of equipment were necessary, what could be eliminated, and what could be added. The audience was asked to reflect on what they learned, how the presentation could be more effective, and whether or not their views changed on individuals with disabilities because of attending this presentation.



Project Description

Vaughn Occupational High School serves students with moderate physical and mental disabilities on Chicago's Northwest Side. Sophomore students at Vaughn benefit from a teaching team that collaborates regularly to integrate learning and service across the curriculum. During the second semester students examine the retail industry making curricular connections in English, Math, Social Studies, and Occupational Prep. Students study basic Math principles of buying and selling, learn important vocabulary for on-the-job tasks in English class, master appropriate occupational behaviors in Occupational Preparation, and research where and under what conditions clothes are made in Social Studies.

Following their introductory academic study, students volunteer at the Salvation Army Thrift Store. Students sort and price products, work in the storage room, fold clothes, and work the cash register. Subsequently, students use their classroom knowledge and volunteer experience to run their own schoolwide thrift store, gathering merchandise and goods from students, parents, teachers, and school administrators with proceeds donated to an organization of the students' choice. The students play important roles during the thrift shop including sorting and pricing goods, advertising, providing security, and cashiering.

“I love doing the thrift store. It is an exciting project that gets everyone involved in multiple areas.” — Teacher

Preparation

The sophomore teaching team leads a unit on retail during the spring semester. The English teacher builds student vocabulary for job tasks and helps them develop and implement an advertising strategy for a student-run thrift shop. The Occupational Preparation teacher helps students develop appropriate on-the-job behaviors through readings and situational dialogues. The Math teacher helps students understand buying and selling, pricing, budgeting, and cash register reports. The Social Studies teacher helps student research where clothes are made around the world and includes a field trip to a thrift store and mall to meet with store management. All of the classroom work prepares students for volunteer work at a Salvation Army thrift shop and their own student-run thrift shop.

Lesson Plan

The sophomore teaching team at Vaughn High School works together throughout the year to plan learning units. During the second semester, the teaching team guides students through a unit on retail. Each teacher in Math, English, Occupational Prep, and Social Studies develops classroom activities to help students understand and participate in the retail economy.

Social Studies: Students take a field trip to a local mall and meet with store managers to understand how retail works. They also identify where the products are made. Students then return to the classroom to learn about these countries, how products are made and under what conditions.

Mathematics: Students learn fundamental skills needed in the retail industry. Students learn and strengthen skills needed for pricing, cashiering and cashier reports, advertising, and buying/selling strategies.

Occupational Prep: Students learn important skills needed for success in the retail industry including appropriate on-the-job behaviors. Students read about work in the retail sector, participate in work-related role plays, and practice work skills like sorting and customer service.

English: Students focus on learning and developing vocabulary for on-the-job tasks.

Action

Students have two opportunities for service during the project. Student groups spend part of a day at a Salvation Army thrift shop helping staff with sorting, storage, cleaning, and customer support. The experience helps students then prepare their own thrift store. Students solicit merchandise from fellow students, family members, teachers, and administrators. In the days leading up to the schoolwide thrift store, students advertise and prepare. During the weeklong thrift store, students play a variety of retail roles including baggers, greeters, cashiers, pricers, sorters, and security. Any left over clothes are carefully laundered and donated to a local community center. All funds raised are donated to a charitable organization chosen by the students.

Learning Standards

- 1.A.4a Expand knowledge of word origins and derivations and use idioms, analogies, metaphors and similes to extend vocabulary development.
- 1.B.4c Read age-appropriate material with fluency and accuracy.
- 6.C.4 Determine whether exact values or approximations are appropriate.
- 7.A.4a Apply units and scales to describe and compare numerical data and physical objects.
- 15.B.4a Explain the costs and benefits of making consumer purchases through differing means.
- 15.C.5a Explain how competition is maintained in the United States economy and how the level of competition varies in differing market structures.
- 15.D.5b Analyze why trade barriers and exchange rates affect the flow of goods and services among nations.
- 15.D.4c Describe the impact of worker productivity on business, the worker and the consumer.
- 16.C.5b Analyze the relationship between an issue in United States economic history and the related aspects of political social and environmental history.



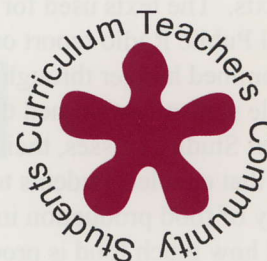
“We all had different parts to play, and we had to work together as a team. It was so much fun. We were also able to make suggestions on how we could make it better next time. I suggested that we get fliers out to different parts of the community to get them involved.”— Student

Reflection

At the culmination of the thrift store experience, students participate in a classroom discussion to reflect on their work. They also make suggestions to improve the process and product for the next year.

Teacher Contact:

Marlene Winn mbwinn@cps.k12.il.us
Martha Cruz mberuz@cps.k12.il.us
Miranda Steier msteier@cps.k12.il.us
Brian Hastings blhastings@cps.k12.il.us
773/534-3600



Project Description

What does hunger look like in America? This essential question provided the framework for freshman Math and English students to explore and act on the problem of hunger in America. Thanks to an excellent series on hunger in America by National Public Radio, students were able to examine the contemporary problem of hunger in urban, rural, and suburban settings. Two English teachers and one Math teacher collaborated to introduce their students to the social problem of hunger, its causes and potential solutions. In English classes students read about the hunger in three families, discussed and analyzed their situation and how each setting was similar or different. In Math class students worked on algebraic equations and conducted statistical analyses of food production and consumption in America. The resulting project, a day of service at the Greater Chicago Food Depository and a food drive at the school, enabled the students to reach important conclusions about hunger in America and their own futures.

“There are students in our own schools who are hungry. And it doesn’t always mean just not having a place to stay. People are hungry and can’t afford to buy food, so that’s why we did our “plan a meal” food drive.”
— Student

Preparation

150 Students in freshman English classes studied the problem of hunger in America in urban, rural, and suburban contexts. The texts used for their lessons came from a National Public Radio report on hunger in America which examined hunger through the stories of three families. While students examined the problem of hunger in their Social Studies classes, their Math teacher developed problems that enabled students to answer the question of sufficiency of food production in the country. Students compared how much food is produced and consumed in the country and then created a statistical analysis of food surplus.

Lesson Plan

The Hunger in America project consists of four lessons. During the first lesson, students address the essential question: Who are the hungry people in America and what do they look like? Students complete a pre-assessment that asks them to think about who the hungry are and where they live. Students are also encouraged to think about the main causes of hunger. Students then construct a bar graph of the brainstormed list of causes of hunger and then read and discuss the article, “The Causes Behind Hunger in America.”

The second lesson helps students develop a basic knowledge of the hunger problem in America, understand the different forms that hunger takes, and begin to understand the problem of hunger in urban areas. Students listen to a National Public Radio report on urban hunger and/or read the article “Housing Costs Play Role in Urban Hunger.” The article and story help students begin to understand budget issues as they construct a family budget and relate it to the problem of hunger.

Rural hunger is the issue students examine and discuss during the third lesson. Students listen to a second report from National Public Radio about rural hunger and read the story “A Rural Struggle to Keep the Family Fed.” After reading and discussing the article/story, students construct a Venn diagram in pairs and compare and contrast urban and rural hunger.

Students examine suburban hunger during the fourth and final lesson. A National Public Radio story on hunger experienced by a suburban family is played for students. While listening, students take notes on differences that they see in location, family size, reason for hunger, budget, and survival strategies of the three examples of hunger.

Action

Following the preparation activities, students began to plan their action. Their first step was to volunteer for a day at the Greater Chicago Food Depository. Students spent six hours at the Depository sorting and packaging food and participating in a lesson on hunger in America and the role of the Food Depository in solving the problem. After the volunteer experience, students returned to school and began to plan their service. Instead of a usual food drive, the students suggested that each division choose food to donate for breakfast, lunch or supper. The food gathered was then donated to the Food Depository. The total amount of food surpassed the expectations of Food Depository staff.

Richards Career Academy

Learning Standards

- 1.B.4a Review reading materials, clarify meaning, analyze overall themes and coherence, and relate reading with information from other sources.
- 1.C.4d Summarize and make generalizations from content and relate them to the purpose of the material.
- 4.A.4a Apply listening skills as individuals and members of a group in a variety of settings.
- 4.B.4b Use group discussion skills to assume leadership and participant roles within an assigned project or to reach a group goal.
- 5.B.4a Choose and evaluate primary and secondary sources for a variety of purposes.
- 6.B.4 Select and use appropriate arithmetic operations in practical situations.
- 6.D.4 Solve problems involving financial calculations, proportions, and percents.
- 8.B.4a Represent algebraic concepts with diagrams, tables, graphs, equations and inequalities.
- 10.A.4a Represent and organize data by creating lists, charts, tables, and graphs.



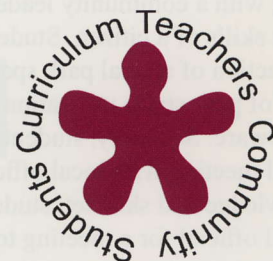
“Students realized how much their own parents work every day. They also expressed a desire to donate to the Food Depository when they have their own business. In the meantime, however, the students understood how important it is to stay in school because they don’t want to be in a situation where they need to accept donations of food.”— Teacher

Reflection

Students wrote a one-page reflection essay about the entire experience. Students expressed a great deal of shock about the level of hunger in this country due to inadequate income levels. Students also expressed deep concern over the fact that the country produces so much more food to feed its citizens, but so many go hungry.

Teacher Contact:

Jeffrey Whitaker jcwhitaker@cps.k12.il.us
Kimber Freeman klfreeman@cps.k12.il.us
Miriam Lopez mlopez13@cps.k12.il.us
773/534-4945



Senn Park Utilization Study

Math

Project Description

A group of first generation immigrant students at Senn High School learned that a plan was in place to re-design the park space that surrounded their school. The current space included a tennis court, parking lot, baseball field, basketball court, gardens, gathering places and a huge open green space used by students and community residents for a variety of purposes. The problem with the plan put forward by a local elected official was that it did not include any input from students. Students were among the primary utilizers of the park space.

Working together with their Math teacher, Senn students conducted a utilization study of the park space in order to determine what should ultimately be part of a final plan. Students created surveys and gauged the level of use of the existing park facilities through observations. With their information, students created graphs and charts for use in a meeting with representatives of the elected official to make their case for the re-design of the park. The final plan was adjusted in order to accommodate the very real needs of young people in the community as determined by the research of Senn High School Math students.

“My students learned so much about the distribution of resources and the public budgeting process.”

— Teacher

Preparation

Students learned two important skills during preparation: To gather, analyze and prepare statistical data and conduct a meeting with a community leader. Both are extremely important skills of a citizen. Students studied the plan for re-construction of a local park space, then gathered their own data of park space utilization and entered the data the Excel software. Secondly, students learned how to conduct a successful meeting with local officials. Equipped with this new knowledge and skill set, students felt confident hosting a local official for a meeting to discuss their concerns about the proposed re-construction of the park that had been developed without community input.

Lesson Plan

To begin the service-learning project, Kristy Beemer presented her Math students with a plan from a local elected official to re-construct the space around Senn High School. Students reviewed the plan and brainstormed ideas about the viability of the plan from a youth and student perspective.

The students then conducted a utilization survey of the park. Students observed different areas of the park—basketball court, tennis court, walking paths, gardens, green space and parking lot—over a 2-month period and recorded their observations. Students then learned how to use Excel spreadsheets to record and prepare their data for analysis. Students then returned to the original plan and developed recommendations based on their data.

The next step in the project was to present their findings to the offices of the local official. The students, many of whom were first generation immigrants, learned the basics of conducting a successful meeting with local leaders. Now prepared for the important meeting, students met with a top representative of the official's office and communicated their findings.

Action

Kristy Beemer's Math students conducted a statistical analysis of the utilization of Senn Park, a large multi-use space around the 100-year old high school. Students developed and conducted surveys to determine who was utilizing the park and in what capacity. The students gathered the information to determine which facilities of the park were important to the community and the students in order to provide their input about a re-construction plan. After having armed themselves with the data, students met with a representative of a local official in order to argue for adjustments in the plan. The student ideas were well-received and ultimately incorporated into the plan.

Senn High School

Learning Standards

- 4.B.4a Deliver planned informative and persuasive oral presentations using visual aids and contemporary technology as individuals and members of a group.
- 4.B.5a Deliver planned and impromptu oral presentations, as individuals and members of a group, conveying results of research, projects or literature studies to a variety of audiences using appropriate visual aids and available technology.
- 10.A.5 Construct a statistics-based presentation, individually and as members of a team, to communicate and justify the results of a project.
- 10.B.4 Design and execute surveys or experiments, gather data to answer relevant questions, and communicate results and conclusions to an audience using traditional methods and contemporary technology.
- 10.B.5 Design a statistical experiment to answer a question about a realistic situation, conduct the experiment, use statistics to interpret the data, and communicate the results, individually and as members of a team.



“It was so exciting to have our classroom work mean something for our community. We really worked well together when we studied how the students and community used Senn Park, and when we presented our work to the Alderman’s office. We were nervous, but we got over our nerves as soon as we started talking.”—Student

Reflection

Throughout the project, students wrote about and discussed how financial priorities are developed and budgetary decisions made. They discovered that community members, especially young people, are usually left out of the important budget decisions and financial priorities usually reflect this fact. How, for example, could millions of dollars be made available for a park re-construction plan outside of the school when students inside the school lack basic educational equipment and materials? At the same time students in wealthier suburban public school districts seem to have all that they need to get ahead in life. Students culminated their service-learning project with an oral reflection. Ms. Beemer posted a set of questions around the room relative to the project and asked students to write their responses and then discuss them as a group.

Teacher Contact:

Kristy Beemer
773/534-2365





City of Chicago

Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Board of Education

Rufus Williams, President

Clare Muñana, Vice President

Members

Norman R. Bobins

Tariq H. Butt, M.D.

Alberto A. Carrero, Jr.

Peggy A. Davis

Roxanne Ward

Chicago Public Schools

Arne Duncan, Chief Executive Officer

High Schools and High School Programs

Donald R. Pittman, Ed.D.

Chief Officer

Careda Taylor

Chief of Staff

Lydia C. Nantwi

Gerod Sherley

Administrators

Jon Schmidt

Service-Learning Manager

Lambrina Mileva

Contributing Editor

Janice Itiher

Graphic Design Specialist

Alexandra Navia

Layout and Design