

Taking Informed Action

Embracing Service-Learning and Civic Engagement
to Solve Real-World Problems

*Utilizing the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework
for Social Studies State Standards*



CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA



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Welcome to Taking Informed Action!

Utilizing the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards, this service-learning instructional unit engages students in civic engagement to solve real-world problems. Students address public problems individually and collaboratively in order to maintain, strengthen, and improve their communities. Civic virtue and principles of democracy guide civic engagement in discussing issues and making informed choices and judgments with civility, respect, and fairness toward the goal of the common good.

Students analyze issues in their school or community, or on national and even international levels, in order to identify problems posed by the issues, explore why they are problems, and build plans to actively engage in addressing the problems. Students then develop proposals to promote their plans to fellow students, teachers, parents, and school administration. Once their proposals have been accepted, students will design procedures to implement the plans, and then execute the service-learning project, evaluate its effectiveness, and publicize the results.



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Lesson Plans

Activity 4

Dimension 4, Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action

In Activity 4, students will pull their research information and formulate a service-learning project proposal to present to the class for approval. It is also a good idea to have students make presentations to the school's faculty, administration, and parents, especially if service-learning is not an established program at the school. If the project team is partnering with an organization, it might be a good idea for students to present their ideas to key people in the organization to gain acceptance and tips on improving their project. Once approved, students will execute the project and conduct a post-project evaluation.

In their presentations, students will review their research from Activity 2 and Activity 3 and convert the compelling question into a compelling statement, which will describe their issues, how students can best address the issue in a service-learning project, the outcomes they expect to achieve, and the processes they will take to complete the project and achieve their objectives.

Procedure

Presenting the Service-Learning Project Proposals

Explain to students that in this activity, they will compile their research data from Activity 2 and Activity 3 to update and finalize answers to their compelling and supporting questions. From this, they will design a service-learning project and formulate a multimedia presentation to the class proposing their project be chosen as a class or group project. Students can choose any method of presentation, including live-action skits, visual aids, posters, or digital presentations using Web 2.0 tools. See the Resources section for information on these tools.

1. Distribute the handout **Communicating Conclusions about Your Service-Learning Project** to each student. Review the directions.
2. Provide time for students to formulate their presentations.
3. After the groups have developed their presentations, distribute the handout **Service-Learning Project Execution Plan** to each group. Tell them that this handout helps them identify the steps needed to describe the procedure for their service-learning project.

Teaching tip

If school administration approval is required or if a partnership needs to be formed with an outside agency for students to conduct a service-learning project, it is a good idea that students are given some time to prepare and rehearse their presentations.



4. Arrange a presentation schedule for students to present their service-learning proposals to the class.
5. Provide time for students to make their presentations. Distribute the **Presentation Evaluation Forms** to all students in the audience, and have them complete the forms.
6. After all presentations are made, students can vote for one or more service-learning projects they would like to conduct.
7. If students need to present to other groups, including faculty and staff, the administration or district officials, or a partnering organization, allow time for students to adapt their messages to the target audience and make their presentations.

Executing the Service-Learning Project

Deciding whether students design and execute their projects completely on their own or in partnership with an organization will depend on the type of project they are envisioning, how much time and resources are available to execute the project, and how much experience they have. Some of the projects students will implement will be associated with another organization (social service or nonprofit agency, a branch of local government, or possibly a private company) engaged in a community-service program. It is not mandatory that students work with an organization to address the issue, but it might better facilitate the execution of their projects if this is the first time they have engaged in a service-learning project. Other projects might be best designed and conducted exclusively by students. Students should be encouraged to develop and execute a project where they retain as much control and participation as possible.

If working with an organization currently addressing the issue:

1. Have students check their research from Activity 2 to discover what organization (government, private industry, nonprofit agency, or individual) is currently addressing the issue.
2. Students can then check with a local organization engaged in addressing the issue to see how they may help and if their project plan would be compatible with the agency's efforts. Information on identifying these local organizations can be found in the Resources section. It's possible that a student might have to contact more than one agency to find one that aligns best to his or her project plan.



Teaching tip

Remind students that the purpose of peer evaluation is to support the presenter's efforts. The presentation evaluation form is designed to help both the presenter and the evaluator understand the importance of including all the required data for a project and that their conclusions are credible and presented in a understandable way.

3. Another idea is to have students offer to propose their plan to an organization to establish a partnership. This can provide valuable feedback to students on the merits of their plan and might give the organization ideas on how it can partner with students to meet its mission.
4. The following listed forms are included to help students plan and execute their projects when partnering with another organization. The forms may be used as needed. Schools may have their own forms, which would be used in lieu of these.
 - **Organization Data Sheet** (to record information on the organization)
 - **Trip Planning Sheet** (to plan and record information for an out-of-school trip)

Just before conducting the project . . .

1. Share with students the **Post-Project Write-Up** document, which they will write soon after their projects are completed. Review its points, telling students to be observant while conducting the project and to take some notes. These will be helpful when students construct their post-project productions and project evaluations.
2. Have students take camera and/or video recording devices with them. Remind them to ask permission before taking any photos of anyone involved in the project. They also might want to have journals, notebooks, or tablets for taking notes.
3. Ask students to observe the facilities or surroundings of where they're working and to record their reactions. They should ask questions and talk with other people connected with the project.
4. Have them also observe and record how members of their team are doing while conducting the project.
5. Make sure students have a plan for evaluating the project. Review with students the **Project Evaluation Tool** handout. An effective evaluation cannot adequately assess the success of a project if it is not planned at the start. If students wait until the end of the project, they may not have made arrangements for data, surveys, and information needed to make a good evaluation.

While conducting the service-learning project, have fun! Although it will be important to monitor students' activities by closely checking on appropriate behavior, attire, and on following the plan, it is also essential that students feel ownership in the projects, can act on their own instincts, and execute their plans. They have put in a lot of work to get to this point, and part of their reward is to enjoy the experience and feel they have accomplished something important. Such an experience will also help them in their post-project assessment.

Post-Project Production

Explain to students that after they have conducted their projects, they are to develop public reviews that can be presented online or at a public forum. The following handouts will assist students in developing their reviews. Students should formulate presentations for public consumption. This might be for only members of the class or the school. It could be presented at an after-school function or posted online on the school's website, blog, or social media site.

- **Post-Project Write-Up**—quick summary of the project, to be completed soon after the project is completed
- **Post-Project Presentation Guidelines**
- **Publicity Forms**—to be sent to alert the organizations about students' issue and service-learning projects
- **Project Evaluation Tool**

Alignment of Indicators from the C3 Framework: Dimension 4

D4.1.6-8 Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments.

D4.2.6-8 Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, and details with relevant information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations.

D4.3.6-8 Present adaptations of arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, and reports) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).

D4.4.6-8 Critique arguments for credibility.

D4.4.9-12 Critique the use of claims and evidence in arguments for credibility.

D4.5.6-8 Critique the structure of explanations.

D4.5.9-12 Critique the use of the reasoning, sequencing, and supporting details of explanations.

D4.6.9-12 Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.

For developing and conducting the project:

D4.7.9-12 Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.

D4.8.9-12 Apply a range of deliberative and democratic strategies and procedures to make decisions and take action in their classrooms, schools, and out-of-school civic contexts.