

Civic Engagement and Leadership

A: Introduction and Description of the Lesson

Our high school leadership class (ASB and Class Officers) appeared to be an excellent place to initiate discussion about civic responsibility and then guide the students into action. We began with a review of just what service-learning was all about, progressed into conversations about what civic action looked like for the high school students, and then completed several projects in the community. Although each team completed a successful project, certainly the most exciting for me was having one team investigate voter apathy in our seniors at the high school and develop a simple solution for the future.

B: Contact Information

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C: Instructional Process

Preparation: Describe content standards, key events, and necessary steps that happen prior to the service activity.

The students started with a brainstorming session on what descriptors could be associated with a good leader. A list of traits was generated and used in a follow-up activity.

The students were then assigned the first 10 pages of the article by Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne, *What Kind of Citizen?* Reading the entire article was offered as an extra credit assignment.

They were asked to read and critique the article; to define personal, social and civic responsibility as they see it, and then write a reflection that illustrated the knowledge, practices, and skills of a student who is an effective citizen in a democratic society.

The group was then divided into 3 teams of approx. 7 students and told to brainstorm a variety of current societal issues, taking into account members' knowledge and desire for change and the feasibility of local action.

Three days were allowed for research in the library.

General Team Requirements were given.

Guiding questions were given each team and timelines for due dates were established.

This goal of this whole service-learning project was to make the leadership students aware of their potential to make a difference and acquaint them with some of the current thought on types of citizenry and levels of engagement. This project aligns with the History-Social Science Standards for Principles of American Democracy.

Action: Describe the service that will occur.

Team One chose to investigate and take action on voter apathy among seniors at our high school. They survey senior social studies class to find out why kids did not vote. They discovered that having the registration forms at the high school would encourage more participation, so after relating statistics and importance of voting to their peers, they worked with the local Registrar of Voters to place registration forms on campus. Follow-up will be completed this year.

Team Two chose environmental pollution and besides accomplishing a large beach clean-up coordinated with the Park and Rec. Dept. they then went to the elementary schools to educate the younger students on the importance of recycling and litter abatement.

Team Three elected to work with a campus club, Tobacco Prevention, and did “talking trips” to other high schools and middle schools concerning the problems with smokeless tobacco and tobacco use in general.

Reflection: Describe the methods that youth and others will use to reflect on the service-learning activity.

Students were asked for individual and team reflections on a weekly basis. These aided in focusing attention to challenges as well as successes in the progression of their projects.

Student Assessment: Describe the methods that will be used to assess the students’ knowledge and skills.

Each assignment was given a point value and assessed on a traditional percentage basis. Self and team evaluation was utilized as well as feedback from community agencies with whom the students worked and the teachers whose classes the students visited.

Project Evaluation and Expansion: Describe how the quality of the service-learning activity will be evaluated.

The incoming Activity Director will follow-up in the coming school year with critiques from last year and then with a plan to extend what was begun by last year’s students. These projects have a potential to grow

Celebration and Public Recognition:

Each team presented their final summaries to class members and reported out to the Student Council as well.

A newspaper article regarding the students successes would have been appropriate.

Funding, Resource Support, and Sustainability:

No additional funding is necessary.