

If you are unclear about or have concerns about any aspect of this assignment, contact Dr. Keeler (702-577-2331).

## Assignment Description for Teaching American History Grant Civil Rights/Service Learning

**Assignment:** Action Research Project

**Due Dates:** Project Plan (2/1/09, 11:59 PM PST); Data Plan (2/13/09, 11:59 PM PST); Data Collection (2/20/09, 11:59 PM PST); Reflections and Future Plans (2/27/09, 11:59 PM PST)

**Description:**

This assignment requires you use action research methods to record the experience of having your students engage in a service learning project.

Service learning is an experiential teaching method in which students learn academic content while engaging in community service. Critical to service instruction is student involvement through the process. Students should actively participate by identifying issues of concern within their community, identifying possible solutions to those concerns, developing and enacting an action plan to address a selected issue, and evaluating their progress toward completion of their action plan. The purposes of service learning include:

- Integrated learning opportunities in which students see how course content (e.g., language arts, math) relates to real-world experiences;
- Active engagement in making positive community change; and,
- Development of civically-responsible individuals knowledgeable about processes for effecting change in a democratic republic.

Many resources are available to assist teachers as they guide their students through service learning projects. Some include “You’ve Got the Power — Let’s Go Make a Difference!” from the *Start Something* Curriculum (see Unit 4), “Step-by-Step Planning Sheet for Projects” (from p. 47 of the *One Survivor Remembers* curriculum), and “Activism Isn’t Just for Adults” (from pp. 13-14 of the *Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks Viewer’s Guide*). Other common service learning curricula include *Project Citizen* and *Giving Back: Introducing Community Service Learning*.

For this assignment, you will have your students learn about the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s with a focus on the Satyagraha process for creating community change (e.g., through the Montgomery Bus Boycott). You will then introduce students to the “Pay It Forward Challenge” from Room 26 in San Dimas, California (attached). At that point, you will guide your students through identifying potential service projects, selecting a service project, weighing possible actions, developing and enacting an action plan, and evaluating the results of their completed plan. Detailed instructions for this process are attached, but feel free to deviate from these steps if you first procure permission from Dr. Keeler. Note that your students may or may not complete their project before the end of this module. Please coordinate with Dr. Keeler if your students will not complete their project during the module time frame so you can still receive credit for the work completed during the module.

Action research is a common method used by classroom teachers to experiment with new teaching techniques while critically reflecting on the processes and outcomes of the experience. This assignment sheet will guide you through the processes of establishing and working through the action research process as well as working with your students to engage in service learning. To meet the expectations of this module, you must engage in the service learning project with your 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, or 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and you must post four action research entries to the InterAct TAH Civil Rights Conference within your grade level conference.

### **Action Research Project Posting Requirements**

*Note: Because you will be posting about your experiences in a location that is accessible by all participants in this module, it is **critical** you maintain confidentiality regarding the students in your classrooms. Please refrain from using student names or use pseudonyms.*

Except where otherwise specified, all responses should appear in paragraph format.

#### **Project Plan (due 2/1/09, 11:59 PM PST)**

Begin your first post before you approach the concept of service learning with your students and before you view “Integrated Service-Based Learning.” This post will have four sections:

1. **Try a New Practice:** In this section, discuss whether you have engaged in service learning in your classroom in the past and with what results. Provide a detailed and sincere description about how you feel about service learning and how you feel about integrating this teaching strategy into your classroom.
2. **Incorporating Hopes and Concerns:** List your hopes and concerns about this assignment and about integrating service learning into your instruction over the next few weeks. After preparing your list, explain some of your hopes and concerns in detail. For example, tell how you plan to connect the student-selected project to the standards you plan to teach over the next month. Explain how this may conflict with your current teaching methodologies and how you will resolve these issues. Mention if you have a preference for the type of project your students might select.
3. **Data Collection Methods:** For this module, you will need to show evidence of your classroom project and student learning. Outline the method you intend to use to document your students’ progress. List the types of artifacts you anticipate may serve as good samples of student work and how you will display those artifacts within your posts (e.g., digital pictures of student work, attaching Inspiration concept maps).
4. **Reflections-to-Date:** State how you will integrate the Civil Rights Movement and other historical events and people to your student’s service project. How will you ensure students see the connection between what great leaders in America’s past have done and what your students are doing through creating change in their own community?

#### **Data Plan (due 2/13/09, 11:59 PM PST)**

During class on 2/11/09, you will have an opportunity to share and discuss your project plan with other teachers in this module. In addition, you will review the video-

lecture “Integrated Service-Based Learning.” At that point, you will have an opportunity to modify your original plan, particularly in terms of the data collection methods you will use for your project. This post will also include four sections:

1. Data Collection Methods—Final Plan: Describe your final plan for evidencing student progress throughout the service learning project.
2. Data Collection: Begin reporting on your progress in planning the service learning project and the progress students have made toward selecting their service project and moving toward the creation of an action plan. Describe what you have done to prepare and assist students and your results in terms of student progress and/or complications.
3. Artifacts: Provide artifacts to substantiate your students’ progress on their project (e.g., lesson plans, student-written letters, web addresses of student work, list from brainstorming sessions, pictures).
4. Reflections-to-Date: Describe how you have integrated historical content into your service teaching and give your sincere impressions about using service teaching as an instructional strategy in your classroom.

#### **Data Collection (due 2/20/09, 11:59 PM PST)**

Before completing this post, review “Phase I: Plan of Action” and “Phase 2: Data Plan.” These action research reports are available at <http://tah-civilrights.blogspot.com/>

This post is similar to the previous post. It should show the progress students have made over the last week of the project. It will include three of the same items from the previous post, but all sections must evidence additional student progress (including additional artifacts). The post must also include an updated reflection on methods of relating the project to history and your feelings about the service learning as a teaching method. Include the following:

1. Data Collection
2. Artifacts
3. Reflections-to-date

#### **Reflections and Future Plans (due 2/27/09, 11:59 PM PST)**

For this final post, begin by providing additional data collection and artifacts collected over the last week.

1. Data Collection
2. Artifacts
3. Data Analysis: Review your three previous posts to identify common themes, problems, insights, etc. When reviewing the project in its entirety, what can you and others learn from the service project your students completed and from the teaching methods you used?
4. Reflections: Sincerely describe your reaction to using service learning with your students and tell how you feel your students responded to service learning opportunities. Additionally, describe how you used service learning as a means to deliver integrated instruction and, in particular, history instruction.
5. Future Plans: Will you use service teaching methods in your classroom again? Provide a detailed explanation of why or why not. If you do *not* plan to use service learning in the future, either identify potential experiential

alternatives for teaching students about the Civil Rights Movement OR tell what changes would need to occur for you to be motivated to use service teaching methods in the future.

**Action Research Project  
Assignment Expectations for Each Post**

<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Your Score</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes all required components of the post</li> <li>• Provides a thorough and detailed description of all component parts</li> <li>• Clearly demonstrates active teaching</li> <li>• Clearly demonstrates student involvement in decision and action processes</li> <li>• Explicitly outlines how the history/service learning connection is being established with students</li> <li>• Classroom plans/lesson descriptions/student artifacts demonstrate delivery of accurate content related to the Civil Rights era</li> <li>• Presented professionally</li> <li>• Thorough</li> <li>• Appreciates student confidentiality</li> </ul>	
<b>Total:</b>	____/15
<b>Final Reflections:</b>	____/20

## Pay It Forward Challenge

January 7, 2008

Dear Teachers,

Congratulations! You have been selected to join us in the “Kids Paying it Forward” active citizenship project.

The students in room 26 at Ekstrand Elementary School in San Dimas, CA decided to start this challenge after our class organized a school and community wide recycling program to help pay for an important surgery for a 3 year old girl named Hayley Brang. Through this project we have learned about the different levels of citizenship and that kids can make a difference. We want to encourage other kids to be good citizens, identify issues in their community, and work together to come up with a plan of action to solve the problems. Come aboard and help us spread the word!

A good citizen is like a good neighbor. He or she follows the law, and makes good choices. This type of citizen is the personally responsible citizen. A personally responsible citizen also helps out in their community. The next type of citizen is referred to as the participatory citizen. This kind of citizen is the one who identifies problems, organizes events in the community to solve the problems, and also participates in them. The last level of citizenship is the justice-oriented citizen. This citizen is the one who finds the problem and works to find a solution or law to fix it. Everyone in the world has the power to make a difference, whether you are giving someone a can of food, or raising money for a little girl in your community. Like it said in the 1<sup>st</sup> amendment, we have a voice, we have the right to say what we want in our world.

“Pay it forward” is another way to say “pass it on.” We are hoping that kids and teachers all around the world will be inspired by our story and “pay it forward” in their communities by doing good deeds, while also learning about their roles and responsibilities as citizens of this world. We are asking kids and teachers to identify an issue in their community and follow a five-step plan to active citizenship. To learn more about the five-step plan and the different levels of citizenship log on to our website at <http://www.kidspayingitforward.org>. You can also share your class project with our class by posting the name of your school, the location, grade level, and a description of your project on our blog (<http://kidspayingitforward.blogspot.com>). Encourage those around you to do great things and stand up for those who need help.

Well, now that you have heard our story, you can start your own projects to help the community. It's very easy once you've looked at someone else's work, so come on up and “pay it forward.” We can't wait to hear about your project!

Sincerely,  
Room 26

Note: This letter was prepared by students under the direction of their teacher and Dr. Jennifer Ponder as part of an on-going service project. The children in

Note: The below document was prepared by Dr. Jennifer Ponder who provided permission to use it for this grant module. She also welcomes other teachers and classes to participate in service learning opportunities. Feel free to use the steps outlined below, those in other readings completed as part of this module, or create your own method.

## **Pay it Forward Challenge: Take Action & Practice Active Citizenship!**

*Congratulations! You have been asked to participate in the Pay it Forward Challenge! This task will help you and your students practice active citizenship. Select an issue that you and your students are passionate about. Follow the five-step process to action. Use the outline below to format your plan of action.*

### **Step 1: Identify Issues**

Increase awareness of current issues in your school/community, state, country, and world. Encourage students to watch the news, read the local newspaper, notice problems in their immediate environment and report back to the class. Use a four-quadrant chart and create a list of current problems in each category. Encourage students to document the issues by bringing in newspaper clippings or by taking photographs of problems around the community or school (graffiti, litter, etc.).

### **Step 2: Choose an Issue**

Have students identify the issues they think they can change and generate possible solutions. Next, narrow down the issues that students have generated in an attempt to choose one problem the entire class can attempt to change.

Follow the steps listed below to narrow down the problems:

1. Ask students to list their top 3 choices on a Post It note. Tally the results and identify the top 3 issues selected by the students.
2. Send home a letter and ask for parental support by involving parents in a discussion with their children about the issues identified. Ask the parents to discuss each issue with their child at home, choose one issue that they think the students can change, come up with ideas that students can put into action to encourage change, and complete a required form to document their discussion and selected problem.
3. Next, teach students how to write a persuasive paragraph/essay. Ask each student to write a persuasive essay about the issue they selected with their parents and support their opinions with reasons, examples, and commentary. Encourage them to talk about possible causes, consequences, and solutions to the problem in their essay.
4. Have students get into groups based on common issues and share essays. Have each group plan a presentation to persuade the rest of the class that their issue is the most important to solve.
5. After all the groups present, take a final vote in order to choose one issue.

### **Step 3: Do your Research!**

Explain the problem selected for study. Begin your research by making a list of specific questions concerning the issue, and then set out to answer them. To gain a broader understanding of the problem you are researching, think about its causes, consequences, and its possible solutions. Make a list of all possible solutions and identify pros and cons

associated with each solution. Be sure to use a variety of resources to find out as much as you can about the issue you have chosen. Include the questions that were generated, as well as the answers!

#### **Step 4: Make a Plan of Action!**

##### *Task One:*

- Define your goal.
- Brainstorm creative, crazy, and fun ways to positively address your issue.
- Build a Team – How will the class develop support among individuals and groups in the community for the proposed plan?
  - Who will you recruit to help with this project?
  - List names of those who will be helpful and those who might oppose your action.
  - Be sure to include parents, other people in the school, and the community if possible.
  - Describe how each person could help with the project.

##### *Task Two:*

- Develop a strategy to accomplish your goal. Describe it in detailed steps! Will you write letters, speak publicly, conduct a survey, write a petition, make a poster or a pamphlet, hold an event, or make a public service announcement?
- Create a “catchy” message or logo for your cause.
  - Prepare emails, letters, or forms of advertisement to solicit support for your project.
- Decide how you will get your message out to the public. List at least two ways.

#### **Step 5: Take Action & Review!**

- After you and your students implement the project, review and evaluate each action. Provide a commentary for each step listed above. Describe what happened!
- Have students post comments about their project, ask questions about civic involvement, and ask for suggestions about their service learning project on the “Kids Paying It Forward” blog at <http://kidspayingitforward.blogspot.com>
- Write a reflection and answer the following questions:
  - What were the positive aspects of the project?
  - What were the major obstacles associated with this project?
  - How could you improve the project?
  - How well did your class work as a team?
  - What did you learn from this project?
  - What recommendations do you have for other classes thinking about doing a service project?