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"What's your Problem?" Research Project [12th grade]

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UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: "What's *your* Problem?" Research Project

Grade Level: 12th

Subject/Topic Area(s): English IV

Designed By: Sherry Brown

Time Frame: January - March

School District: NEISD

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

Students will develop a project around a social or environmental issue which is important to them. In groups, students will research their topic and write a précis with a works cited page. In groups, they will then develop and present a multimedia presentation on their topic. The presentation will present the points from their précis, include music, photos, and videos, and incorporate elements from art, poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. They must also engage in primary source research or a community action component. Finally, the students individually will write a personal reflection and connection paper. Through this process, the students will address the essential questions: "Why should we explore and grapple with social and environmental issues?" and "How can I be a force for positive and substantive change?"

"What's *your* problem?" Research Project
Established Goals (Standards)

TEKS:

110.34 (b)(9) Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about expository text and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to: (A) summarize a text in a manner that captures the author's viewpoint, its main ideas, and its elements without taking a position or expressing an opinion; (B) explain how authors writing on the same issue reached different conclusions because of differences in assumptions, evidence, reasoning, and viewpoints; (C) make and defend subtle inferences and complex conclusions about the ideas in text and their organizational patterns; and (D) synthesize ideas and make logical connections (e.g., thematic links, author analysis) among multiple texts representing similar or different genres and technical sources and support those findings with textual evidence.

110.34 (b)(10) Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about persuasive text and provide evidence from text to support their analysis. Students are expected to: (A) evaluate the merits of an argument, action, or policy by analyzing the relationships (e.g., implication, necessity, sufficiency) among evidence, inferences, assumptions, and claims in text; and (B) draw conclusions about the credibility of persuasive text by examining its implicit and stated assumptions about an issue as conveyed by the specific use of language.

110.34 (b) (12) Students use comprehension skills to analyze how words, images, graphics, and sounds work together in various forms to impact meaning. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts. Students are expected to:(A) evaluate how messages presented in media reflect social and cultural views in ways different from traditional texts; (B) evaluate the interactions of different techniques (e.g., layout, pictures, typeface in print media, images, text, sound in electronic journalism) used in multi-layered media; (C) evaluate how one issue or event is represented across various media to understand the notions of bias, audience, and purpose.

110.34 (b) (13) Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text. Students are expected to: (A) plan a first draft by selecting the correct genre for conveying the intended meaning to multiple audiences, determining appropriate topics through a range of strategies (e.g., discussion, background reading, personal interests, interviews), and developing a thesis or controlling idea; (C) revise drafts to clarify meaning and achieve specific rhetorical purposes, consistency of tone, and logical organization by rearranging the words, sentences, and paragraphs to employ tropes (e.g., metaphors, similes, analogies, hyperbole, understatement, rhetorical questions, irony), schemes (e.g., parallelism, antithesis, inverted word order, repetition, reversed structures), and by adding transitional words and phrases; (D) edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling; and (E) revise final draft in response to feedback from peers and teacher and publish written work for appropriate audiences.

110.34 (b) (15) Students write expository and procedural or work-related texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes. Students are expected to: (D) produce a multimedia presentation (e.g., documentary, class newspaper, docudrama, infomercial, visual or textual parodies, theatrical production).

110.34 (b) (21) Students determine, locate, and explore the full range of relevant sources addressing a research question and systematically record the information they gather. Students are expected to: (A) follow the research plan to gather evidence from experts on the topic and texts written for informed audiences in the field, distinguishing between reliable and unreliable sources and avoiding over-reliance on one source; (B) systematically organize relevant and accurate information to support central ideas, concepts, and themes, outline ideas into conceptual maps/timelines, and separate factual data from complex inferences; and (C) paraphrase, summarize, quote, and accurately cite all researched information

according to a standard format (e.g., author, title, page number), differentiating among primary, secondary, and other sources.

110.34 (b) (22) Students clarify research questions and evaluate and synthesize collected information. Students are expected to: (A) modify the major research question as necessary to refocus the research plan; (B) differentiate between theories and the evidence that supports them and determine whether the evidence found is weak or strong and how that evidence helps create a cogent argument; and (C) critique the research process at each step to implement changes as the need occurs and is identified.

110.34 (b) (23) Students organize and present their ideas and information according to the purpose of the research and their audience. Students are expected to synthesize the research into an extended written or oral presentation that: (A) provides an analysis that supports and develops personal opinions, as opposed to simply restating existing information; (B) uses a variety of formats and rhetorical strategies to argue for the thesis; (C) develops an argument that incorporates the complexities of and discrepancies in information from multiple sources and perspectives while anticipating and refuting counter-arguments; (D) uses a style manual to document sources and format written materials; and (E) is of sufficient length and complexity to address the topic.

110.34 (b) (24) Students will use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to: (A) listen responsively to a speaker by framing inquiries that reflect an understanding of the content and by identifying the positions taken and the evidence in support of those positions; and (B) assess the persuasiveness of a presentation based on content, diction, rhetorical strategies, and delivery.

110.34 (b) (25) Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to formulate sound arguments by using elements of classical speeches (e.g., introduction, first and second transitions, body, and conclusion), the art of persuasion, rhetorical devices, eye contact, speaking rate (e.g., pauses for effect), volume, enunciation, purposeful gestures, and conventions of language to communicate ideas effectively.

110.34 (b) (26) Students work productively with others in teams. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to participate productively in teams, offering ideas or judgments that are purposeful in moving the team towards goals, asking relevant and insightful questions, tolerating a range of positions and ambiguity in decision-making, and evaluating the work of the group based on agreed-upon criteria.

College Readiness Standards:

I.A. Compose a variety of texts that demonstrate clear focus, the logical development of ideas in well-organized paragraphs, and the use of appropriate language that advances the author's purpose. 2. Generate ideas and gather information relevant to the topic and purpose, keeping careful records of outside sources. 3. Evaluate relevance, quality, sufficiency, and depth of preliminary ideas and information, organize material generated, and formulate a thesis.

II.A. Locate explicit textual information, draw complex inferences, and analyze and evaluate the information within and across texts of varying lengths. 1. Use effective reading strategies to determine a written work's purpose and intended audience. 2. Use text features and graphics to form an overview of informational texts and to determine where to locate information. 3. Identify explicit and implicit textual information including main ideas and author's purpose. 4. Draw and support complex inferences from text to summarize, draw conclusions, and distinguish facts from simple assertions and opinions. 5. Analyze the presentation of information and the strength and quality of evidence used by the author, and judge the coherence and logic of the presentation and the credibility of an

argument. 9. Identify and analyze the audience, purpose, and message of an informational or persuasive text.

III.A. Understand the elements of communication both in informal group discussions and formal presentations (e.g.,

accuracy, relevance, rhetorical features, organization of information).2. Adjust presentation (delivery, vocabulary, length) to particular audiences and purposes.

III.B. Develop effective speaking styles for both group and one-on-one situations. 1. Participate actively and effectively in one-on-one oral communication situations. 2. Participate actively and effectively in group

discussions. 3. Plan and deliver focused and coherent presentations that convey clear and distinct

perspectives and demonstrate solid reasoning.

IV.A. Apply listening skills as an individual and as a member of a group in a variety of settings (e.g., lectures, discussions, conversations, team projects, presentations, interviews). 1. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of a

public presentation. 2. Interpret a speaker's message; identify the position taken and the evidence in support of

that position. 3. Use a variety of strategies to enhance listening comprehension (e.g., focus attention on message, monitor message for clarity and understanding, provide verbal and nonverbal feedback, note cues such as change of pace or particular words that indicate a new point is about to be made, select and organize key information).

IV. B. Listen effectively in informal and formal situations. 1. Listen critically and respond appropriately to

presentations. 2. Listen actively and effectively in one-on-one communication situations. 3. Listen actively and effectively in group discussions.

V.A. Formulate topic and questions. 1. Formulate research questions. 2. Explore a research topic. 3. Refine research topic and devise a timeline for completing work. B. Select information from a variety of sources. 1. Gather relevant sources. 2. Evaluate the validity and reliability of sources. 3. Synthesize and organize information effectively.

C. Produce and design a document. 1. Design and present an effective product. 2. Use source material ethically.

NETS (National Educational Technology Standards):

2. Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students a. interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media, d. contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems.

3. Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information. Students a. plan strategies to guide inquiry, b. locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media, c. evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness to specific tasks, d. process data and report results.

4. Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources. Students a. identify and define authentic problems

and significant questions for investigation, b. plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project, c. collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions, d. use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions.

Understandings

Students will understand that…

social and/or environment issues are often complex and require a nuanced view of causes and responses;

a single person can affect change;

we live in a global community and often issues are interrelated;

many different types of media and literature can give us insight into society's contemporary problems and challenges.

Essential Questions

Why should we explore and grapple with social and environmental issues?

How can I be a force for positive and substantive change?

Knowledge	Skills
Students will know…	*Students will be able to…*
to consider author, audience, and purpose in sources; the importance of utilizing members' strengths and encouraging one another;	cite sources properly by utilizing the Purdue Owl website; develop a written précis
various types of literacies can inform thinking/writing about social/environmental issues;	create a multi-media presentation using Vuvox, Prezi or similar program;
to honor opposing viewpoints;	utilize web 2.0 resource to communicate with peers about developing projects;
how to make personal connections to literature and to social/environmental issues	express in writing their personal connections and responses to their academic work.

Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

Performance Task:

group multimedia presentation

précis and work cited page

individual personal connection/reflection paper

Other evidence:

(quizzes, tests, academic prompts, self-assessments, etc.

note – these are usually included where appropriate in Stage 3 as well)

ning posts; reflection/progress exit slips; quick writes relating art/music/literature to research topic

Stage 3: Learning Activities

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

- Use "open space technology" to choose topics and groups
- Use "zones of comfort, risk, and danger" to understand teammates and choose tasks
- Develop essential question in groups
- Each student posts 2 ning posts per week about thoughts on research/project and responds to at least 2 nings of members of other groups
- Quick write relating to art/music/literature to research topic
- Primary source research and/or community action component

English IV

"What's *your* Problem?" Research Project

This project will provide an opportunity for you to perform an in-depth exploration of a topic of importance to you. You and your classmates will consider a variety of social and/or environmental issues. The issues may be local, regional, national, and/or global.

You will divide into teams based upon the topic which you choose.

Team:

1. The team will research and write a précis along with a works cited page. A précis (pronounced pray see) is a concise paper which gives the reader a picture of the points of what would be a full-length research paper.
2. In addition, you must engage in primary source research and/or an action component to your project. (For example, if your issue is homelessness in San Antonio, you might work in a soup kitchen, or raise money or items to donate to a shelter, or interview someone who has been homeless.)
3. Your team will develop a multi-media presentation which includes photos, text, and video clips. You may use Vuvox, Prezi, or other programs. In your presentation, you will address all of the components of your précis, as well as the primary source/action component to your project.

Individual:

1. Individually you will post comments to the ning. You must post at least 2 comments per week to your team's ning. You must also post at least 2 responses per week to another team's ning. The comments which you post to your team's ning will be about the progress you are making, concerns, frustrations, questions, or things which you are excited about.
2. You will write a personal connection/reflection paper. This is your opportunity to write a more informal paper regarding your personal connection to this topic and a reflection of the experience of being involved in this research project.

English IV

"What's *your* Problem?" Research Project

Timeline

Week One

Day 1:

- Introduce project
- Show clip and give example of one person identifying a need, taking action, and making a difference (maybe Greg Mortensen?).
- Have students complete issue interest questionnaire and look over their journal entries from the last few months. Ask students to look for connections, patterns.
- Brainstorm as a class. Write topics/issues on board. <if there are many topics, consider grouping…list/group/label>.

Day 2:

- Use Open Space Technology to have students choose topics and form into groups. http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocol/doc/ost_description.pdf
- Have each group choose a scribe.
- Each group works on the essential question creation process. <frequent check-ins with the teacher>
- Each group writes its essential question and posts it on a wall in the classroom.

Day 3:

- Teacher leads "zone of comfort, risk, danger" protocol. Each group has its own zones marked out and does the activity within the group. http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocol/doc/zones_of_comfort.pdf
- Group comes up with a plan of action and list of responsibilities. Turn in to teacher.

Day 4:

- work on computers to begin research.

Week Two

Days 5-9:

- research with frequent check-ins with the teacher.

Week Three

Day 10:

- proposal for primary source research and/or community action component to teacher

Days 11-14:

- work on presentation component and community action component

Week Four

Days 15 -18:

- finish précis, presentation, and community action

Day 19:

- précis due

Week Five

Days 20-23:

- presentations

Day 25:

- personal reflection and connection paper due

English IV

"What's *your* Problem?" Research Project

Issue Interest Questionnaire

- What thoughts keep you awake at night?

- If there were no obstacles or limitations, what job would you want to do?

- What puzzles or baffles you?

- What do you spend your spare time doing?

- What interests you as you read, blog, watch TV, or surf the internet?

- What social and/or environmental issue do you think will be resolved in the next 10 years?

- What social and/or environmental issue do you think will become a bigger problem in the next 10 years?

- Read back over your answers. Do you see any patterns?

English IV

"What's *your* Problem?" Research Project

Essential Question Creation

Before beginning your project, your team will develop your essential question or questions. An essential question has the following characteristics:

- It is about an issue of considerable importance.
- It can be about a global issue, or can go to the heart of a particular issue.
- It cannot be answered by a simple "yes" or "no". Often a final answer cannot be found, or is controversial.
- It serves to uncover the essential elements of a topic and can serve to define that topic.
- It can evolve and change as new information is uncovered or new perspectives are reached.
- It requires unusual perspectives and the challenging of assumptions, rather than being easily answered by existing research.
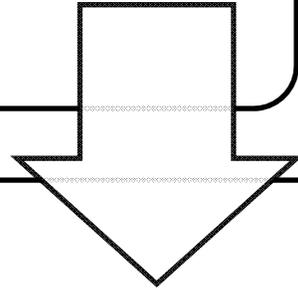
Essential question information is adapted from:

Understanding by Design, by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, published by Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005, Danvers MA.

http://portangelesschools.org/pahs/documents/THEHANDBOOK2009.pdf

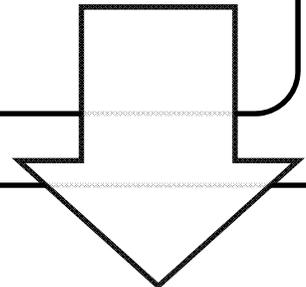http://questioning.org/mar05/essential.html

What is your broad topic?

What do you already know about this topic? (general statements, common knowledge)

What do you want or need to know about this topic? (specific, relevant information)

broad topic

- using your essential question development paper, create sentences or phrases about the broad topic which you have chosen.

assertions

- write down some claims or assertions about your broad topic.

question

- choose what you like from what you've written about your broad topic and your assertions and create a question which will guide your research.

English IV

"What's *your* Problem?" Research Project

Zones of Comfort, Risk, and Danger Questions

1. Speaking in front of my class…my class and a visiting class...my class and visitors, including my family…the entire school.
2. researching a topic when the librarian has put together online sources for me…researching a topic on my own.
3. Working with a group on a project…keeping my group teammates on track and organized…keeping written records of our group meetings.
4. Developing a multimedia presentation using prezi…using vuvox…using a program which is completely new to me.
5. Writing a research paper….using Purdue's Owl website…writing in-text citations…creating a work cited page.

English IV

"What's *your* Problem?" Research Project

Plan of Action

Essential Question:

Team Members and responsibilities:

What is your issue?

Who/What/Where is affected by your issue?

Why is it important to you?

What do you think can be done? (This is just your initial impression. You may change your mind as you research this issue.)

What will your primary source/community action be?

What difficulties do you foresee as you begin working?

English IV

"What's *your* Problem?" Research Project

Some questions to move process along:

What most surprised, intrigued, or disturbed you in your reading so far?

What does one of your sources say about your topic? Identify the source.

If you were to write one sentence about what stands out most to you right now, what would it be?
Why?

Has the direction of your researched changed? How?

**the above questions are from "Stealth Outlining: Using Visual Displays to Outline a Research Essay"
by Helen Collins Sitler and Jennifer Brocious, from *Classroom Notes Plus*, published January 2010, by the
National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana.

English IV

"What's *your* Problem?" Research Project

Précis

Your précis (pronounced pray see) is a concise paper which gives the reader a picture of the points of what would be a full-length research paper. However, each point is not as fully explored or fleshed-out as it would be in a full paper. It is not necessary to write a full research paper, because you will be expanding upon the points of your précis during your multimedia presentation. This is a formal academic piece of writing. There is no length specification or requirement; I expect that your finished paper will be 2 or 3 pages in length. You must use in-text citations and attach a works cited page. You must write about the following points in your précis:

Statement of the issue

        What is the issue?

        Who/what does it affect directly? Is it regional, global?

        How has this issue changed over time?

Relevance

        Why is it important to you?

        Why should anyone who is not directly affected care about this issue?

        How does it indirectly affect people?

Causes

        How did this circumstance come about?

        Are there differing opinions about the cause(s) of this issue?

        Is this issue connected to other issues, or is it an isolated circumstance?

Conclusion

        What can be done by individuals, communities, officials about this issue?

        Is there controversy regarding what can be done?

        What resources are necessary for something to be done?

        Is there a way to circumvent the necessity for those resources?

        If this is a global issue, can something be done locally? If it is a local issue, are there global factors?

Implications

        If something is done about this issue, what is affected?

        Does the resolution or improvement of this issue exacerbate or cause other issues?

English IV

"What's *your* Problem?" Research Project

Précis rubric

organization	Writing is clear and concise. Ideas are cohesive and there are clear transitions from one idea to another. There are no grammar or spelling errors. The language is academic and sophisticated. A variety of sentence structures are used.
content	There are good examples and details to illustrate the points. All of the required information is included in the paper. There is a variety of interesting and reputable sources. The information is accurate.
creativity	There is a hook in the introduction which intrigues the reader. There is a strong, convincing conclusion. There is evidence of synthesis of ideas. There is evidence of innovative thinking and a questioning of assumptions. There is an acknowledgement of varying opinions on the subject.

English IV

"What's *your* Problem?" Research Project

Multimedia presentation

Your team will create, produce, and present a multimedia presentation. You may use one or several of the presentation programs which are available to you. Some suggestions are vuvox, prezi, and slideboom. Be sure that you choose a program or programs which best suits your needs. Make your presentation engaging, creative, and visually interesting. Your presentation must include all of the following:

1. Clearly explain all of the points about which you wrote in the précis.
2. You must incorporate at least one poem, piece of art, piece of music, fictional prose, and creative nonfiction (such as memoir or essay). You do not need to include the entire piece; incorporate it creatively into your presentation.
3. Be sure to have photographs, as well as videos imbedded in your presentation.
4. You must cite your sources, so be sure to ask if you have any questions about copywrite or fair use laws.
5. Include information about your primary source research and/or community action component. If you use videos or photographs of someone in the community, be sure to obtain their permission.
6. Consider how you want to end your presentation. What conclusion, information or emotion do you want your audience to take away from your presentation?

English IV

"What's *your* Problem?" Research Project

Multimedia presentation rubric

organization	There are smooth transitions from one idea to another. The ideas are presented in a logical order. Technology appropriate to the information being presented is used.
content	All of the required information is included. All sources are documented and cited properly. There are examples and detail to support ideas. All information is accurate.
presentation	Presenters are comfortable with the technology and the topic. Presenters exhibit confidence and enthusiasm. Presenters work well together. Presenters maintain eye contact with the audience and speak loudly and clearly. There is good use of audio and visual elements.
creativity	There is a hook in the introduction to intrigue the audience. There is a strong, convincing conclusion. Technology is used in a creative, unexpected way. There is evidence of the questioning of assumptions. There is evidence that the various strengths of the team members were put to use.

English IV

"What's *your* Problem?" Research Project

Personal Connection and Reflection Paper

As a member of your group, you have researched your topic and written a précis. You have also had the opportunity to engage in primary source research or community action, and you have participated in a multimedia presentation to your peers. This personal connection and reflection paper is your opportunity to explore your experience throughout this process. This is a somewhat informal paper, so you may write in 1st person. However, you still need to organize this paper to make your points clear to your reader. Following are points you should address in your paper. These are questions to get you started. You should touch on all of these points in your paper, but there may be other facets to your experience which you will want to address as well. Remember that this is an essay; I do not want you to simply turn in answers to these questions. There is no length specification or requirement to this paper; I anticipate that it should take you a couple of pages in order to fully reflect on your personal connection to this project. Remember to cite sources if you quote anyone or refer to any articles or published information.

Introduce your issue. What is it? Where is it? Who or what does it affect?

Explain why you chose this issue. Did is resonate with you personally? Have you or someone you know been directly affected by this issue?

Did your opinion about this issue change throughout this research process?

How did you contribute to the final project?

What team accomplishment gives you the most pride? What personal accomplishment gives you the most pride?

What surprised you as you engaged in this experience?

What was frustrating about this experience? What could have been done differently?

What are you taking away from this experience? Do you feel that you learned more about your issue, yourself, or the members of your team? Do you feel compelled to continue to do more or take action?

What advice do you have for students next year who will do this project?

English IV

"What's *your* Problem?" Research Project

Personal connection and reflection paper rubric

organization	Writing is clear and concise. Ideas are cohesive and there are clear transitions from one idea to another. There are no grammar or spelling errors.
content	There are good examples and details to illustrate the points. All of the required information is included in the paper.
creativity	The writer's voice comes through strongly. There is evidence of the writer's engagement with the topic. There is a strong, convincing conclusion. There is evidence of synthesis of ideas. There is evidence of innovative thinking and a questioning of assumptions.