
Language Arts

This unit will provide students with experiences in reading and writing biographies and autobiographies. Students will engage in activities that will help them to understand the purposes and writing perspective of each, gaining an understanding of the reflective process. Communication strategies will be immersed in a service-learning project in which students provide information to the public about an issue in their community, using biographical or autobiographical sketches to reveal relevant perspectives about the identified issue. In engaging students in this process, a number of film clips from major motion pictures will serve as a catalyst for class discussions and help to take students' understandings deeper.

The following McRel Language Arts Standards will provide the foundation for learning into which the identified 21st Century Skills will be immersed:⁹

Language Arts

Standard 1. Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

Level II [Grade 3-5]

Benchmark 7. Writes expository compositions (e.g., identifies and stays on the topic; develops the topic with simple facts, details, examples, and explanations; excludes extraneous and inappropriate information; uses structures such as cause-and-effect, chronology, similarities and differences; uses several sources of information; provides a concluding statement)

Benchmark 9. Writes autobiographical compositions (e.g., provides a context within which the incident occurs, uses simple narrative strategies, and provides some insight into why this incident is memorable)

Benchmark 10. Writes expressive compositions (e.g., expresses ideas, reflections, and observations; uses an individual, authentic voice; uses narrative strategies, relevant details, and ideas that enable the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience)

Standard 7. Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

Level II [Grade 3-5]

Benchmark 1. Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, biographical sketches, letters, diaries, directions, procedures, magazines)

Benchmark 2. Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, biographical sketches, letters, diaries, directions, procedures, magazines)

⁹ Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (2007). 4th Edition Standards and Benchmarks. Retrieved December 30, 2007, from <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

Essential questions that might be explored through this unit of study include:

How can individual lives influence the lives of others?

What considerations must be taken into account when developing a biographical sketch in order to make the message meaningful to others?

How does perspective affect the way another person's life is viewed?

How can history be used to make our world better today?

Suggested performance tasks for collecting evidence of learning:

Students will identify someone in their local community that has influenced a significant event or community development. They will research this person's life, including conducting relevant interviews, and synthesize relevant lessons that can be taken from this history to impact an issue that is present in the community today. Using the biographical skills gained in this unit, they will develop and share a meaningful biographical sketch that can help communicate lessons which can be used to take action on the identified issue.

Use the following resources from Film Clips for 21st Century Education series to illustrate and stimulate discussion of the key concepts identified above:

Cool Runnings (Episode 1, Honesty)

Synopsis:

This inspiring movie based on a true story is about four athletes who defy the odds to reach for the gold medal in bobsledding at the Winter Olympics. In this clip, one of the team members confronts his coach about why he cheated in order to win a third gold medal when he was in the Olympics. He responds with a description of how his entire life was based on winning, providing a valuable lesson by telling the young athlete that "A gold medal is a wonderful thing, but if you're not enough without it, you'll never be enough with it."

Instructional connections:

Use this clip to engage students in a discussion of what it means to be "true to yourself". Connect this concept with the how meaningful biographies and autobiographies tell more than the facts and dates of a person's life. They are a reflective piece of writing that draw out major life lessons, that tell a story about the person, and that provide the reader with insights that can connect to their own life. Ask students to complete a self-reflection about the things that matter to them in students' own lives, who they are, and what they stand for. Other activities might include conducting interviews with classmates, family members, or other community members, or conducting a verbal poll by asking students to "stand up if you agree..." in response to various topics of interest.

Batman Begins (Episode 5, Honor)

Synopsis:

Billionaire playboy – that is the image Bruce Wayne, secretly the Batman, wants everyone to see. In order to fit in, he acts like something he is not. When

Bruce runs into someone very dear to him from long ago, he tries to convince her that there is more to him than what she sees. Bruce receives a tough lesson about the difference between good intentions and right actions when she tells him, "It's not who you are underneath, it's what you do that defines you."

Instructional connections:

Use this clip to engage students in a discussion of how they can choose actions that are in keeping with their personal values and beliefs. Connect this discussion with how it is necessary to understand a person's life within the context of who they are and what they believe in order to write an effective biography, or even to write an autobiography of their own lives. Engage students in activities which help them identify how their actions reflect their character. It may be helpful to provide specific situations in which to conduct this self-assessment, such as on the playground, standing in line, or working on homework. These activities can provide the groundwork for writing their own autobiography.

Service-Learning Project Connections

The process of integrating a service-learning project into a curricular unit involves what students are learning in the classroom and providing opportunities for them to use that knowledge to better their local and/or global community by taking civic action on issues that matter to them. For the purposes of this unit, focus students' discussion on how they might discover lessons from community members' lives that can help to communicate an effective message in advocating for change pertaining to an issue that is important to them.

One effective way to involve students meaningfully in this process is to engage them in a community mapping exercise early in the unit. Community mapping is the process of researching, analyzing, and documenting the resources that exist within an identified community. This exercise will connect to the biographies and autobiographies that they write about themselves and other community members by using them to communicate public awareness messages about relevant issues that students identify in their community. One example might be to develop a series of messages to reduce bullying in the school, using stories from student's experiences that illustrate effective strategies (such as standing up to a bully as a group in support of each other). Through the community mapping process, students are engaged in defining their community, analyzing the resources that exist in the community, and assessing how these resources can be utilized to address issues that they identify. It is through this process that students begin to learn how community assets are connected and how their experiences in school can relate to the larger world.

Community Mapping

Step 1:

After dividing the class into small groups, ask each group to define the community they will focus on for their community map. This definition may be shaped by the teacher based upon the unit objectives, or may be left open for the students to decide. A community may range from the school, a particular neighborhood, the town/city, or even the global community.

Step 2:

Based on the community identified by the group, brainstorm a list of all the different types of resources that exist in a community. Encourage students to be as thorough in this list as possible, including manmade and natural resources, community agencies, government entities, businesses, individuals or groups, etc.

Step 3:

Using this brainstormed list, students are to create a visual depiction of their community on a large sheet of butcher paper. This representation may look like a physical map, or may take the form of a concept map. In either case, the goal is to depict as accurately as possible, all of the assets that make the community what it is and how these assets intersect in providing for the needs of the community. The teacher may elect to make this process more detailed by engaging students in researching community assets, conducting interviews in the community, and/or inviting community partners to join students in the process. As such, community mapping can take as little as a class period or two for a general overview, or can be extended to a much more in-depth study of the community.

Step 4:

In reflecting on the community mapping process, students will begin to see areas of need within the community. For example, in this language arts unit, any issue that necessitates the use of communication that responds to the needs of the target audience, using language that meets the intended purpose would be relevant. Ask students to identify the top two or three needs that exist in their community that they would like to take action on through a service-learning project.

Step 5:

Bring the class back together as a whole group. Ask each small group to share their community map and the issues they identified as priorities. Reflect on each group's overview, finding community assets and issues that each group has in common. Through this dialogue, develop a list of three to five issue areas that the whole class is interested in addressing. Finally, use consensus-building strategies to determine the one issue that everyone can agree on as their top priority for this unit. Be sure to engage everyone in this process and incorporate as many perspectives as possible. The result should be agreement among all class members on one issue that encompasses the diverse viewpoints of all class members.

Envision Change

As a class, develop a vision statement that will serve as the goal for the service-learning project that they will be completing. Use the following statements to guide the

development of this goal-setting. Be sure to make the final goal something that is concrete and achievable.

We will help to make our community a place where...

This change is important to us because it will...

Issue Exploration

Once an issue area has been addressed, students will need to engage in research to gain an historical understanding of how this need has arisen in their community, determine the root causes and symptoms of problems associated with this need, and identify possible options for steps they might take in addressing this need. It is important to take the time to fully develop this process so that students engage in a thoughtful decision-making process as they seek solutions that are substantive and that will make a lasting difference in this issue. Seek to engage your students in deeper understanding of the problem, using critical thinking to fully analyze the complexity of variables that contribute to the issue at hand.

After determining multiple solutions to the identified problem, ask students to use a formal decision-making process in guiding them to select a project to help them achieve their identified goal through conducting a public awareness campaign. One such process is to ask students to write or present a proposal for the solution they believe will best help them to achieve their goal using the following criteria:

Saleable (*Can you convince others that this is a good idea?*)

Affordable (*Do we have or can we find sufficient funding to carry out this project?*)

Workable (*Is it appropriate and are we able to do it?*)

Effective (*Will it help us be successful in meeting the identified need?*)

Ask the class to assess each proposal based on these criteria and select the one service-learning project that they will implement in order to achieve their vision. In planning this public awareness campaign, it is important to have students identify how they will use the skills they are learning in this unit to raise awareness about the identified need in the community. The service-learning project should help to take their communication skills to a higher level, engaging students in analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, while applying knowledge in a real-world, unpredictable situation. In planning for successful project implementation, you may find it to be helpful to utilize a service-learning project planning form, such as the one found on page 31 in the *Wave Action Team Implementation Guide* which can be downloaded online on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction website at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/fscp/sl-teach-tools.html>.

This unit will focus on conducting research on an issue that is relevant in the community. Students will select a topic based upon an identified community need, research the symptoms, causes and effects, and explore multiple solutions to the problem. After developing a research paper to fully support their conclusions, students will develop communications that inform, explain, and persuade others to join in taking a proposed action. Communication strategies will be immersed in a service-learning project in which students advocate for an issue in their community. In engaging students in this process, a number of film clips from major motion pictures will serve as a catalyst for class discussions and help to take students' understandings deeper.

The following McRel Language Arts Standards will provide the foundation for learning into which the identified 21st Century Skills will be immersed:¹⁰

Language Arts

Standard 2. Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing

Level III (Grades 6-8)

Benchmark 1. Uses descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas (e.g., establishes tone and mood, uses figurative language, uses sensory images and comparisons, uses a thesaurus to choose effective wording)

Benchmark 2. Uses paragraph form in writing (e.g., arranges sentences in sequential order, uses supporting and follow-up sentences, establishes coherence within and among paragraphs)

Benchmark 3. Uses a variety of sentence structures to expand and embed ideas (e.g., simple, compound, and complex sentences; parallel structure, such as similar grammatical forms or juxtaposed items)

Benchmark 4. Uses explicit transitional devices

Standard 4. Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Level III (Grades 6-8)

Benchmark 1. Gathers data for research topics from interviews (e.g., prepares and asks relevant questions, makes notes of responses, compiles responses)

Benchmark 3. Uses a variety of resource materials to gather information for research topics (e.g., magazines, newspapers, dictionaries, schedules, journals, phone directories, globes, atlases, almanacs, technological sources)

¹⁰ Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (2007). 4th Edition Standards and Benchmarks. Retrieved December 30, 2007, from <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

Benchmark 4. Determines the appropriateness of an information source for a research topic

Benchmark 5. Organizes information and ideas from multiple sources in systematic ways (e.g., time lines, outlines, notes, graphic representations)

Benchmark 6. Writes research papers (e.g., asks research questions, defines a topic, organizes information into major components and examines relationships among these components, addresses different perspectives on a topic, achieves balance between research information and original ideas, integrates a variety of information into a whole, draws conclusions)

Benchmark 7. Uses appropriate methods to cite and document reference sources (e.g., footnotes, bibliography)

Standard 7. Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

Level III (Grades 6-8)

Benchmark 2. Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of informational texts (e.g., electronic texts; textbooks; biographical sketches; letters; diaries; directions; procedures; magazines; essays; primary source historical documents; editorials; news stories; periodicals; bus routes; catalogs; technical directions; consumer, workplace, and public documents)

Benchmark 3. Summarizes and paraphrases information in texts (e.g., arranges information in chronological, logical, or sequential order; conveys main ideas, critical details, and underlying meaning; uses own words or quoted materials; preserves author's perspective and voice)

Benchmark 4. Uses new information to adjust and extend personal knowledge base

Essential questions that might be explored through this unit of study include:

Does research affect peoples' opinions on a topic or issue?

What effect does research on multiple solutions to a problem have on the determination of action steps?

How are issues in the community interconnected?

How can an effective message be developed to communicate important issues to a wide audience?

Suggested performance tasks for collecting evidence of learning:

- Students will write a research paper outlining relevant information about an identified community issue, providing an analysis of the issue including the cause-effect relationships, multiple alternative solutions, and an assessment of the most viable action plan.
- Students will create an effective PSA, letter to the editor, flyer, or other form of public communication to engage community members in taking a proposed action on an identified community issue.

Use the following resources from Film Clips for 21st Century Education series to illustrate and stimulate discussion of the importance of civic responsibility and personal commitment to taking action on an issue in the community. Use this inspiration for standing up for a cause as a stimulus for conducting research. The topic selected to research should engage students on a personal level around

an issue that they care about. Selected film clips that will be useful for this purpose include:

The Rookie (Episode 5, Pride)

Synopsis:

He once had dreams of being a major league baseball player, but that was a long time ago. Now he is a coach for the local school team, facing players that don't believe that what they do makes a difference. In a speech rising out of his frustration, the coach tells his players, "If you don't have dreams, you don't have anything."

Instructional connections:

Use this clip to engage students in a discussion of what it means to have a personal commitment to a cause or belief. Pose questions such as: Why should you care about what goes on in the world around you? How would you like things to be different? What are some dreams that can make you want to give your all?

Glory (Episode 8, Citizenship)

Synopsis:

During the Civil War, Colonel Robert G. Shaw, informs his troop of all-black company that they are to be paid less than white troops. The power of one individual to inspire action on the part of others is demonstrated as one soldier dares to speak out against this practice.

Instructional connections:

Use this clip to engage students in a discussion of the power of one individual to inspire and motivate a group. Pose questions such as: What are the risks of being the first to speak out against an injustice? How can one person change others' views? What effect does evidence have in persuading others?

Indiana Jones & The Last Crusade (Episode 3, Courage)

Synopsis:

He has fought Nazis, thieves, and killers. He has faced countless death traps, supernatural forces, sewer rats and snakes. But now Indiana Jones faces his most fearsome challenge: to take a step of faith against all odds. The situation is desperate; his father, with whom he has recently been reunited, is dying from wounds that cannot be healed by normal means. Indy's only hope to save his father lies in the miraculous healing powers of the mysterious Holy Grail.

In order to retrieve the Grail, Indiana Jones must reach a cave from which he is separated by a huge chasm. Indy looks down and cannot see the bottom. One step and, surely, he is a dead man. Yet, it is precisely a step that he has to take. His father urges him on, knowing that one must step out in faith to make it to safety. Indiana has lived his whole life by common sense and reason; this makes no sense.

There is, however, no other way. Either he watches his father die, or he trusts his father's advice and takes that dreaded first step...

Instructional connections:

After students have conducted their research on their identified issue, use this clip to move their ideas forward into action. Discuss the risks that an individual encounters in taking that first step. What might enable them to take their first step? How is the future like the invisible bridge that Indiana Jones had to step out on? What steps might they take to help create that future? How does their research help ensure that their leap of faith is different than a leap of foolishness?

Service-Learning Project Connections

The process of integrating a service-learning project into a curricular unit involves what students are learning in the classroom and providing opportunities for them to use that knowledge to better their local and/or global community by informing the community and seeking to engage them in taking civic action on issues that matter to them. The research that students conduct on their identified issue will form the basis for their proposed solution and subsequent messages to the community.

One effective way to involve students meaningfully in this process is to engage them in a community mapping exercise early in the unit. Community mapping is the process of researching, analyzing, and documenting the resources that exist within an identified community. Through the community mapping process, students are engaged in defining their community, analyzing the resources that exist in the community, and assessing how these resources can be utilized to address issues that they identify. It is through this process that students begin to learn how community assets are connected and how their experiences in school can relate to the larger world.

Community Mapping

Step 1:

After dividing the class into small groups, ask each group to define the community they will focus on for their community map. This definition may be shaped by the teacher based upon the unit objectives, or may be left open for the students to decide. A community may range from the school, a particular neighborhood, the town/city, or even the global community.

Step 2:

Based on the community identified by the group, brainstorm a list of all the different types of resources that exist in a community. Encourage students to be as thorough in this list as possible, including manmade and natural resources, community agencies, government entities, businesses, individuals or groups, etc.

Step 3:

Using this brainstormed list, students are to create a visual depiction of their community on a large sheet of butcher paper. This representation may look like a physical map, or may take the form of a concept map. In either case, the goal is to depict as accurately as possible, all of the assets that make the community what it is and how these assets intersect in providing

for the needs of the community. The teacher may elect to make this process more detailed by engaging students in researching community assets, conducting interviews in the community, and/or inviting community partners to join students in the process. As such, community mapping can take as little as a class period or two for a general overview, or can be extended to a much more in-depth study of the community.

Step 4:

In reflecting on the community mapping process, students will begin to see areas of need within the community. For example, in this language arts unit, any issue that necessitates the use of communication that responds to the needs of the target audience, using language that meets the intended purpose would be relevant. Ask students to identify the top two or three needs that exist in their community that they would like to take action on through a service-learning project.

Step 5:

Bring the class back together as a whole group. Ask each small group to share their community map and the issues they identified as priorities. Reflect on each group's overview, finding community assets and issues that each group has in common. Through this dialogue, develop a list of three to five issue areas that the whole class is interested in addressing. Finally, use consensus-building strategies to determine the one issue that everyone can agree on as their top priority for this unit. Be sure to engage everyone in this process and incorporate as many perspectives as possible. The result should be agreement among all class members on one issue that encompasses the diverse viewpoints of all class members.

Envision Change

As a class, develop a vision statement that will serve as the goal for the service-learning project that they will be completing. Use the following statements to guide the development of this goal-setting. Be sure to make the final goal something that is concrete and achievable.

We will help to make our community a place where...

This change is important to us because it will...

Issue Exploration

Once an issue area has been addressed, students will need to engage in research to gain an historical understanding of how this need has arisen in their community, determine the root causes and symptoms of problems associated with this need, and identify possible options for steps they might take in addressing this need. It is important to take the time to fully develop this process so that students engage in a thoughtful decision-making process as they seek solutions that are substantive and that will make a lasting difference in this issue. Seek to engage your students in deeper understanding of the problem, using critical thinking to fully analyze the complexity of variables that contribute to the issue at hand.

After determining multiple solutions to the identified problem, ask students to use a formal decision-making process in guiding them to select a project to help them

achieve their identified goal through conducting a public awareness campaign. One such process is to ask students to write or present a proposal for the solution they believe will best help them to achieve their goal using the following criteria:

Saleable (*Can you convince others that this is a good idea?*)

Affordable (*Do we have or can we find sufficient funding to carry out this project?*)

Workable (*Is it appropriate and are we able to do it?*)

Effective (*Will it help us be successful in meeting the identified need?*)

Ask the class to assess each proposal based on these criteria and select the one service-learning project that they will implement in order to achieve their vision. In planning this public awareness campaign, it is important to have students identify how they will use the skills they are learning in this unit to raise awareness about the identified need in the community. The service-learning project should help to take their communication skills to a higher level, engaging students in analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, while applying knowledge in a real-world, unpredictable situation. In planning for successful project implementation, you may find it to be helpful to utilize a service-learning project planning form, such as the one found on page 31 in the *Wave Action Team Implementation Guide* which can be downloaded online on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction website at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/fscp/sl-teach-tools.html>.

This unit will explore the topic of communication, developing students' vocabulary and ability to use words, phrases, idioms, and various grammatical structures to communicate effectively. Students will engage in activities that will help them to understand the effects of different types of language, and how to choose words purposefully in order to develop communications that inform, explain, and persuade. Communication strategies will be immersed in a service-learning project in which students advocate for an issue in their community. In engaging students in this process, a number of film clips from major motion pictures will serve as a catalyst for class discussions and help to take students' understandings deeper.

The following McRel Language Arts Standards will provide the foundation for learning into which the identified 21st Century Skills will be immersed:¹¹

Language Arts

Standard 2. Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing

Level III (Grades 6-8)

Benchmark 1. Uses descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas (e.g., establishes tone and mood, uses figurative language, uses sensory images and comparisons, uses a thesaurus to choose effective wording)

Benchmark 2. Uses paragraph form in writing (e.g., arranges sentences in sequential order, uses supporting and follow-up sentences, establishes coherence within and among paragraphs)

Benchmark 3. Uses a variety of sentence structures to expand and embed ideas (e.g., simple, compound, and complex sentences; parallel structure, such as similar grammatical forms or juxtaposed items)

Benchmark 4. Uses explicit transitional devices

Level IV (Grades 9-12)

Benchmark 1. Uses precise and descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas and supports different purposes (e.g., to stimulate the imagination of the reader, to translate concepts into simpler or more easily understood terms, to achieve a specific tone, to explain concepts in literature)

Benchmark 2. Uses paragraph form in writing (e.g., arranges paragraphs into a logical progression, uses clincher or closing sentences)

Benchmark 3. Uses a variety of sentence structures and lengths (e.g., complex and compound-complex sentences; parallel or repetitive sentence structure)

¹¹ Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (2007). 4th Edition Standards and Benchmarks. Retrieved December 30, 2007, from <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

Benchmark 4. Uses a variety of transitional devices (e.g., phrases, sentences, paragraphs)

Benchmark 5. Uses a variety of techniques to provide supporting detail (e.g., analogies; anecdotes; restatements; paraphrases; examples; comparisons; visual aids, such as tables, graphs, and pictures)

Benchmark 6. Organizes ideas to achieve cohesion in writing

Benchmark 7. Uses a variety of techniques to convey a personal style and voice (e.g., stream of consciousness, multiple viewpoints)

Essential questions that might be explored through this unit of study include:

How does the setting, purpose, and cultural context of a communication affect the use of language?

What considerations must be taken into account when developing a message in order to communicate effectively?

What variables affect how a message is received?

How can an effective message be developed to communicate important issues to a wide audience?

Suggested performance tasks for collecting evidence of learning:

Students will identify a social issue that they are concerned about, conduct research on the history of the issue, analyzing the root causes and subsequent impacts on the community. Using the communication skills gained in this unit, they will develop and share a relevant message that will resonate with an identified target audience, either verbally or in written form.

Use the following resources from Film Clips for 21st Century Education series to illustrate and stimulate discussion of the key concepts identified above:

Liar Liar (Episode 1, Honesty)

Synopsis:

A young son makes a birthday wish that his father, a chronic liar, must tell the truth for twenty-four hours. Thanks to a bit of magic, his wish comes true. When his father arrives at work the next morning, he greets his fellow employees as usual, only this time he is brutally honest in his opinions of them. It does not take long before this liar-turned-truth-teller finds himself begging his son to take back the wish!

Instructional connections:

Use this clip to engage students in a discussion of euphemisms and other forms of figurative language. Activities might include writing a story about a topic of students' choosing. Have students exchange stories and then identify the uses of figurative language in their partner's story. Extensions can also include an exploration of how cultural contexts influence the use and understanding of euphemisms and other figurative language.

Remember the Titans (Episode 1, Respect)

Synopsis:

There are many kinds of pioneers. This movie tells the tale of one such pioneer and the football players whose lives he helped transform. Based on a true story in the 1970s, an African-American coach at a newly integrated high school must help his players not only win, but more importantly, look beyond appearances and see each other in new ways.

Instructional connections:

Use this clip to engage students in a discussion of euphemisms and other forms of figurative language. Activities might include writing a story about a topic of students' choosing. Have students exchange stories and then identify the uses of figurative language in their partner's story. Extensions can also include an exploration of how cultural contexts influence the use and understanding of euphemisms and other figurative language.

X-Men (Episode 1, Respect)

Synopsis:

Do you ever feel like you don't fit in? Try being a mutant! Feared and hated by the very people they protect and defend, the students of Charles Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters fight their evil counterparts as the X-Men, even as they live and learn in the one place where they feel safe and respected.

Instructional connections:

Discuss the cultural divisions that caused this team to have difficulty communicating. What are some strategies for using language to reduce those barriers? What elements are necessary in order to create a common understanding? Engage students in researching culture-specific language. Examples might include vocabulary that is unique to specific geographic regions, phrases that carry a unique meaning within a particular context, or vocabulary adapted from a foreign language. Develop a "translation guide" to provide universal expressions that can carry meaning across multiple contexts.

Service-Learning Project Connections

The process of integrating a service-learning project into a curricular unit involves what students are learning in the classroom and providing opportunities for them to use that knowledge to better their local and/or global community by taking civic action on issues that matter to them. For the purposes of this unit, focus students' discussion on issues of cultural diversity, equal opportunity, and acceptance.

One effective way to involve students meaningfully in this process is to engage them in a community mapping exercise early in the unit. Community mapping is the process of researching, analyzing, and documenting the resources that exist within an identified community. Through the community mapping process, students are engaged in defining their community, analyzing the resources that exist in the community, and assessing how these resources can be utilized to address issues that they identify. It is through this process that students begin to learn how community assets are connected and how their experiences in school can relate to the larger world.

Community Mapping

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Step 3:

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In reflecting on the community mapping process, students will begin to see areas of need within the community. For example, in this language arts unit, any issue that necessitates the use of communication that responds to the needs of the target audience, using language that meets the intended purpose would be relevant. Ask students to identify the top two or three needs that exist in their community that they would like to take action on through a service-learning project.

Step 5:

Bring the class back together as a whole group. Ask each small group to share their community map and the issues they identified as priorities. Reflect on each group's overview, finding community assets and issues that each group has in common. Through this dialogue, develop a list of three to five issue areas that the whole class is interested in addressing. Finally, use consensus-building strategies to determine the one issue that everyone can agree on as their top priority for this unit. Be sure to engage everyone in this process and incorporate as many perspectives as possible. The result should be agreement among all class members on one issue that encompasses the diverse viewpoints of all class members.

Envision Change

As a class, develop a vision statement that will serve as the goal for the service-learning project that they will be completing. Use the following statements to guide the

development of this goal-setting. Be sure to make the final goal something that is concrete and achievable.

We will help to make our community a place where...

This change is important to us because it will...

Issue Exploration

Once an issue area has been addressed, students will need to engage in research to gain an historical understanding of how this need has arisen in their community, determine the root causes and symptoms of problems associated with this need, and identify possible options for steps they might take in addressing this need. It is important to take the time to fully develop this process so that students engage in a thoughtful decision-making process as they seek solutions that are substantive and that will make a lasting difference in this issue. Seek to engage your students in deeper understanding of the problem, using critical thinking to fully analyze the complexity of variables that contribute to the issue at hand.

After determining multiple solutions to the identified problem, ask students to use a formal decision-making process in guiding them to select a project to help them achieve their identified goal through conducting a public awareness campaign. One such process is to ask students to write or present a proposal for the solution they believe will best help them to achieve their goal using the following criteria:

Saleable (*Can you convince others that this is a good idea?*)

Affordable (*Do we have or can we find sufficient funding to carry out this project?*)

Workable (*Is it appropriate and are we able to do it?*)

Effective (*Will it help us be successful in meeting the identified need?*)

Ask the class to assess each proposal based on these criteria and select the one service-learning project that they will implement in order to achieve their vision. In planning this public awareness campaign, it is important to have students identify how they will use the skills they are learning in this unit to raise awareness about the identified need in the community. The service-learning project should help to take their communication skills to a higher level, engaging students in analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, while applying knowledge in a real-world, unpredictable situation. In planning for successful project implementation, you may find it to be helpful to utilize a service-learning project planning form, such as the one found on page 31 in the *Wave Action Team Implementation Guide* which can be downloaded online on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction website at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/fscp/sl-teach-tools.html>.