

Affecting Our Communities

A Lesson Plan using the TIME Magazine Archive Database from EBSCO

LESSON OVERVIEW			
Name: Lauren Carlton	Grade: 10	Subject: ELA	Location: Foxboro, Massachusetts
<p>Context & Purpose</p> <p>The curriculum for our 10th grade students centers on the concept of community: What does it mean to be a part of a community, what do we “owe” our community, how can we contribute to our community, and what power do we have to affect our community in both positive and negative ways? We study the way in which individuals can affect their communities and vice versa in texts like The Crucible and The Great Gatsby. This lesson will follow the study of those two core texts, so the students will be well versed in the idea of community already. It will fall directly before they begin their final unit of study, which is more Project Based Learning; they will research individuals in their own community (in the school and town) and find an individual who affected (or is affecting) change in the community.</p>			
<p>Standards</p> <p><i>Common Core Listening and Speaking, Grades 9-10:</i></p> <p>1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</p> <p><i>Common Core Writing, Grades 9-10:</i></p> <p>4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p>			
<p>Lesson Procedure (<i>Share the sequence of learning activities before, during, and after the QFT</i>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before QFT: Students will be asked to share what experience they have had, if any, with community service, whether it was required or not, and what their experience was like. 2. During QFT: Students will follow the steps of the QFT in small groups. 3. After QFT: Students will read the article in its entirety. They will choose 3-5 questions from the QFT process and reflect on how the article served to answer each question and/or evoke further questions. 			
<p>Next Steps (i.e., how student questions will be used after the QFT)</p> <p>Students will use their questions as a catalyst for an argumentative writing assignment. They will choose the topic and format—for example, they might write a persuasive letter to the National Honor Society urging them to reconsider the “service” requirement. They might create an infographic to display on the school’s website and/or around the building encouraging students to take on more service opportunities. They might write and deliver a speech encouraging students to participate in community service or encouraging club advisors/coaches to add or drop the service requirement of their club/team. They might write a persuasive letter to school community urging them to consider adding/dropping the service requirement for graduation, etc.</p>			

Question Focus:

Involuntary Volunteers

Public schools are starting to require students to serve their communities. Is that too much to ask?

Article source:

Cloud, John. 1997. "Involuntary Volunteers." *TIME Magazine*, 150 (23): 76.
AN: 9711301324

Excerpt of article:

"As a student last year at Baltimore's Dunbar High, Christina Mullins knew she wouldn't be able to graduate unless she put in the 75 hours of community service required of all students by the state of Maryland. So she volunteered in the obstetrics-gynecology department at nearby Johns Hopkins University. It would be a good way, she thought, to accumulate hours and also get an insider's look at a medical career.

But she mostly saw the inside of a file cabinet. 'I was filing papers all day--eight hours--for free,' says Mullins. 'Do you know how boring that is? And I couldn't get a job because I had to get my hours. I had no money in 1996.'

Eventually, Mullins more than met the requirement, racking up 500 hours when she added community events where she played in the school jazz band. But she doesn't think community service should be a prerequisite. 'You're just forcing it on us, and people don't get as much out of that,' she says."

Reflect on your QFocus:

The headline "Involuntary Volunteers" was compelling to me; I thought that juxtaposition would spark some questions and debate over whether required volunteerism was actually volunteerism — and whether that mattered. I also thought the question posed in the subheading would potentially engage them in a dialogue about expectations and responsibility to our community.

LESSON OUTCOMES

Sample Student Questions:

1. How can volunteers be involuntary?
2. Why are public schools requiring students to serve their communities?
3. When did this requirement begin?
4. Do private schools have this requirement?
5. How are students serving their communities?
6. What volunteer activities are available?
7. Are we required to volunteer for our community at our school?
8. If we are required, how do I get started?
9. What does it mean to serve your community?
10. How do you know you're serving your community as a volunteer?
11. Why would this be too much to ask?
12. How old are these student volunteers?
13. Is it bad to have involuntary volunteers?