

Graduate Project Implementation Plan

Description

For my graduate project, I am examining the positive impact service and community can have in social studies classrooms. In my graduate paper, I argued that service learning can have a positive impact on developing students into empathetic, active individuals in a robust civil society. Multiple scholars have researched and supported the positive connection between service, classroom learning, and the positive development of students as scholars and citizens. For my graduate project, I plan on demonstrating how service and ties to community can be integrated at an everyday level into daily lessons to continually develop and emphasize themes of positive moral development throughout the year. I hope to illustrate that teachers can bring service and community into the classroom at a feasible level. Through my plan, I hope to convey that teachers can achieve the positive benefits of service and community in a manner that does not require extensive planning or organization but simply a dedication to civic ideals and development.

Specifically, my plan involves incorporating a community service activity into a daily lesson for a unit on World War II. The lesson plan is designed for a general seventh grade US History Part II class at Lois S. Hornsby Middle School in Williamsburg, VA. Four sections of US II will participate in this lesson.

In the WWII unit, students learn about the efforts of the American people on the homefront while U.S. soldiers fought in the war. Students will further their understanding of U.S. history and forge connections beyond the classroom by participating in a service activity. Students will have just learned about the rationing and liberty bond efforts of Americans while U.S. soldiers fought abroad. In this lesson, they will then make connections between WWII and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq being fought today. We will discuss the differences in the attitudes of the American people and government. The lesson will conclude in an activity where students will write a letter to a current soldier fighting abroad. We will discuss the impact these letters might have on soldiers, and how these letters indicate a larger need for support and empathy in the community. These letters will be sent through [Operation Gratitude](#), a non-profit organization that coordinates letter-sending to members of the armed forces. Finally, students will be asked to write a brief paragraph about the lesson, which will serve to evaluate the activity's effectiveness.

About a quarter of my students have families involved in the military, which makes this lesson especially relevant to their lives. This lesson is designed so that students make larger connections to the world beyond the immediate curriculum, and to understand the impact a simple act can have on the lives of others. In the beginning of the school year, my cooperating teacher taught a unit on September 11 and the ongoing war on terrorism, and so students will already have background knowledge on these wars, making it easier for students to forge connections between the two time periods. Though Hornsby Middle School does not have a formal service learning or community service program, this lesson is designed for implementation on a daily class basis that teachers can integrate into their own classrooms.

Project Lesson Plan

In order to implement this graduate project proposal, I will teach the following lesson plan outline. This lesson plan incorporates both a pre- and post-assessment to evaluate students' responses to the plan and the overall project effectiveness on developing students learning and commitment to civic ideals.

Lesson Outline

Topic: American Efforts on the Homefront

- Discussion of World War II and Afghanistan and Iraq Wars
- Letter Writing Activity
- Discussion of Civic Duty

Objectives

- Students will engage in a discussion comparing the American response to World War II and the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Students will write a letter to an American soldier fighting abroad.
- Students will engage in a discussion about the importance of service and engagement in their local and national communities.
- Students will complete pre- and post-assessments demonstrating their civic development and understanding of community involvement.

Materials

- Class powerpoint
- Paper, pencils, and markers
- Envelopes and stamps
- Pre- and post-assessment prompts

Activities

1. *Warm-Up Activity/Pre-Assessment:* How did the American people respond to WWII? Why did Americans engage in certain war efforts on the homefront?
 - a. Have students answer this question individually in their weekly warm-up worksheet, then share and discuss their answers as a class. This activity will serve as a diagnostic, pre-lesson assessment.
2. *Discussion:* WWII and Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq
 - a. Lead the class in a discussion about the different responses of the American people to World War II and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Ask students why they think the wars received such different responses. Transition the discussion into how students can show their commitment to American ideals and soldiers.
 - b. Utilize the following guiding questions to help students in the discussion.
 - i. What did Americans do to help soldiers abroad? (liberty bonds, rationing, victory gardens) What was the importance of these actions?
 - ii. How did these actions affect the lives of soldiers? The community of the United States?
3. *Letter Writing:* Operation Gratitude
 - a. Instruct students that they will now write a letter to soldier currently fighting abroad. Provide students with materials (paper, pencils, markers, envelopes, stamps) to complete the letters. Once students have completed this activity, collect the letters and mail them to Operation Gratitude.
4. *Discussion:* Impact of Letters
 - a. Lead the class in a discussion about how these letters will impact the lives of American soldiers. Connect letter writing to larger themes of community involvement and dedication to service in American society.

- b. Utilize the following guiding questions to help students in the discussion.
 - i. How will these letters impact the soldiers? Imagine you are a soldier. How would you feel if you received one of these letters?
 - ii. Why is it important to send letters to soldiers? What message does it send? Why is this message important? What are some other ways we can send this message?
- 5. *Post-Assessment*: What are additional ways you can get involved in your community? Why is community involvement important?
 - a. Following the class discussion, instruct students that they will now write a brief paragraph about other ways they can get involved in their community. Students will each explain one way they can get involved in their community, and why this is important.
 - b. Collect exit tickets at the end of class.

Assessment Plan

The effectiveness of this lesson plan will be assessed through both pre- and post-lesson assessments. The pre-lesson assessment will be in the form of a warm-up question, which students are expected to answer at the beginning of class. Students’ written responses to this question will be collected at the end of class.

The post-lesson assessment will also be in the form of a written question. Students will be given time at the end of class to respond to the prompt, and the responses will also be collected at the end of class. I will then evaluate these responses based on the rubric below, which addresses the level of understanding of civic ideals and importance of service to the community. These assignments will not be formally assessed, in that students will receive a grade based on completion, not necessarily on their demonstration of civic ideals rather. Rather, these assessments will serve as a means to evaluate the effectiveness of this service learning lesson plan and inform future teaching and implementation decisions.

Additionally, students will be formatively assessed throughout the lesson through their participation in class discussion and activities. Ideally, students will reach conclusions about the importance of community and service on their own, and actively engage in the letter-writing activity. However, I have prepared scaffolding techniques and guiding discussion questions in order to ensure that students truly grasp the significance and achieve the objectives of this lesson.

Pre- and Post-Assessment Rubrics

Pre-Lesson Rubric

	Yes	Yes - with reservations	No
Did the student properly identify Americans’			

response to WWII?			
Did the student identify the importance of commitment to service and community during WWII?			
Did the student identify the importance of commitment to service and community today?			

Post-Lesson Rubric

	Yes	Yes - with reservations	No
Did the student identify a relevant example of how they could get involved in their community through service?			
Did the student explain the significance of their community involvement example?			
Did the student actively participate and contribute in the class discussion?			

Implementation Plan

This lesson will be taught in all four sections of my cooperating teacher's seventh grade US History Part II class. It will coincide with the class' unit on World War II. Because this unit is so extensive, it will be divided into three separate sections, the War on the Homefront, the War in the Pacific, and the Holocaust. Because this lesson explicitly revolves around the American people's response to the war, it will be taught during the War on the Homefront section, which will take place mid-March. I have already spoken with my cooperating teacher about teaching this lesson, and he has blocked one class period in his unit calendar for its implementation.

Student growth will be tracked via the pre- and post-assessments described above. If more time allows, additional activities involving the community and service will be integrated throughout my lesson plans as I continue student teaching. This graduate project lesson serves as a way to illustrate how teachers can

implement on-the-ground approaches to service learning through daily lesson planning.