Getting Started: Student-Led Topics

There are so many needs in our communities and so many ways that kids can make an impact. Incorporate student voice in the decision-making process and mind time constraints using personal inventory, community mapping, and persuasive pitches to identify and select a topic for service.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Week and Milestones</th>
<th>Teacher Roles</th>
<th>Student Roles</th>
<th>Summary (Example)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1 (2-3 lessons)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Before lessons:</strong>&lt;br&gt; o Print community mapping and personal inventory handouts&lt;br&gt; o Secure permissions and chaperones for community walk as needed</td>
<td>• Interview partner on personal skills, talents, and interests&lt;br&gt; • Record observations from community mapping activity&lt;br&gt; • Share observations on community&lt;br&gt; • Group observations into themes and identify the intersection between personal skills, talents, interests and community assets and needs</td>
<td>• Recorded students’ skills, talents, and interests (graphic design, dance, languages, etc.)&lt;br&gt; • Went on 5-block walk and students recorded observations&lt;br&gt; • Brainstormed community assets and needs in small groups&lt;br&gt; • Students identified helping with litter, stray animals, and homelessness as community needs&lt;br&gt; • Next steps: Next week, three groups (stray animals, litter, and homelessness) will develop pitches for focusing on their topic for service first</td>
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<td>1. Identify skills, talents, and interests of self and classmates</td>
<td><strong>During lessons:</strong>&lt;br&gt; o Model how students complete personal inventory interviews in partners&lt;br&gt; o Elicit student responses and record master list of skills, talents, interests for class&lt;br&gt; o Chaperone guided walk and ensure students complete community mapping handouts&lt;br&gt; o Facilitate discussion of community assets and needs and how personal skills, talents, interests intersect&lt;br&gt; o Record common themes and students’ interest in each topic</td>
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<td>2. Identify assets and needs of community</td>
<td><strong>After lessons:</strong>&lt;br&gt; o Determine student groups based on interests, skills, and talents</td>
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<td>3. Identify and analyze the common themes and connections among personal skills and community assets and needs</td>
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<td>4. Define next steps</td>
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| **Week 2 (3-4 lessons)** | **Before lessons:**  
  o Gather information on topics to support student investigations  
  o Curate relevant articles or other media on each topic  
  o Prepare materials for selected brainstorming activities (reading circles, Four Corners, reflection, etc.)  
  o Create ballots for class vote  
  **During lessons:**  
  o Guide students through brainstorming questions on topics (i.e., with Four Corners)  
  o Monitor reading circles and assist students in identifying key information, developing questions, and making connections to their personal skills, interests, and talents  
  o Model or provide an outline for a persuasive pitch  
  o Facilitate student presentations  
  o Ensure voting is fair and respectful  
  o Facilitate student reflection  
  **After lessons:**  
  o If possible, save the topics that were not chosen for the next project |  
  • Engage in brainstorming and initial action research  
  • Contribute to other groups’ brainstorming and research  
  • Analyze text or other media on topic and identify research questions and key information on topic  
  • Develop and present persuasive pitch, ensuring each group member has role in presentation  
  • Consider which topic is most interesting and how class could have impact  
  • Reflect on impressions from investigation and how it felt to build consensus as a class |  
  • Completed Four Corners and students came up with research questions for each topic  
  • Small groups read articles and collected facts on animals, pollution, and homelessness  
  • Worked with small groups to develop pitches that explained WHY class should take on this topic  
  • Small groups presented persuasive pitches on each topic  
  • Voted to focus on homelessness  
  • Reflected on process so far  
  • Next steps: Curate engaging resources on homelessness in our neighborhood, prepare MISO activity for next lesson |