

Project-Based Learning Proposal

PCEP Michigan Department of Education Models of Proficiency Grant

Beth Savalox

1. Unit/Course Title: How might we honor veterans in a public space? US History

2. Driving Question: How can the past inform the present?

Why are wars fought?

How are wars fought?

What impact does war have on the individual, the community, and the country?

How might we honor veterans in a public space?

3. Project Summary:

Students will analyze the Progressive Era's lessons and apply those lessons to a modern day issues at their school.

The project will be for students to 1) Brainstorm the best way to honor veterans; 2) Interview potential decision makers, present their method to the class; debate the benefits of each proposal; 3) Choose a method; 4) Plan and implement a method; 5) Evaluate the effectiveness of the method; 6) Write thank you letters to the participants

The project will depend on:

1. Oral history interviews and interviews with decision makers using flip cameras
2. Survey of peers
3. Researching the school possibilities
4. Planning and implementing
5. Reading appropriate materials

Each hour explored the same content, but devised different methods of honoring veterans. They were:

- 3rd hour: Bowling fundraiser for local chapter of Vietnam Veterans; money donated to Blum's Landing, a free vacation spot for veterans returning from war and their families <http://www.blumslanding.org/>
- 4th hour: Take veterans to a Detroit Tigers' game
- 5th hour: Create lap blankets for the Ann Arbor Veterans' Hospital

All projects required multiple approvals, community partners, and fundraising. All efforts were conducted by students.

4. Teaching Team:

Teacher Name	Course/Dept.	School
1. Carrie Chobanian	SS	Salem
2. Beth Savalox	SS	Plymouth

5. Duration: **7 weeks** **Approximate dates: April and May**

6. Student Data:

Total number of participating students: **100/year**

Estimate of participating students who are at-risk: **20%**

7. Learning Goals and Strategies

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies include multiple modes of instructional content, multiple ways for students to express what they know, and multiple ways to engage students.

Content Standard

P3 Public Discourse and Decision Making – engage in reasoned and informed decision making that should characterize each citizen’s participation in American society.

P3.1 Clearly state an issue as a question of public policy, trace the origins of an issue, analyze various perspectives, and generate and evaluate possible alternative resolutions.

P3.2 Deeply examine policy issues in group discussions and debates (clarify issues, consider opposing views, apply democratic values or constitutional principles, anticipate consequences) to make reasoned and informed decisions.

P3.3 Write persuasive/argumentative essays expressing and justifying decisions on public policy issues.

- Project Activity(s) to Specifically Address the Content Standard:

- UDL Strategy(s): cooperative learning; variety of materials; opportunities for practice; using multiple presentation strategies

Content Standard

- Project Activity(s) to Specifically Address the Content Standard: Direct instruction of content; guest speakers/oral history;
- Project Activity(s) to Specifically Address the Content Standard: direct instruction; oral history; photo journalism
- UDL Strategy(s): image analysis; expert visitors in documentary film

Content Standard

8.1.2 Foreign Policy during the Cold War – Evaluate the origins, setbacks, and successes of the American policy of “containing” the Soviet Union, including

- the development of a U.S. national security establishment, composed of the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the intelligence community (*National Geography Standard 13, p. 210*)
- the armed struggle with Communism, including the Korean conflict (*National Geography Standard 13, p. 210*)
- direct conflicts within specific world regions including Germany and Cuba (*National Geography Standards 5 and 13; pp. 192 and 210*)
- U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and the foreign and domestic consequences of the war (e.g., relationship/conflicts with U.S.S.R. and China, U.S. military policy and practices, responses of citizens and mass media) (*National Geography Standard 13, p. 210*)

P2 Inquiry, Research, and Analysis – critically examine evidence, thoughtfully consider conflicting claims, and carefully weigh facts and hypotheses.

P2.1 Understand the scientific method of inquiry to investigate social scientific and historical problems.

P2.2 Read and interpret data in tables and graphs.

P2.3 Know how to find and organize information from a variety of sources; analyze, interpret, support interpretations with evidence, critically evaluate, and present the information orally and in writing; report investigation results effectively.

P2.4 Use multiple perspectives and resources to identify and analyze issues appropriate to the social studies discipline being studied.

P2.5 Use deductive and inductive problem-solving skills as appropriate to the problem being studied.

- Project Activity(s) to Specifically Address the Content Standard: reading novel, *Fallen Angels*; using technology; interviewing veterans
- UDL Strategy(s): project design and production

8. “Grabber” Activity to Generate Interest

- **Watched three video clips about veterans and national efforts to honor vets**
- **Discussed the essential question, “How might we honor our vets in a public place?”**
- **Used flip cameras to interview students, administration and veterans about methods to honor vets**

9. Formative Assessments and Tentative Timeline

- **Read novel *Fallen Angels***
- **Interview veterans using flip cameras; compare experiences to novel**
- **Compare experiences of WWII and Vietnam vets**
- **Read selections from *Times of Change*, an anthology of Vietnam**
- **Watch *Letters Home from Vietnam***
- **Class discussions**

Timeline:

--Weeks 1 and 2: Project development and WWII experiences

--Week 3-4: Research and Vietnam experiences

--Week 5: Project execution and reflection

--Week 6-7: Iraq and Afghanistan war experiences and America's response to terrorism debate

10. Summative Assessment/Culminating Product

Implement a method to honor veterans

11. Resources/UDL Supports Requested and Budget

Materials and estimated cost:

See attached chart=\$3484

Training/Planning/Subs and estimated cost:

2 days of subs/teacher for planning=\$400

Field Trip(s) and estimated cost:

Community trip to analyze local memorials and visit experts for 140 students=\$1000

Total funding request: \$4484

Reflection on Project Based Learning Work

1. What were your results? The students created a variety of projects that honored soldiers. Approximately 95% of the students used the flip cameras and to tape interviews, 100% participated in the planning of the event; about 25% participated in the event.

The results varied wildly: 3rd hour successfully raised \$800 for Blum's Landing; 4th hour's Tigers' game got rained out and rescheduled for the last day of school; 5th hour's blanket making successfully completed 40 lap blankets for vets.

How did students with special needs benefit from the project?

Students with special needs benefitted from the project because the project drew on so many skills, as well as content. It allowed students to go outside their box and conduct interviews, which relied on verbal skills. It required the use of technology, which played off of other skills. The project also allowed for building relationships with veterans and experiencing empathy. Further, the novel was a very high interest, readable novel for all students.

Finally, although not necessarily kids with special needs, the best part of the project was witnessing which students responded to the challenge of honoring veterans. Two students with very low interest in school took control of the bowling fundraiser and single handedly organized the event, motivated the class, got donations, and ran the event. These students have likely never engaged in a single school event, yet they blossomed in project-based learning.

3. What did you learn from your experience with Project Based Learning?

The benefits of this approach are:

1. Students must master both lower and higher level thinking skills.
2. Students must brainstorm, agree on, develop, implement, and evaluate their approach for honoring veterans.
3. Students must master skills, as well as content: interviewing, planning, evaluating, writing, etc.
4. Students practice the art of history by evaluating that which is worth honoring; finding a public forum in which to honor; securing the necessary methods of approval; fundraising; advertising; promoting; and material selection.
5. Students practice a real-world solution to a problem.
6. Students learn the necessary content of war and apply it to a current situation.

4. What student or teacher challenges were faced in the implementation of the projects?

- This project was enormously time-consuming, from obtaining/learning/training the equipment to setting up interviews to organizing logistics to attending all of the events; it was exhausting, but rewarding work.
- The cameras ultimately proved useless for my purposes. While easy to use, the sound quality was broken and muffled, disallowing the ability to use in a video or send in to the Library of Congress.