

Ready to _____ !

Making a Case for _____ in Our Community

This toolkit is modeled after the Vote at 16 Workshop Toolkit prepared by Power California. The original toolkit guides facilitators to lead a workshop that informs and recruits volunteers for the movement to reduce the voting age to 16 in the state of California. Here, it is adapted to take on an issue of a student's choosing and is framed within a service learning context.

I. Overview

Purpose:

- To build awareness and understanding of the movement to _____
- Center and prepare students to lead on this issue in their community.

Outcomes and Goals:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

II. The Service Learning Process - Investigate Self

By investigating the self first, students connect personally to the issue at hand and consider how their interests, skills and talents are related to and/or may serve this cause. Consider classroom community agreements, contracts, expectations, or guidelines that will help frame this exploration in a safe space.

1. Energizer: I Love My People Who ...

Students stand in a circle. One person starts in the middle and makes a statement about how they relate to the issue. A student from the circle steps forward to take the middle spot if this statement also applies to them. Continue for several rounds to find out more about how students relate to the issue at hand.

2. The Agreement Spectrum

Statements about the issue are read aloud. Students consider their position on this statement and line up along an agreement spectrum with one end of the room representing strongly disagree and the other end representing strongly agree. Have students pair share with those nearby (or far away) to share perspectives.

3. Other Strategies to Consider:

- KWL for the issue being explored - What do students know? What do they want to know?
- Have students draw a mind map of what they know surrounding the issue
- _____
- _____

III. The Service Learning Process - Investigate the Issue

*When investigating the issue, students build knowledge about the topic through the curriculum while developing and utilizing academic skills. Consider types of action research that coincide with your curriculum goals and students developmental levels. In service learning, common forms of action research used are: **Media**, **Interviews**, **Surveys**, **Observation/Experimentation**, also known as the **MISO** method.*

1. The Definitions Game

Familiarize students with key words. Develop word lists related to the issue, then have students pair terms with their definitions. Students may wish to research and write their own definitions to be matched by other classmates.

2. Scenarios / Case Studies

Look at examples of policies around this issue. These can be sourced by the teacher or students depending on academic skill level. Case studies can be read in groups or whole class. Use discussion points after reading the case studies to help guide conversations. Additionally, students can develop short skits to share what could be done differently than what occurred in the case study.

3. Others Strategies to Consider:

- Create a timeline for the issue (i.e. expansion of rights over time, laws related to the issue..)
- **Media:** Consider alternate forms of media to be explored: newspapers, podcasts, advertisements, campaign materials, infographs ...
- **Interviews:** Experts in the field, community organizations focused on this work, other students who have supported this cause, elected officials ...
- **Surveys:** Survey students, parents, school community, local community, or community organizations to gain perspectives on other's knowledge and views on the issue. Consider the populations whom students might wish to target for future education surrounding the issue.

- **Observation/Experimentation:** What can be observed by students in the classroom, school or community that might give insight into the issue or how it manifests itself in these spaces?

- _____
- _____

*See related resources *Gathering Information about a Community Need* and *Who is Helping? Government & Community Groups* by Cathryn Berger Kaye

IV. The Service Learning Process - Planning and Preparing for Action

In this phase of service learning, students determine how to take informed action - what developed from their investigation of the issue. Students prepare and plan for specific action and reconsider how their earlier investigation of themselves (their interests, skills, and talents) can play a helpful role in the action being taken.

1. Talking Points

Students can develop talking points to establish the key takeaways from their issue investigation. These statements may include: data collected about the issue, information on the current status of a related movement, or how individuals, communities and they themselves are affected by the issue.

2. My Story Mad Libs

Students identify a target audience and frame their own personalized story surrounding the issue, which can be presented to members of the community at a town hall, hearing, candidate visit, board meeting, etc.

Sample:

“Hi, my name is _____, and I am a _____ (insert sentences that describe yourself - perhaps in a way that connects with your audience or the issue). As a _____, I am concerned about _____ (describe issue). I am supporting _____ because _____ (describe the plan of action). This plan _____ (describe the intended outcomes, especially as they are relevant to the audience).

3. Mock City Council Meeting

In groups students use the talking points and Mad Libs created above to practice their pitch for what they have discovered and the action they plan to take. Create a mock city council meeting, hearing, faculty meeting (etc.) where they plan to share their findings and action plans. Students take turns volunteering to be the officials / leaders while each group practices their pitch.

4. Others Strategies to Consider:

- _____
- _____

*See related resource *Service Learning Proposal* by Cathryn Berger Kaye

V. The Service Learning Process - Take Action

Students have considered how they would like to take informed action, and have developed their case in the preparation and planning stage above. Service learning offers four types of action to be taken and are considered below. Visit www.discoverECSL.org/youthrolestopreservedemocracy to access links to resources and lesson plans that support these action plans.

1. **Direct:** students have a direct impact on the issue at hand by working face-to-face with those directly involved with the issue.

- Design and host classroom deliberations with other classes about the issue
- Plan a site visit with a local candidate to present student findings on the issue or engage a candidate in a service project related to the issue
- Organize a town hall with local candidates and explore their views and pledges around the issue
- Attend hearings, rallies, etc that focus on the cause
- Design a Workshop Toolkit and host other students or community members to gain more supporters / volunteers
- _____
- _____

2. **Indirect:** students indirectly impact the issue - while not being face-to-face with those involved, they are impacting the issue in other ways.

- Create policy proposals or resolutions to be shared with local officials and candidates
- Volunteer to distribute materials for a community organization or campaign that supports the cause
- _____
- _____

3. **Advocacy:** students speak out about the issue through various channels.

- Letter-writing campaigns, PSAs, Letter to the Editor, blogs, videos ...
- Develop a social media toolkit for with hashtags, policymaker and NGO twitter handles, sample tweets, etc related to the cause (see *Vote at 16 Workshop Toolkit* for examples)

- _____
- _____

4. **Research:** students take further steps to investigate the issue and share their discoveries with others to ignite new opportunities for action.

- Design an Issues Guide or Voter Ed Guide that shares data, laws, proposals, candidate views, etc for the topic
- Conduct opinion polls with students, parents, etc and share the results with elected officials or candidates

- _____
- _____

VI. The Service Learning Process - Demonstration and Reflection

Demonstration and reflection during service learning can be done at the end of the process, but can also be conducted within and between each stage to capture growth and collective knowledge. Students can consider their own personal and academic growth, as well as the whole group's challenges and milestones.

1. The Call to Action: A Collective Poem

Demonstrate students' collective experiences, wisdom, and growth by creating a collective poem. Students write one sentence on why they are working on or motivated to address this issue. Each person reads their sentence aloud to make a collective poem (with each person getting louder and louder for impact, if desired). Student responses can also be collected and displayed in unique ways to create community art as a form of demonstration and reflection.

2. Others Strategies to Consider:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

*See related resource *Student Self-Evaluation* by Cathryn Berger Kaye