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Colerain High School
8801 Cheviot Road
Cincinnati, Ohio
Grades 11 & 12 - Introduction to Education
(In Partnership with the University of Cincinnati)
Thoreau Institute, July 2022
3 August 2022

Finding Walden in the Place We Call Home

“Fools stand on their island opportunities and look toward another land. There is no other land; there is no other life but this, or the like of this.” ~Henry David Thoreau

The Course

The Introduction to Education course is being implemented this year in partnership with the University of Cincinnati with the purpose of generating student interest in becoming a teacher and, most hopefully, returning to their alma mater to do so. While any junior or senior can enroll in the course, one specific intention of the program is the recruitment of students of color with a goal of increasing the diversity of the future staff to encourage and inspire our future students with the ability to see themselves reflected in their teachers.

Project Overview

This project will be a year-long endeavor wherein students, as “citizen sociologists,” will explore the township to develop a Sense of Place that deepens their personal connection to the area they call home. While students live, study, and sometimes work in a region, they are often only familiar with their particular social circle and/or neighborhood; therefore, the purpose of this project is to expose the students to the wide range of environments, the varied businesses, and most importantly, the distinct people who live and work in this locality and how that makes it a community. If students are going to return to teach where they were once students, they will need to feel an emotional connection. This Sense of Place Project will strive to encourage that connection to foster within them a commitment to preserving and improving the community that shaped them.


Rationale

“Thoreau's process of finding his 'Walden' teaches us that anyone can do the same. But what does it really mean to have a 'Walden'? A 'Walden' is a place that has special meaning to a community. It doesn't have to be pristine, nor does it necessarily have to be a fully natural area. A 'Walden' can be an empty lot, a schoolyard, a building, a park, conservation lands, farmlands, etc. A 'Walden' is a place of significance to the community, and thus it is up to each person or community to identify what their 'Walden' is.” (www.cincymuseum.org).

Learning Objectives

~Students will

- Investigate the diverse environments, businesses, and people of their community.
- Formulate opinions on how these variables work in harmony to create community.
- Collaborate with classmates sharing initial reactions to the locations and analyzing their connections.
- Develop a strong sense of identity hypothesizing and anticipating future contributions to the community.
- Revise writing to compose for publication in order to practice and improve effective communication..

 At the end of the school year, students will be required to create a final project that demonstrates what they have learned about the community and how they foresee it in the future. In the spirit of PBL, this project will be student inquiry based and will be developed as the school year and this project progresses.

Lesson Lengths

Introduction to Sense of Place - Day 1: 85-minute class period

- 03 minutes - setting the mood
- 02 minutes - settle/attendance
- 10 minutes - Sense of Place and Story
- 05 minutes - travel to benches
- 20 minutes - Connecting to Places
- 10 minutes - reflect
- 05 minutes - travel back to class
- 15 minutes - share thoughts in groups
- 10 minutes - large group share
- 05 minutes - student reactions in field notes

(This will be the first activity we do in our Field Notebooks. They will be stored in our classroom, but students will have been given their notebooks during the previous class period to write in their names and know where to retrieve them).

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meditation music playing
class routines/procedures
[Handout 1](#)
school/class policies
[Handout 1](#)
school/class policies
school/class policies
class routines/procedures
class routines/procedures
free writing

Introduction to Sense of Place - Day 2: 45-minute class period

- 02 minutes - settle/attendance
- 10 minutes - Interior/Exterior Landscapes
- 15 minutes - share thoughts in groups
- 10 minutes - large group share
- 05 minutes - student reactions in field notes
- 03 minutes - return field notebooks

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class routines/procedures
[Handout 2](#)
class routines/procedures
class routines/procedures
free writing
class routines/procedures

Field Research Days: 85-minute class periods

- 05 minutes - assemble/attendance
- 15 minutes - travel to offsite location
- 30 minutes - hike, tour, observation
- 15 minutes - response using assigned prompts
- 15 minutes - travel back to school
- 05 minutes - announcements/dismissal

Schedule Below

class routines/procedures
school/class policies
school/class policies
[Handout 3](#)
school/class policies
class routines/procedures

Discussion Days: 45-minute class periods

- 02 minutes - settle/attendance
- 03 minutes - students reread their field notes
- 20 minutes - students share and discuss
- 10 minutes - large group share
- 10 minutes - student reactions in field notes

Schedule Below

class routines/procedures
class routines/procedures
class routines/procedures
class routines/procedures
free writing

Dates and Locations of Off-Campus Visits (First Thursdays of the Month)

<i>Day</i>	<i>Month</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
1	September	Farbach Warner Park	Nature is Our Neighbor
6	October	Vinkolet Vineyard	A Vine Grows in Colerain
3	November	Veteran's Memorial	Honoring Our Fallen
1	December	Grippo's Chip Factory	Chipping Away at Our Industry
5	January	Rumpke Landfill	How Trash Became a Treasure
2	February	Municipal Building	Meeting Our Civil Servants
2	March	Arlington Gardens	Appreciating Our Ancestors
6	April	Heritage Park	Where It All Started

Dates of Discussion Days (First Fridays of the Month)

<i>Day</i>	<i>Month</i>
2	September
7	October
4	November
2	December
6	January
3	February
3	March
7	April

Dates for Field Notebook Collection (Mondays following a Site Visit)

<i>Day</i>	<i>Month</i>
5	September
10	October
7	November
5	December
9	January
6	February
6	March
10	April

Grading

There will be two grades associated with this project.

*The **Field Notebook Entries grade** will be based on the students' writings from the offsite trips.* (During Janet Burne's Approaching Walden presentation, she spoke of scoring journal entries as an A, B, or F. This resonated with me due to the authenticity it brings to the importance of the project as well as how it eases the burden of scoring for the teacher; however, if a student completes/turns in the assignment but it is lacking in substance, it will be scored as a D). Using this streamlined rubric will allow me to spend more time delving into and providing feedback on their entries.

In order to score an A (95%), entries should include the following:

- Writing is confident and clearly focused. It holds the reader's attention.
- Relevant details enrich writing.
- Writes with a distinct, unique voice/point of view.
- Consistent variety of sentence structure throughout.
- Writing is skillfully adapted to the location.
- Effective and engaging use of word choice.

Entries will score a B (85%) if the entries include the following:

- Writing is purposeful and focused. Writing engages the audience.
- The piece contains some details.
- Writes with a strong voice/point of view.
- Varied sentence structure.
- Writing attempts to adapt to the location.
- Purposeful use of word choice.

Entries will score a D (65%) if they are missing any of the above attributes.

*The **Trip Behavior grade** will be based on each student's behavior and engagement during the offsite trips. For this "experiment" to work, students must be committed to it. Attaching a grade to the student's behavior while attending the trips, reinforces the value of this opportunity to engage in first-hand experiences.*

In order to score an A (95%), behaviors should reflect the following:

- Follows all school and classroom policies throughout the trip.
- Exhibits willingness to benefit from learning experiences.
- Practices professional etiquette/is polite in words and actions.
- Demonstrates active listening and contributes to discussions when appropriate.
- Follows written and verbal instructions.

Students will score a B (85%) if the student is missing one of the above attributes.

Students will score a D (65%) if the student is missing more than one of the above.

Materials Needed

Field Notebooks Spiral
Pens/Pencils
Milk Crate
List of Prompt Questions

State Standards

~Writing

- *Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. W.11-12.4
- *Develop and strengthen writing as needed by trying a new approach and focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. W.11-12.5
- *Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. W.11-12.10

~Conventions

- *Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing. L.11-12.1
- *Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization/punctuation/spelling. L.11-12.2
- *Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts. L.11-12.3

~Integration

- *Synthesize information from sources into a coherent understanding of a process or concept. RST.11-12.9

~Social-Emotional

- *Demonstrate an awareness of responsibilities as an involved citizen in a democratic society C2.1.d
- *Evaluate the impact of personal involvement in activities to improve C2.4.d school/home/community/world
- *Participate in cross-cultural activities, identify unique contributions and perspectives of various groups, and how the experience may change personal perspective C3.2.d
- *Evaluate how societal and cultural norms influence personal interactions C4.1.d
- *Integrate prior experience and knowledge of outcomes to inform future decisions E2.3.d
- *Actively seek out new opportunities to expand personal knowledge and experiences E4.1.d

[Standards were obtained from the Ohio Department of Education Website](#)

Bibliography

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