

Appendix A: Engaging in Community Project

How To Get Involved: Local Engagement for International Students

Rationale: As educators, we desire to have international students feel a part of their community. There are many different ways to do this. The following are a few examples of ideas, both previously implemented and hypothetical.

Project Idea 1: Nonprofit Volunteering

A former colleague from the University of Iowa, Angela DeBoer, and I created a speaking project that later culminated in volunteerism. We used [Charity Navigator](#) as one source for students to research nonprofit organizations with the idea that they would use this information to create a poster and present this as a program-wide poster session. The goal was to promote research and oral fluency skills. Additionally, we had a representative from a local organization give a talk to our combined students for additional listening practice and background on a nonprofit organization. The students and I also volunteered together at a local foodbank for a volunteer experience. This was an optional activity, but the majority of the students participated.

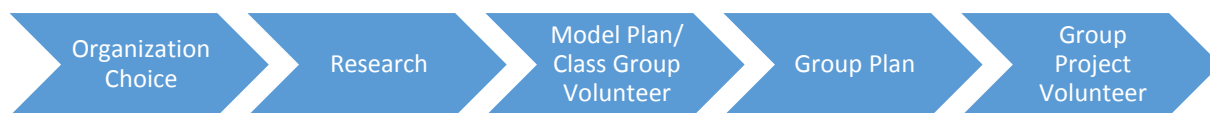
If I were to repeat this process here in Lawrence, Kansas, I might set it up in this way:

Preparation

There are both local and national nonprofit volunteer opportunities in Lawrence, so I would try to find a variety of organizations. I might also contact organizations prior to creating this list to ensure that this type of project would be appropriate for the students. Prior to this lesson, I would make an annotated list of nonprofit local organizations. I would focus on the needs of the organization and my students' background, preferences, and linguistic ability.

In-Class

Overall Set-up



- ✓ Give annotated list of organizations and chart (Table 1) to students.
- ✓ Forms groups of three to four students, or allow students to form their own groups.
- ✓ Students use annotated list to research and complete the chart on the history, organizational structure, purpose, and impact of the nonprofit organization.

- ✓ Once the students have completed the research (online, in-person, phone), the students create a plan for how they could engage with this organization.
- ✓ Set limitations and expectations for students to prepare them for this experience. I would also recommend that the entire class do a volunteer opportunity first before doing these individual projects.

The following is an example explanation and chart for how I would implement local volunteering here in Lawrence, Kansas.

[Just Food](#) is a local food bank here in Lawrence. Just Food has listed volunteer opportunities involving task-based assignments such as sorting items and picking up items, but students could also discuss how they could work with clients. I, as the teacher, would encourage the students to be involved with clients, if possible, because it is the human interaction that provides opportunity for engagement and dialogue.

Table 1. Nonprofit Information Chart

Organization Name	History	How It Works	Purpose	Impact
Just Food	2008/2009-Econ. Rec Act & ARRA funds - >Richard Jackson, CEO, ECKAN	Donated & purchased food is stored, sorted, and distributed to “partner agencies & Douglas Co. residents”	To fill food gap, alleviate “food insecurity,” and “eradicate hunger” in Douglas Co.	“Just Food and its 35+ partner agencies feed more than 8,000 people per month in Douglas County.”
Lawrence Humane Society				
Big Brothers, Big Sisters				

Volunteer Action Plan

The students should both create and implement this volunteer action plan. That said, here is a list of possible actions that you may use to guide the students in creating their plan.

- 1. Contact the Organization:** Students should contact the organization to learn about volunteer opportunities available. They should also ask if volunteer training is available.

2. **Time Commitment:** Students should decide how often they would like to volunteer. They should also decide if they will volunteer individually, as a group, or both. I would recommend that students volunteer as a group as this is likely to be more comfortable for students.
3. **Keeping Track:** Students should track their hours, experiences, and difficulties as they go along. They should keep you informed if there are any difficulties that require your intervention. This information will be used as a reflection, so it is important that students document what they learn as they go.
4. **Reflection:** Students should complete a reflection on this experience, particularly regarding change. You should have them either keep a paper journal, blog, or vlog, or have them give a presentation on their organization and experience.
5. **Optional Assessment:** You should decide if you want this project (any or all parts) to be graded. You could treat this as a portfolio, using alternative grading. You could grade their written responses to discussion questions, or you could assign a group presentation, which could be assessed with a rubric.

Project Idea 2: Student Forum

Host a forum through your school. Train your students as group leaders to facilitate conversation on change using discussion questions. A forum of this nature might work best in small groups. Ask other teachers or administrations to be present in each group to observe and/or intervene if needed.

Project Idea 3: Voicethread Pals

Create a Voicethread for your class. Have the students create pseudonyms. Have each group post questions and respond to each other. Then, invite another class to participate. You might consider expanding this to a public Voicethread to reach a larger audience. Teacher moderation is necessary as the goal of the exercise is to dialogue, albeit in a calm manner.

Project Idea 4: Twitter

Similar to Phelps-Roper, create a class Twitter account. Students can comment and engage with others on this account. Moderation is needed.

Project Idea 5: Newspaper Series

You could contact your school or area newspaper about doing an ongoing column on international student engagement and volunteerism. Each student could publish one article over

the course in the newspaper with the help of self, peer, teacher, and newspaper editor revisions. These pieces could be reflective, persuasive, or informative.

Reference

Just Food. (n.d.). History of just food. Retrieved from <http://justfoodks.org/about-us/history-of-just-food/>