Independent Project Unit 2

Unit Focus

Students will work on their independent project throughout the unit, and build the documentation that goes along with their work. At the end of the unit, students will make a final presentation to showcase what they have done, and how it helped them grow as learners.
Students will work on an independent project of their own design. For that reason, the project content itself will vary widely and be what inspires students' curiosity throughout the course. Some students will create websites or videos that illuminate topics they're interested in; others may create a powerful piece of art or design a new product; and a few may build new technologies.
As a part of the project work, students will create an annotated bibliography of research they need to advance their project. No matter the project's subject, students will be asked to take in a range of perspectives and collect related ideas for consideration. This research should help students get up-to-date on these topics, and focus efforts to optimize their project's impact. Weekly, students will conference with teachers to keep their efforts focused. From past experience, we've also observed students helping each other advance projects, even when their work has little overlap. A formal annotated bibliography will be submitted by students at the halfway point in the course, and a weekly log of work will be maintained by students throughout the project.
As the course draws to a close, students will prepare a presentation of their work. This presentation may look different for each; but it will always involve students communicating about their project and explaining the impact. For many, this will feel like an academic presentation, perhaps with slides and a visual aide. For others, it may be a performance or a technical demonstration. Not every project will be successful (in the traditional sense) – student growth can happen even if a project doesn't work as intended.
The goals of the course, will be that students have: 1) learned how to pursue their interests; 2) built skills for interpreting varied sources of information; 3) acquired extensive new knowledge and/or skills; 4) developed project management skills; and 5) significantly expanded their communication and documentation skills.

Stage 1: Desired Results

Established Goals

Standards

Common Core
English Language Arts: 11-12
Reading: Informational Text
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.7)*
Writing
Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7)*
Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of

Transfer

Students will be able to independently use their learning to...
T1 Research and present information to expand knowledge and understanding of a topic
T2 Develop and communicate an informed argument/explanation using illustrative details and examples based on audience and purpose
T3 Evaluate diverse sources and points of view to stretch learning of a given topic

Meaning

Understanding(s)

Students will understand that...
U1 One can use prior knowledge and skills to explore their interests and stretch their learning.

Essential Question(s)

Students will keep considering...
Q1 How does knowing more about the topic change or deepen my understanding?

Stage 1: Desired Results

the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8)*

Speaking & Listening

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2)*

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5)*

C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards

Social Studies: 12

INDIVIDUALLY AND WITH OTHERS, STUDENTS …

Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources. *(D1.5.9-12.)*

Common Core

English Language Arts: 11-12

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1)*

Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1.A)*

Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references (e.g., Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage, Garner's Modern American Usage) as needed. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1.B)*

Other Goals

Profile of a Graduate

Inquiry: Posing, pursuing, and refining significant questions to deepen understanding about a topic or issue. *(POG.1.1)*

Analyzing: Examining information/data/evidence from multiple sources to identify possible underlying assumptions, patterns, and relationships in order to make inferences. *(POG.1.2)*

Idea Generation: Studying a problem, need or model (mentor text, political piece, documents, art work, etc.) to consider limitations and imagine new solutions/transformations. *(POG.2.1)*

Product Creation: Effectively use a medium to communicate important information. *(POG.3.2)*

Self-Awareness: Examining current performance critically to identify steps/strategies to persist. *(POG.4.1)*

Decision Making: Make responsible decisions, based on potential outcomes. *(POG.4.2)*

U2 Critical thinkers question the validity and bias of the information they encounter.

U3 The ability to persevere in the face of setbacks and obstacles is essential to success.

U4 Having an impact on an audience is what makes an endeavor worthwhile.

Q2 How do I find what I'm looking for? What perspective does it represent?

Q3 How does one know what to believe in what they read, hear, and view?

Q4 How can I communicate my thinking and how I grew as a learner in the face of setbacks and obstacles?

Q5 How does my work have an impact on other people?

Acquisition

Knowledge	Skill(s)
Students will know... K1 Content knowledge and terminology related to the selected topic K2 Terminology related to annotated bibliographies and use of research databases K3 Terminology relating to the product/presentation or secondary fields of interest	*Students will be skilled at...* S1 Critiquing the validity and perspective of a source S2 Reflecting on and documenting progress and needs S3 Explaining content knowledge/terminology, and progress/process to those who have no prior knowledge of the topic S4 Prioritizing next steps strategically S5 Choosing strategies to overcome obstacles