



Students Advocate for our Environment: A School Project with a Purpose!

This project assumes students do care about what the landscapes in their community look like — and how land is developed for the beauty and safety of everyone in their local community. It is based upon the “Flagship Project” for Message to the Future Foundation (www.M2tf.org) that involved 32 High School students in Columbus, GA from three classrooms. *We have documented it all here for easy reference by teachers and students alike who choose to replicate it as an end of year “capstone” or community service project.* It can be used to expand on a science lesson, tackle an event-marketing requirement or bring emphasis to other relevant subject areas such as communications, visual art, political science or digital technology!

The project engages students working together to create two artworks (what we call “Patchwork

paintings”) that they present to the Mayor or other city official with a message requesting responsible land development at a reception they organize. As the students develop their ideas and paint about the natural spaces in their town they would like to see preserved or improved, they begin to understand first hand what it really means to work as a team, prepare for a public presentation, communicate clearly and manage a project. Students are 100% responsible for the entire project — from setting a date that works for the Mayor, to securing a venue, to making the presentation. It is theirs to own!

Watch as students truly make a difference in their own community through a project that also helps to prepare them for college and their career!

WARM UP

First, expose students to the overall concept of Project Based Learning, whereby teachers are empowered to bring relevance from the workplace into the classroom, and connect with their students as a coach or facilitator.

In this way, students are able to develop important skills needed to succeed in our twenty-first century work place.

Watch two brief videos:

3-minute video by Edutopia for a great “Introduction to Project Based Learning.”



6-min video featuring this “Flagship Project” for Message to the Future Foundation by the students of Northside High School who won the local TV station “Green Award.”

LESSON

Students learn by doing! Before getting started, be sure teacher(s) introduce themselves in a new light to students simply as available “consultants” or coaches. It is appropriate to share one’s personal resume/background to the students for context. The students are the only ones making it all happen.

Step 1: Teacher(s) introduce project & scope to students.

Using the information provided here, tailor the project to your own specifications. Set and share the overall goals, specific requirements, time allotted for students to work on it during your class and the deadline for completion. This project is appropriate for one or multiple classes working together. We recommend devoting an entire quarter/semester and allowing students the full time allotted for their time in your classroom. Remember, when tempted to start making a time-line and creating a metric – don’t. Let the students do this on their own – and it is ok to have failures along the way – that’s one way to learn!

- *Outline specific deliverables required (suggested):*
 - A one hour presentation at a local venue made to the town Mayor or other high ranking official with simple refreshments to include every student as participant.
 - A 3 min-video presentation by all the students representing their message to the Mayor.
 - The 2 “Patchwork painting” artworks.
 - A website where all this information is documented and easy to access.

Lesson Objectives

- a. Students will have the opportunity to develop mastery of multiple English Language Arts, Literacy and Technical skills required to investigate, research, and gather data; synthesize information; create supporting artworks, digital media, spoken messages, and documents; and persuasively present their final project to influential parties.
- b. Students will be exposed to project management realities working with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed, with ultimate goal of empowering full understanding of how great teams function.
- c. Students will specifically be required to write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- d. Students will make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding and compel action.

Resource Links (click to open)

[Buck Institute for Education](#)

[Achieve the Core](#)

[“Introduction to Project Based Learning” by Edutopia](#)

Materials

The most critical supplies will be art supplies. This list was compiled for a “one-stop shop” experience on-line at a company called <http://www.dickblick.com/> who offer reduced rates to educators.

- Premier Museum Canvas, Pkg of 2, 36”x48”
- Set of 6 Colors - Acrylic Paint
- Basics Brushes, Set of 6 - order 5 of these!

Other supplies needed: paper towels, pie tins and aluminum foil (line pie tins for use as painting taborets!), small buckets for water.

Perhaps you find funding of this by (a) entering the total cost onto <http://www.donorschoose.org/> for funding by anyone interested or (b) seek funds from local PTA, or (c) invite parents of your students to contribute.

Classroom Tip

Suggest that students get each other’s contact information day 1 so they can communicate and plan together outside of school hours as well as during school.

Step 2: Teacher(s) establish working protocols.

- *Assign (somewhat randomly) five individual students as leader of the project (1 person) and as leaders of four committees (4 people).* Be sure they have expertise in the area for which they are responsible – except the overall leader! The four committees (outlined in detail below) include: web design/technology, video production, visual art and event management of some sort.
- *Explain how group leaders should help the entire group work towards a common goal.* Students should understand that this will involve working with their team independently and together as a larger group reporting regularly to each other. Help them see how the collective tasks will ultimately come together in an overarching theme evident in all they show at their final presentation as a team.

Created by:

Anne Ostholthoff
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of Teachers Ignite,
home of *The Ignite*
Show.



**Founder of Creating Pride/
Arts Now, Inc. (1992-2012)**

**Anne developed this project in
collaboration with three teachers
from Northside HS for M2tf.**

Step 3: Students form their committees and get to work.

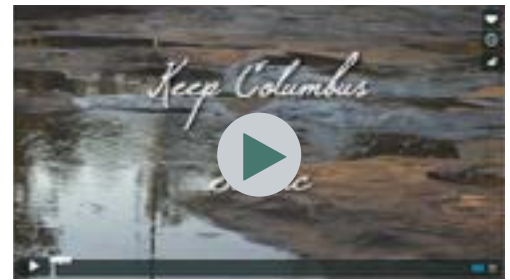
The group leader invites the entire class of students to move around the room and join one of the four committees noted below. Once these four committees are formed, the leader should allow for 30 minutes for this collective, large group to brainstorm together. They should plan for another 30-minutes for each smaller committee to work together on their specific responsibilities. The project leader roves the room, listening and observing as these committees work – taking notes and making connections.

- **Event Committee – This team will plan and oversee the actual event.** They contact the Mayor’s office and invite Mayor or other local official to public reception to receive a gift of student artworks. *(As the adult, you should call ahead, alert the mayoral/town leader staff of the project, and request their participation. Once secured, then give the phone number and name of executive assistant to the student committee leader.)* They must identify a venue, establish a date that works for the Mayor, design of invitation and send to an established list of invitees, arrange for food/beverage catering, AV/Technology requirements, and be responsible for facilitating the presentation. It is at this event that the Mayor/ local official will receive the artworks from the students and hear their message advocating for responsible land development and/or beautification.
- **Art Committee – This is the team of students responsible for creating the two artworks** on canvases sized 36”x 36” depicting places in the local community that students want to see protected or beautified (cleaned up). Each canvas is marked off as a grid of 12 squares of equal size and assigned to individual students. Acrylic paint and other supplies are on hand ready for use. (See supply list) 24 students are required to paint. The committee can have just a few members who facilitate creating the artworks by other students on other committees. They assign a student to each square and document their specific quote as to what their square is all about (using a grid template on paper). They title the artworks (perhaps with “Keep (town name) Scenic”), paint/finish the canvas sides and help students prepare to present their artwork. They create a framed graphic representation of the artworks and corresponding “grid” of artists and titles to accompany the artworks. It shows at-a-glance who painted what square and what their specific “quote” is within the broader theme of the painting.



- **Communications Committee – This is the group responsible for creating a video presentation.** It should represent the voices of their fellow students sharing a message concerning land development or beautification particularly relevant to their community. This will involve some work and dialogue with the entire group to determine if there is a singular, shared space or piece of land they all want to see preserved or beautified – or if there are multiple sites/issues everyone wants to address. This group determines the focus of the message and this committee produces the video to say it best.
- **Documentary Committee – This group creates a website and some digital form of documentation of the process, activity and final presentation.** All assets developed by each group are captured by this team and placed onto this website –and they might even create a way for team members to upload content and share information. (google drive)

[Click here for Student Video Presentation to Mayor of Columbus, GA](#)



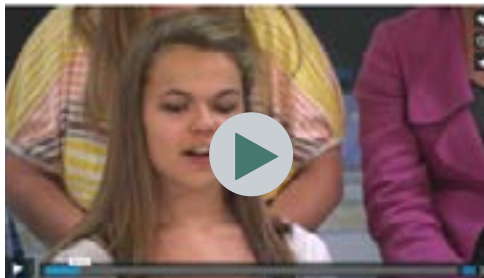
APPLICATION

There are multiple applications as to how this lesson is relevant to today’s marketplace. Students learn to work as a team, to manage their time, to produce a product and present it to a group. Among the many life skills they learn, the most important might be the lesson that they – as a person, and a group – can tackle a real world issue and actually have a positive impact and potentially resolve!

[Click here for Teacher-to-Teacher Video “Reflections and Advice”](#)



[Click here for Student-to-Teacher Video](#)



Students of Northside High School with Anne Ostholthoff upon completion of “Flagship Project” for M2tf!



Special message to teachers, parents and interested others: *This lesson was designed to shed light as to what the actual standards are and how they are being used by teachers all across the country to help all of our children — no matter the zip code — learn to think most strategically, critically and collaboratively. We hope the lesson demonstrates the simplicity and high level of expectations teachers and state leaders have agreed to as most important to help prepare our youth for the workplace. Let's know the facts, then join hands and help our teachers implement these standards in how we reinforce them in our homes and throughout our community.*

The Common Core State Standards www.corestandards.org

Mission Statement: The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (“the Standards”) are the culmination of an extended, broad-based effort to fulfill the charge issued by the states to create the next generation of K–12 standards in order to help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school.

The present work, led by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA), builds on the foundation laid by states in their decades-long work on crafting high-quality education standards. The Standards also draw on the most important international models as well as research and input from numerous sources, including state departments of education, scholars, assessment developers, professional organizations, educators from kindergarten through college, and parents, students, and other members of the public. In their design and content, refined through successive drafts and numerous rounds of feedback, the Standards represent a synthesis of the best elements of standards-related work to date and an important advance over that previous work.

As specified by CCSSO and NGA, the Standards are (1) research and evidence based, (2) aligned with college and work expectations, (3) rigorous, and (4) internationally benchmarked. A particular standard was included in the document only when the best available evidence indicated that its mastery was essential for college and career readiness in a twenty-first-century, globally competitive society. The Standards are intended to be a living work: as new and better evidence emerges, the Standards will be revised accordingly.

Click here for easy reference to the specific standards referenced below in this lesson, taken from the grades 11-12 Literacy Common Core Standards. While all of these standards will be met by students satisfying the expectations of the project, additional standards (in the areas of Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, for example) might also be included by expanding the scope of this project to include conducting studies, surveys, formulating specific solutions, etc.

Reading Informational Texts (RI) [Click here for easy reference.](#)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

- RI.11-12.7 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.

Writing (W) [Click here for easy reference.](#)

Text Types and Purposes:

- W.11-12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and Distribution of Writing:

- W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)
- W.11-12.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grades 11-12 here.)
- W.11-12.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

- W.11-12.7 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.
- W.11-12.8 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 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.

Speaking and Listening (SL) [Click here for easy reference.](#)**Comprehension and Collaboration:**

- SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- SL.11-12.1.A Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- SL.11-12.1.B Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
- SL.11-12.1.C Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
- SL.11-12.1.D Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.
- SL.11-12.2 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.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:

- SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
- SL.11-12.5 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.

Language (L) [Click here for easy reference.](#)**Conventions of Standard English:**

- L.11-12.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- L.11-12.1.A Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.

Writing for History/Social Studies, Science & Technical Subjects [Click here for easy reference.](#)**Range of Writing:**

- WHST.11-12.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Reading for Science and Technical Subjects [Click here for easy reference.](#)**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:**

- RST.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., quantitative data, video, multimedia) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

The activities included in this Ignite Curriculum Guide are provided to inspire and equip educators to implement the lesson as seen on The Ignite Show. The intent is not to necessarily imply mastery of the standards, but to offer alignment to a sampling of standards.

FOR MORE INFORMATION www.theigniteshow.com **CONTACT US AT** mail@theigniteshow.com

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