



Module 4: Making Your Voice Heard

The work of the semester has been on understanding how local government functions and working with others to bring about a better community. In this module the culminating project, the Youth Issues Agenda, is completed and presented and students reflect on their work.

Lesson 1: Sharing the Youth Issues Agenda

Understanding Goals: How can we make our community a better place?

Introduction: The big event has arrived. Be sure to invite others to view students' work and issue a press release to local media.

Time Span: 1-2 days

Resources Needed:

- 3x5" index cards
- Handout: *Writing a Position Essay*
- Completed Handout from Module 1: *Writing an Action Plan*
- *How to Create a Successful Civics Fair Project – Student Voices* video, <http://annenbergclassroom.org/AssetDetail.aspx?myID=1055>
- *Teachers: Press Kit*, templates and handouts to help publicize your civics fair project and event, <http://www.student-voices.org/ShowPageInternal.aspx?Name=Teachers:%20Press%20Kit>
- The completed Youth Issues Agenda Project
- *Student Voices Speak Out: Making your case in a Civics Fair*, <http://www.student-voices.org/SpeakOut.aspx?Id=618>

Skill sets: Analysis, interpretation, research, synthesis

Performance of Understanding:

Students present their Youth Issues Agenda to their peers and the public.

Procedures:

PEER PRESENTATIONS AND FEEDBACK:

Before presenting the projects to the public, groups in the class should present their projects to their peers and get feedback.

1. Hand out 3x5" cards so that each student has one card for every group that will present in class. For each group that presents, students should write the names of the group members on the card, the pros and cons of the approach to the issue that the group presented and why. They will hand these cards to the groups at the end of their presentations.
2. Have each team present the ways they identified to address their issue. Remind

students that each presentation should include a description of the issue, the advantages and disadvantages of the approach they have taken to solve it and the constituencies that might be for and against the idea.

3. Ask students to hand their feedback cards to the appropriate presentation groups. Groups should look over the cards and, using feedback from their classmates, make adjustments to their approach as necessary.
 - Using the feedback they received from their classmates, have students write a 1-page essay about the approach they have taken to address the issue and why. Have students use the *Writing a Position Essay* handout to help them write.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

The culminating event is an opportunity for students to show the depth of their understanding of local government and to perform a service to the community. Watch the *Student Voices* video *How to Create a Successful Civics Fair Project* for tips on organizing and preparing your students' projects for exhibition. The video can be downloaded and burned to a disk or streamed directly from your computer.

Students can also discuss ideas and methods for successful presentations with peers in other areas through the *Speak Out Making your case in a Civics Fair*.

The proper venue for the event should be identified and reserved. Invite family members of students and community members who might be interested to the event. The local media should be notified. Government officials, the school administration and school board members should also be invited.

Templates, handouts and checklists to help you publicize your students' civics fair project and event can be found on the teachers' page of the *Student Voices* Web site.

Assessments:

Both students and teachers should evaluate the project based on the quality of the presentation and the value of the information to the community.

Correlation to *National Standards for Civics and Government*:

Standard III.E. How does the American political system provide for choice and opportunities for participation?

Standard V.A. What is citizenship?

Standard V.B. What are the rights of citizens?

Lesson 2: Reflecting on What We Accomplished

Understanding Goals: How can we continue to make our community a better place?

Introduction: Students reflect on their experience in this concluding lesson and talk about ways that they might continue their efforts.

Time Span: 1-2 days

Resources Needed:

- Handout: *Reflecting on the Student Voices Experience*
- *Student Voices Speak Out: Your Community: From Problems to Solutions*, <http://www.student-voices.org/SpeakOutDiscussion.aspx?LocId=1000&Id=611>
- (Optional) Handout: *Tips for Writing an Op-Ed + (SAMPLE)*

Skill sets: Analysis, interpretation, research, synthesis

Performance of Understanding:

Students craft a short written piece about what they learned during the unit, and forward photos, videos and written descriptions to *Student Voices* online. E-mail studentvoices@asc.upenn.edu, and be sure to include your school and contact information.

Students can also communicate their thoughts on how their issue is currently being addressed (or how they would like to see it addressed) to the local media or school newspaper. These op-eds can be sent to *Student Voices* for publication on the Web site.

Procedures:

Begin the lesson by holding a debriefing session on the previous day's presentation. After a preliminary discussion, have students return to their research teams to continue the reflective exercise. Give all students a copy of *Reflecting on the Student Voices Experience*. Students should share their thoughts with one another in their teams as they talk through the questions of the handout.

At the conclusion of the group discussion ask students to post the most important aspect of their recently completed work to the class wiki or blog.

Students should then decide on the items that they want to share with others in the *Student Voices* community.

- Are there photos of work in progress or the final event?

- Was a video record made that can be shared?
- Can the written reflections be pooled for key ideas and themes?

Congratulate the class on the completion of a significant piece of scholarly work that can be taken further to address the issue within their own communities.

Students should be encouraged to discuss their experiences researching how to solve a community issue with their peers across the country in the *Speak Out Your Community: From Problems to Solutions*. This Speak Out includes a brief streaming video report.

Complementary Materials/Other Pathways/Other Activities:

Students should be encouraged to communicate their thoughts on how their issue is currently being addressed (or how they would like to see it addressed) to the local media or school newspaper.

- Work with students to prepare their op-eds, letters-to-the-editor or editorial cartoons. You may want to have students refer to the *Tips for Writing an Op-Ed* handout for tips.
- Contact the local media or school newspaper about publishing the students' work.

Assessments:

Evaluate student feedback on the *Student Voices* curriculum and the Youth Issues Agenda.

Correlation to National Standards for Civics and Government:

Standard III.E. How does the American political system provide for choice and opportunities for participation?

Standard V.A. What is citizenship?

Standard V.B. What are the rights of citizens?