

# **TIES** 2003

Teachers in Industry for Educational Support

## **Better Citizens Through Volunteering**

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## Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
<b>Curriculum Unit Overview - narrative</b>	#3
<b>Summary Chart</b>	#4
<b>Section One</b> Government & Economics of Community Service	#5
<b>Section Two</b> Communication Skills for Community Service	#11
<b>Section Three</b> Computer Science to Improve Community Service	#16
<b>Transfer Activity</b> Volunteer Time	#21

## Better Citizens Through Volunteering Curriculum Unit Overview

### Summary

Numerous high schools have adopted a senior exit project as a way to encourage growth in their students, promote community involvement and prepare them for their lives after high school. One of the greatest needs in most urban areas is for younger students to make connections with older students who have found success in the educational system. These students can serve as mentors and tutors, helping not only with academic issues, but social issues as well. Getting students involved in their communities is of vital importance, census data shows that 85% of Americans live within 25 miles of where they were raised. On the other hand, only a fraction of people under age 30 volunteer. Therefore, the goal of this unit is to expose students to community involvement and volunteering in the hopes that many will not just view it as another graduation requirement, but as a positive force for community change.

### Big Picture

Ask students if they have or have ever considered volunteering in their community. Those that have should write a paragraph about why they volunteered and what were the positive and negative aspects of their experiences. Those that have not should write a paragraph discussing why they have not volunteered in the past. Once writing is complete the students will debrief while the teacher creates a chart on the board that highlights the concepts and ideas brought forth in the discussion.

### Preparation for the Unit

Preparation for the unit includes:

1. Contacting local volunteers and community leaders to speak in various classes
2. Preparing the materials needed for each activity
3. Contacting school officials at the middle schools to arrange times for tutoring and mentoring during January and February
4. Contacting local volunteer agencies for student placement during January and February

### Overview

On the following page is a summary of the unit including brief summaries of each Authentic Learning Task (ALT). This table provides an overview of the tasks in the unit sections and shows how the activities in the different teaching areas relate to each other.

## Better Citizens Through Volunteering Curriculum Unit Summary

Government & Economics	Communications	Computer Science
<b>ALT 1 - Agency Funding</b> Students will research a local, state or national public agency and determine how the agency received funds to operate.	<b>ALT 1 – Listen &amp; Learn</b> Students will listen to a speaker from a local volunteer agency and write a summary of what was discussed and learned.	<b>ALT 1 – Volunteering on the Web</b> Students will find three sites using three search engines that discuss volunteer opportunities.
<b>ALT 2 – Why do people need help?</b> Students will complete a budget for a family who lives below the federal poverty line.	<b>ALT 2 – Thank You</b> Students are to write a brief thank you note to the speaker.	<b>ALT 2 – Rating a Volunteer Website</b> Students will rate a website using Compustars site rating system and suggest areas of improvement.
<b>ALT 3 – Request for Funds</b> Students will write a convincing letter to a state or federal congressperson asking for support.	<b>ALT 3 – Speaking about Volunteering</b> Students will research and give a speech on a volunteer opportunity.	<b>ALT 3 – Building a Volunteer Site</b> Students will improve a web page that highlights a volunteer opportunity.
<b>Transfer or Culminating Activity</b>  Students will volunteer 20 hours of their time in a community organization of their choice during the months of January and February. This will allow them to connect all that they have done and hopefully see the benefits to themselves and others of community service.		

## **Section One: Government & Economics**

### **ALT One: Agency Funding**

#### **Summary**

Students will choose either a local, state or national agency and using the Internet and other library resources determine how the agency receives its funding. The students will present their findings in an essay at least one page in length.

#### **Competencies**

1. Students will write about the difference between public and private organizations with regards to funding.
2. Students will describe any regulations they discovered about how money is distributed and guidelines regulating spending.

#### **Time**

The activity will require 30 minutes for introduction and at least two hours for research time. The writing itself would be completed outside of the school day, but a few days should be given before it is due.

#### **Materials**

Access to the Internet, library resources, printer resources, paper and a writing instrument.

#### **Instructions**

1. Review the concept taxation for the purpose of providing public services.
2. Students should brainstorm about what public services they use that taxes provide.
3. Student should then be introduced to the assignment, with an overview of a public agency as well as requirements for the essay.

#### **Evaluation/Assessment of Student's Competency**

Student's research, writing and product will be evaluated using a rubric model, which is included in the handout section of this ALT.

#### **Closure**

The activity will be closed by students creating a large chart on the board describing the various methods of funding as well as pointing out any differences in funding methods.

**Government & Economics ALT One: Handout One****Agency Funding Essay**

Your task is to pick either a federal, state or local agency. You are then to determine through using the Internet or other library resources, how the agency receives funding. You will need to include where you found your information in the references sections. You will then need to write an essay at least one page in length describing what the agency does and how it receives funding. You may also include your opinion of the agency, as long as it is appropriate. The project is worth 50 points and will be graded based on the following rubric.

Student spent his or her time in the library working on the assignment in a productive manner.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Student used proper grammar and spelling in the essay.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Student met the requirements of the essay regarding content as discussed above.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Student cited references as well as used the proper format for citation.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Student developed a well-written essay that demonstrates what they learned.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Your total will be multiplied by two in order to reach the total points earned.

## **Section One: Government & Economics**

### **ALT Two: Why do people need help?**

#### **Summary**

Students will be provided with data and will be asked to create a budget based on a family living below the poverty line as established by the federal government.

#### **Competencies**

1. Students will demonstrate budgeting skills required in their own lives.
2. Students will learn the hardships of many families living in such conditions, and conversely the need for volunteer relief agencies.

#### **Time**

This activity will need one hour to complete.

#### **Materials**

Students will need paper, writing instrument, calculator (optional, but helpful) and the handout.

#### **Instructions**

1. Students will work in groups of two to four.
2. Students will be given a handout with data and instructions. The students are then to develop a budget for the family so that they can survive on the income listed
3. After all groups have completed the activity, they will need to write their budget on the board so that each group can compare and discuss what they decided was important to maintain for the family

#### **Evaluation/Assessment of Student's Competency**

Students will be evaluated on participation as well as whether their budget is realistic. The activity will be worth 20 points, 10 for each part.

#### **Closure**

The class will discuss the merits and drawbacks of each budget as well as what can be done for people so that they can improve their economic situation.

Government & Economics ALT Two: Handout One

**Why do people need help?**

The federal government has established a poverty line, those who live above it are not in poverty, and those who live below it are in poverty. Your task is to create a monthly budget for a family of three (one adult and two children) who earn \$13,000/year. Try to incorporate all of the needs of the family first before thinking of extras. You will be graded on your level of participation and whether or not your group's budget is realistic. The activity is worth 20 points.

## **Section One: Government & Economics**

### **ALT Three: Request for funds**

#### **Summary**

Students will write a letter to a local, state or national politician stating reasons why funding should or should not be increased to relief agencies and programs.

#### **Competencies**

1. Students will learn the proper way to write a letter to a member of the government.
2. Students will express themselves clearly and concisely in a letter that states their opinion with factual support.
3. Students will learn how to participate directly in their government.

#### **Time**

This activity will take two hours, one hour for introduction, discussion and prewriting, another for actual letter writing.

#### **Materials**

Computers, printer, envelopes & stamps

#### **Instructions**

1. Have students discuss whether or not they feel public relief agencies and programs should exist, using facts to support their arguments, not just opinions, making sure to record the information on the board.
2. Introduce the idea of letter writing as a way to influence public policy in the U.S.
3. Discuss the guidelines for a letter to a public official.
4. Have students select a representative to write to within the government at any level.

#### **Evaluation/Assessment of Student's Competency**

Student letters will be evaluated using the rubric contained within the handout on the next page.

#### **Closure**

Students will present their letters to the class and discuss the intended results.

**Government & Economics ALT Three: Handout One****Request for funds**

Democracy does not work without citizens participating in the system. One method of participation is letter writing. Your task will be to construct a letter to a representative at either the local, state or national level, which discusses your views with factual support of the funding of relief agencies. Your letter should use the proper letter format and be no shorter than half of a page and no longer than a page. You will be graded using the following rubric, keep in mind you will be given a grade and then asked to change any mistakes as these letters will be mailed. The assignment is worth 50 points.

Student used the proper format for letter writing.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Student wrote in a clear and concise manner.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Student used proper grammar and spelling.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Student gave their opinion with factual support.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Student work was neat, organized and met the length requirement.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Your grade will be computed by multiplying your score by two.

## **Section Two: Communications**

### **ALT One: Listen & Learn**

#### **Summary**

Students will be listening to a speaker of their choice discuss the work of various local relief agencies. They will then write a review of the speaker as well as information learned

#### **Competencies**

1. Students will review the skills required for good public speaking
2. Students will write a review summarizing the main points

#### **Time**

The speaker will have an hour, some of which is question and answer, the students should be given the assignment the day before so they know the requirements, all writing will be done outside of class.

#### **Materials**

Various speakers from community agencies, at least 3. Paper and a writing instrument for note taking.

#### **Instructions**

1. Review with students key public speaking skills.
2. Distribute the handout, which contains all other instructions.

#### **Evaluation/Assessment of Student's Competency**

Student writing will be evaluated using the rubric contained within the handout on the next page.

#### **Closure**

Students will discuss what they learned and which speaker(s) they thought were best and why. This will lead into the next activity, as students will construct thank you letters to the speakers.

**Communications ALT One: Handout One****Listen & Learn**

Your task with this project is to grade a public speaker, while at the same time writing down information so that you can construct an essay illustrating what you have learned. You will need to be looking for the speaker's good and bad public speaking skills. You will need to listen to what the speaker says so you can construct your essay. The assignment is worth 25 points and will be graded using the following rubric.

Essay is neat and well organized with at least two paragraphs.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Essay uses proper grammar and spelling.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Essay relays the main points of the speaker.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Essay highlights the good skills of the speaker.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Essay highlights skills the speaker could improve upon.

0      1      2      3      4      5

## **Section Two: Communications**

### **ALT Two: Thank You**

#### **Summary**

Students will write a brief thank you note to the speaker noting something they learned with the goal of improving their interpersonal communications skills.

#### **Competencies**

1. Thank you letter format will be used
2. Use of personal writing in a formal setting

#### **Time**

Time needed should be no more than one hour.

#### **Materials**

Students will need paper and pen, thank you cards are optional, and computers are optional for those with poor handwriting skills.

#### **Instructions**

1. Students will learn how to write a proper thank you note for the business world
2. Pass out examples of quality thank you notes, discussing what makes them quality
3. Students will then draft their own, using a partner for peer editing
4. Students will create a final copy for a grade and mailing

#### **Evaluation/Assessment of Student's Competency**

Students will be graded using the following rubric, which will be distributed to them via handout or written on the board. Student uses proper format 0-5; Student uses proper grammar and spelling 0-5; Student includes one point the speaker made 0-5

#### **Closure**

1. As a class we will discuss why thank you notes are an important way to help people find jobs and make contacts in the business world.

## **Section Two: Communications**

### **ALT Three: Speaking about volunteering**

#### **Summary**

Students will research and speak about a volunteer opportunity.

#### **Competencies**

1. Students will be able to independently research a volunteer opportunity of their choice.
2. Students will give an informative speech using proper techniques about the topic of their choice.

#### **Time**

A minimum of three hours of research time as well as enough time for each member of the class to give a three to five minute speech.

#### **Materials**

Access to the Internet for each student, materials to write on and with, printers and materials for students to make handouts or displays.

#### **Instructions**

1. Review with students the parts of an informative speech.
2. Review with students proper research techniques on the Internet.
3. This should be a review activity to give students information about volunteer opportunities in the community.
4. Students will be expected to have some sort of visual to relay their topic.

#### **Evaluation/Assessment of Student's Competency**

The students will be assessed using the rubric on the handout page.

#### **Closure**

The speeches themselves will provide closure; giving students ideas of places they could volunteer with the next activity being the culminating volunteer activity.

**Communications ALT Three: Handout One****Speaking about volunteering**

The following is your rubric for your informative speech about volunteering within the community. Keep in mind your job is to educate your classmates, a task you should take seriously as your speech may influence someone's choice. The project is worth 30 points.

Student used time wisely while researching on the Internet.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Student has an overall coverage of the topic.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Student presents in a professional manner.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Student speech is the proper length.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Student is able to answer questions about the topic from the class.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Student utilizes a visual aide.

0      1      2      3      4      5

## **Section Three: Computer Science**

### **ALT One: Volunteering on the Web**

#### **Summary**

Students will use the Internet to find at least three different websites, using three different search engines that discuss volunteer opportunities for young people.

#### **Competencies**

1. Students will be able to navigate the Internet.
2. Students will be able to use at least three different search engines.
3. Students will be able to use proper citation to relay their information.

#### **Time**

This activity should not take longer than one hour.

#### **Materials**

All students will need a computer with access to the Internet. Students will also need paper and a writing instrument.

#### **Instructions**

1. Students are to find at least three different websites about three different volunteer opportunities.
2. Students are to use at least three different search engines.
3. Students are to document their findings using proper Internet citation format
4. Students will turn in all information at the end of the period.

#### **Evaluation/Assessment of Student's Competency**

The assignment will be worth 15 points, with students receiving 5 points each for the following. Location of three different sites, use of three different search engines and use of proper citation.

#### **Closure**

The next day students will be asked to show one of their websites and discuss what they learned as a bridge to the next activity of rating a website.

## **Section Three: Computer Science**

### **ALT Two: Rating a Volunteer Website**

#### **Summary**

Students will rate a website using Compustars site rating system and suggest areas of improvement.

#### **Competencies**

1. Students will be able to see positive and negative aspects of web design.
2. Students will be able to rate a site using Compustars site rating system.

#### **Time**

The assignment will take one hour.

#### **Materials**

Students will need to have a computer with Internet access as well as printing capability.

#### **Instructions**

1. Show students the Compustar website and rating page. Discuss any parts they have questions about.
2. Have students rate a site using the rating page. Students should use a site they found during the last ALT.
3. Have students print a copy of the first page of the website as well as a copy of the rating sheet they filled out on Compustar.

#### **Evaluation/Assessment of Student's Competency**

Student assessment is subjective; at this point it is best to simply give a completion grade looking to see if they were somewhat on target with their ratings. Some may be generous, others overly critical, yet you want to see if they put forth thought and effort into their rating.

#### **Closure**

Have student volunteers present the best site, worst site and an average site, discussing what sets them apart from each other. Then discuss what could be done to improve any of the sites, as that is what will be done in the next activity.

## **Section Three: Computer Science**

### **ALT Three: Building a Volunteer Site**

#### **Summary**

Students will improve a web page that highlights a volunteer opportunity.

#### **Competencies**

1. Students will further develop the idea of a user-friendly site.
2. Students will improve web design techniques.
3. Students will improve web language writing skills
4. Students will improve power point skills

#### **Time**

Time will vary. It could take as little as a few hours, but most likely will require five hours or more.

#### **Materials**

Students will need a computer, printer and zip/CD or server to turn in work.

#### **Instructions**

1. Using one of the sites from the previous ALTs students will design changes on a dummy page.
2. The first task is to review the current shortcomings of the site.
3. The second task is to brainstorm about what could and should be improved.
4. The third task is to actually make the changes to the site to improve its user friendly feel.
5. The final task is to create a power point presentation showing a before and after of the site.

#### **Evaluation/Assessment of Student's Competency**

Students will present their improvements to the class in a before and after presentation, using power point. The presentations will be evaluated using the rubric in the handout section.

#### **Closure**

This activity is the final activity before students go into the field to volunteer. If applicable students can take their work with them to show to the places they are volunteering.

**Computer Science ALT Three: Handout One****Web Design Rubric**

You are required to present what you have done to improve your particular website in a power point presentation of at least five minutes. Below you will find the requirements, the project is worth 40 points.

Student used time wisely when improving the web page.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Student was professional during the presentation.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Presentation was the desired length.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Presentation highlighted the before site.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Presentation highlighted the changes made in the site.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Changes made to the site were positive for user.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Technology needed to implement changes was discussed.

0      1      2      3      4      5

Presentation and changes were creative.

0      1      2      3      4      5

## **Transfer Activity – Volunteer Time**

The transfer activity involves each student volunteering 20 hours of their time during the months of January and February. The students along with help from his or her teacher will need to set up a location, either a school, relief agency or other volunteer agency. The students are then to set up a schedule with the agency so that the hours can be completed. The students will be evaluated by the agency as to their effort and performance, which will be the overall basis for their grades. The students will be required to write a reflection paper on their experience as well as keep a journal while they are volunteering. As far as materials, they will vary, but one of the best places to volunteer would be elementary and middle schools in the community since the high school students get out much earlier and many teachers would be receptive to tutoring/mentoring help during proficiency time. The actual volunteer experience will tie to together all the ALTs so that students will learn the benefits of community service to themselves and others.