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Food Insecurity in Your Community Project

The set up for this project is for a group of ELLs would be high school level students with Intermediate proficiency and up. This will be in a large Houston, TX school. There is a total of 24 in the class. The students are mainly from a Spanish speaking background and a few Asian language backgrounds, such as Vietnamese and Thai. Over the next 6-8 weeks, the students will learn how to research problems in their communities, such as poverty and food insecurity. They will be able to effectively communicate plans among themselves, communicate with outside help, such as at the venue where the meal they are serving will be held. They will be able to advertise their event successfully through posters and advertisements on social media, as well as they will learn how to raise awareness and money for the cause they are supporting. They will also learn how to buy food while staying within a budget, follow a recipe, and prepare the food. Students will also take some time while volunteering to eat with and interview a homeless/food insecure person and create a presentation reflecting on the experience, what they learned, and how they may have been humbled or encouraged to volunteer in the future.

To start the multi-week project off, I will begin by leading a discussion with the students about poverty around the world then focus in on poverty around the community. I will ask the students if they can guess how many homeless and food insecure people we have in the area then send them to do their research. I will then give them a worksheet (see handouts) to research and find out these answers. We will then talk about their findings as a class and I will introduce the project we will be working on for the next 6-8 weeks.

The first mini task in this project will be for the students to write drafts of an email they will send to the organization “”Loaves and Fishes”, a organization in the Houston area that provides 200-300 chronically hungry people daily. They will thank the organization for allowing them to use their facility (which has been pre-arranged)and ask some questions about the kind of equipment and help they will have at their disposal on the event day so they know what to expect for cooking. This will practice their email correspondence skills when writing a professional email. They will be evaluated on their use of an appropriate greeting, an appropriate thank you, 3 or more questions for the organization, and an appropriate closing to the email.This however is formative, so no grade will be given. It will be self-checked as we go over the final draft. We will then work as a class to come up with the final email that will actually be sent to the organization, discussing the things that need to be included and using suggestions from everyone.

Next, the students will be grouped into 6 groups of 4. These will be the groups for the food aspect of the project. Each group will be assigned a course (appetizer, main dish, main dish, side, side, dessert). They will be given a list of possible foods they could serve, and must choose which one and find a recipe online for the dish Students will need to multiply the measurements so they the number of servings will be aligned with how many they are expected to have. Students will be encouraged to look online and see the price of foods before deciding on their choice, as well as talk to the other groups in a class meeting about what they chose to make sure no groups chose the same food and that all the foods go together well. Students must then use Walmart’s online grocery shopping list to find the ingredients and put them in their cart, but not purphase. Students will be expected to stay within their budget, with appetizers, sides and desserts budgeting for 300+ servings, and main dishes budgeting for 150 each. The total budget is $1,000 total (coming from the organization that typically feeds the community). This doesn’t include cookware or eating utensils, because they will be provided. Students must communicate with the other groups to see what their portion of the meal’s estimated budget will be. The students will then have a group discussion about the costs of food as far as they’ve seen and discuss why so many people may be food insecure.

After the food details are taken care of, students will need to advertise the event to the homeless and food insecure people in the community. Each group will make a poster advertising what the event is, who it is for, where it is, what time it starts, and needs to make it look inviting and attention grabbing. The posters will be copied and hung around the city, specifically around the area where they will serve the food, because that neighborhood will be the most likely area the people they will serve will see it. They will also post these posters onto community facebook pages using the class’s facebook page. The students will set up a GoFundMe account, writing the accounts mission statement together as a class as we talk about persuasive writing techniques, such as the use of ethos, pathos, and logos. Students will also make posters raising awareness for food insecurity and homelessness in the community. These posters should have statistics, have an emotional appeal, and have a QR code and link to the GoFundMe account created by the class to fund Loaves and Fishes, along with local homeless shelters and food banks. Students’ posters will also be copied and hung around the city in high traffic areas like malls and outside grocery stores. The students will also publish them online and share the GoFundMe account on the class social media accounts. Individually, students will need to come up with at least 3 meaningful interview questions (not what is your name or age) to ask the people they will be serving and eating with at the event, which will be used in an oral presentation at the end of the project. The interview questions must be pre-approved before the day of the event.

Finally, on the day of the event, students will go on a field trip to Loaves and Fishes where they will prepare their dishes by following their recipes with the help of the volunteers at the organization, and setting up the dining area. They will then serve the homeless/food insecure people who they will then be eating with and interviewing. Each student must interview at least 2 people, but they may interview more if they’d like. They will make a voicethread presentation about their interviews and their experiences serving food at a soup kitchen, which will be evaluated based on their reflections and language aspects such as comprehensibility. The posters and voice thread will be evaluated by rubrics and the worksheets containing math will be graded by the accuracy of the math. Everything else will be by completion. The students will also receive credit for attendance and active participation.