American Dream Multi-Genre Project
Primary Content Area: English III

Introduction
The American Dream multi-genre project is the final project for an American Literature class. The project examines the American Dream both in a contemporary and historical frame. Students explore how the use of historical documents and the creation of texts of different genres can expand our knowledge and understanding of an event, person, or art work (painting, sculpture, novel, architecture, collection of poetry, short stories, essays, music album). Multi-genre projects present multiple, even conflicting, perspectives on a topic in order to provide a rich context and present an aesthetically appealing product for an audience. Students choose a focus, and present a series of at least 10 documents to illustrate an argument about that topic. As part of their research, students are asked to find a relevant nonprofit agency at which to volunteer. Students are then to incorporate the experience into their work. For example, a student doing a project about the immigrant experience in America might volunteer at an immigrant rights nonprofit, and a student doing a project on John Steinbeck might volunteer at a library for unpublished writers.

Project Goals
- Students will write in different genres to convey their arguments.
- Students will present multiple perspectives on a topic in order to provide a rich context and present an aesthetically appealing product for an audience.
- Students will be able to incorporate various pieces into a coherent work.
- Students will locate and volunteer at community organizations relevant to their topics.
- Students will reflect on their experiences and perform self-evaluations.

Procedure/Project Sequence
1. Present the project assignment in class. The project is a culmination of the entire year studying American Literature.
2. Students select a focus—an event, a person, an art work, or a theme—related in some way to the American Dream.
3. Meet with students one-on-one or in small groups to discuss and approve the topic as well as potential service-learning sites.
4. Students perform original research and create a works cited page. They then develop their own 10+ works of varied genres.
5. Students participate in peer editing/review during class.
6. Students complete their service experience and integrate their experiences into their research.
7. Students perform a self-evaluation.
8. Students present their final project in class during final exam period.

Community Partner/Resources
Chicago Cares - www.chicagocares.org/
Idealist - www.idealist.org
Volunteer Match - www.volunteermatch.org/
Addendum

Standards
This project addresses the following Common Core State Standards:
RL.9.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
W.9.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Duration
Preparation: Studying the American Dream and choosing a theme within the topic; finding a community organization relevant to the topic
Action: Individual volunteer work at the chosen organization
Reflection: Incorporating the volunteer work and information about the organization into the project; in-class presentation of the complete project

Cross-Curricular Connections
Connections with many other classes including American History, Civics, and Environmental Science could be made with this project.