



University of
Massachusetts
Amherst

Increasing Student Participation Through Model United Nations

Item Type	article
Authors	LaBelle, Daniel
Download date	2026-03-08 10:11:57
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/22563

Project Overview

- Inviting at-risk and disinterested history students to join model UN
- Model UN offers a more hands on setting for learning and participating in historical scenarios
- Model UN offers students an opportunity to participate by choice and provides students with a worldview of history that is not present in U.S.I and U.S.II
- Model UN provides students with public speaking and active listening skills
- Model UN provides insight into world politics and the importance of political participation
- Students gain confidence working in a collaborative setting with their peers

The Students

- The students that are participating in my CSL project are made up of both my current and former student in my united states history classes (USI, USII).
- These students come from various backgrounds (ethnicity, race, age, socioeconomic economic status) and have differing abilities.
- The object of meeting with this students is to help them to develop an interests in history and in order to give them a wider view of our world.
- These students act as ambassadors for other students that want to understand the importance of history or want to see history through a more diverse lens in a collaborative setting, outside of the classroom.



Findings

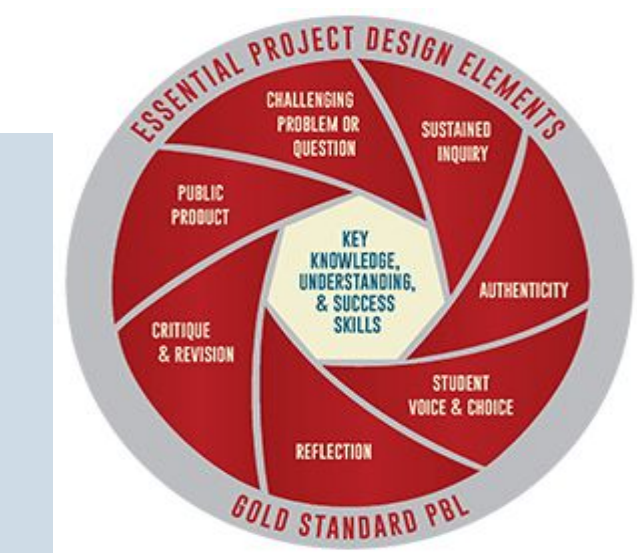
How does this project connect to my future teaching and learning goals?:

- Hands-on learning activities
- Incorporating a worldview and various perspectives in my classroom
- Group collaboration
- Emphasis on civics and politics (connecting history to student's lives)
- Developing leadership skills
- Instilling confidence in my students
- Using Model UN type simulations in my classroom



Connection to PBL

1. Challenging Problem or Question:
 - A. The challenging problem that was addressed in this project was how to increase student engagement and interest in history.
 - B. Model UN allows students to research the politics, economies, and culture of various countries and then challenges them to solve scenarios in a collaborative group setting.
2. Sustained Inquiry:
 - A. Students are constantly researching their country, working through mock scenarios, asking questions, and applying what they know in a simulated real world setting.
3. Authenticity:
 - A. Students gain political and civic experience.
 - B. Students gain an appreciation and understanding for the rights and liberties of people across the world.
4. Student Voice & Choice:
 - A. Once they are assigned a country, students are free to use whatever sources that they believe will increase their understanding and ability to debate on issues surrounding their country.
5. Reflection:
 - B. Students are asked to reflect on the process of researching and presenting at Model UN.
6. Critique & Revision:
 - C. Students provide feedback that will be used to improve the process for next year.
7. Public Product:
 - D. Students display their knowledge and research in front of high school students from all across Massachusetts and to collegiate Model UN chairmen.



ACES/Poverty Considerations

- The model UN trip to UMass was expensive, but through fundraising and generous local donations we were able to cover the cost for students who did not have the financial means to attend
- The setting of the conference may have dissuaded students who have experienced trauma from attending
 - It was a large conference
 - There were many people in small rooms all debating at once
 - It was a location away from their everyday comfort zone
- It was also difficult for some students to stay after school to attend meetings
 - No Late Bus
 - Students have after school jobs

Next Steps

Implementing a Model UN set up in my 10th grade U.S. History II class!

- Through simulations, have students get involved in Civic Engagement simulations
- The United Nations Association offers an App that adheres to the common core standards for grades 9-12. This offers me the challenge of implementing Model UN into my classroom
- PBS offers a lesson connected to a UN simulation that directly pertains to U.S. II



CONTACT



Daniel LaBelle
University of Massachusetts
Email: dan.labelle123@gmail.com

Sources:

1. <https://unausa.org/model-un/>
2. https://www.pbs.org/ralphbunche/education/edu_model.html



Supporting Literature

- Model UN builds Leadership skills, teamwork skills, and writing skills
- Model UN teaches students about the world which becomes increasingly important as the world continues to globalize
- Model UN connects students from all across Massachusetts and allows people to make lifelong friends