Illegal Drugs and Other Unhealthy Habits

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Education 200

Analyzing Schools

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Introduction

We believe in a curriculum that provides academic growth but also supports positive informed thinking so that children will be able to successfully navigate the path of adolescence into adulthood. Our mission was to design a curriculum that would inform children of the types and effects of popular drugs and other potentially destructive habits. This specific curriculum fulfills this mission by allowing children to learn information on the social and health effects that result from illicit substance abuse. This is an important lesson to teach all students, especially those who live in urban low-income neighborhoods which may allow for increased chance of exposure. The lesson plan will encompass many different skills and methods of learning including methods reflective of Robert Slavin's cooperative learning approach. The lesson plan will function to aid students in writing development as well as teach them a variety of research skills. As a highlight, students will also learn how to effectively work in groups to produce and present a poster board.

This curriculum was designed for a sixth grade classroom in the Hartford Public School District. Students in the sixth grade are at an effective age to learn in increased detail about the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs as these students are becoming socially and academically mature. These pubescent 6th graders are beginning to gain knowledge of the world around them with multiple influences including the media, home, family, and friends. Their brains are becoming more complex and their minds are starting to wander into wonder as the effects of peer pressure become a considerable factor. All things considered, it is necessary to inform the students of the potential social and health effects of illicit substances before they are introduced to them by other peers.
and lack the ability to make an informed decision. Sixth grade in the Hartford Public School District services students from low-income neighborhoods with increased awareness about these substances compared to most children their age; access to these substances may be more prevalent than anyone would hope making this curriculum an effective tool of prevention for them.

The drug awareness curriculum unit consists of five eighty minute class periods with interdisciplinary lessons incorporating writing development, science, and health. It was designed for a class with twenty-four students. The objectives for the class were chosen in accordance with the educational standards presented by the Connecticut Curriculum Frameworks provided for sixth grade students in the aforementioned subject areas. The objectives of our curriculum are outlined in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug Awareness Curriculum Objectives</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Learn to work in groups to create an informative poster board and present it to an audience (CTS 3.2 Writing)</td>
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<td>2. Examine through writing the influences that affect healthy decision making (CTS M 4.1-3, M 6.3 Health)</td>
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<td>3. Investigate using research tools including the library and internet to locate relevant information and construct opinions using data (CTS B 1,2,5,8 Science)</td>
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<td>4. Construct a three paragraph essay with proper diction and structure (CTS 4.1-2 Writing)</td>
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These objectives are met through a number of activities with a result of teaching students the effects of drugs. It is our goal to describe the lesson plan by providing a day by day breakdown describing the planned activities, their significance, and how they relate back to our objectives. When appropriate the objectives will be referred to as Objective, followed by its associated number.
Lesson Plan and Activities

Day One: Monday

Day one will function as an introduction to the entire curriculum. At the beginning of the lesson, we suggest playing a drug awareness video of your choice that may relate to your students. One that we believed was particularly relevant and kid friendly is a seven minute commercial entitled “They Said... They Lied.” This video provides insights into peer pressure and provides an excellent example of how what is said about these drugs usually doesn’t correlate to the actual results of use. After the video has ended, students will be guided into a general conversation about what they know about drugs. This conversation is meant to be broad in that we want the children’s perceptions and knowledge to be brought to light. This discussion will be guided by the teacher in order to prevent wasted time discussing personal experiences. It should function as a brainstorming session to name drugs, some known effects, and other ideals while the teacher takes notes on the board providing insight and direction when necessary. This portion of the lesson should take no longer than 25 minutes.

After the discussion, the week’s assignments should be briefly explained with a particular focus on the poster board presentation. The teacher should provide an example of the poster board presentation using the substance caffeine that fulfills the guidelines presented. This will make clear your expectations and give an excellent example of what they should strive to complete. Students will work on these presentations throughout the week in order to fulfill Objective 1 by the end of the week. Our guidelines for a poster board are attached at the end of this document. Students should then be divided into six groups of four. Groups are assigned by the teacher in order to strategically place students in effective
and fair groups. Research topics will be assigned randomly by having one person from each group pull a number from a hat. Each number will correlate to one of six well known substances including tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine, and heroin but can be changed as you see fit. After they have their group assignments, as well as the substance on which they will present, provide students with the “Drugs and Your Body” vocabulary handout attached to this document. This will function to provide students with relevant vocabulary essential to their research and the description of their substance. After students briefly review the worksheet in the groups, the teacher should go through the vocabulary words and provide the appropriate definitions. This portion should take no longer than 30 minutes.

This section should be followed by the presentation of the first of four journal assignments which fulfill Objective 2. The journal assignments function to give students an opportunity to practice their writing and help organize their ideas before their final writing assignment at the end of the week. They will not be evaluated as critically on their journals as compared to the final assignment but this serves to get students writing; an important skill necessary in all areas of academia. These journal assignments include a prompt that has to be effectively answered using more than ten sentences. The first prompt is as follows, “Describe what you already know about your assigned drug. Is there anything particular you would like to know or clarify? Also think about and describe how family, friends, and school may affect decisions regarding healthy choices.” Although this is the homework assignment, the remainder of the period can be used to start it.
Day Two: Tuesday

Day two will function to complete Objective 3 in that it will begin in a library/computer lab with a lesson on how to properly use the library and internet as research tools. This will be accomplished by providing a worksheet that students will use during the lesson with instructions on how to use research tools in the library and questions/prompts to help them look up necessary things. Our prompts were taken from the information required in the poster board presentation and include the following questions:

1. What is the drug?
2. What are its effects?
3. Is the drug legal or illegal? Why?
4. Is there other relevant information in terms of history, use, production, etc.?

Before the actual research begins, students will be randomly assigned numbers correlating to the questions using the suggested method from day one. This will provide students not only with structure to complete the task but also gives them a sense of responsibility to their group. Changing the venue from the classroom to the lab or library provides an avenue to re-establish rules. We hope that being away from the classroom will encourage the effective use of time to answer the provided questions given that this is the only class time designated for research. In accordance with the idea of effective time use, a plethora of books should be chosen in advance and provided so that students can use this time effectively. After students have their particular question to be answered, their research may begin. The introduction of how to do the research and its relevance to their presentation should take twenty minutes allowing forty minutes to conduct research.
In the final 20 minutes, if all questions are effectively answered in the eyes of the teacher, groups may reconvene to share what they have discovered and start brainstorming ideas to develop their poster boards. If all questions aren’t effectively answered, this time may be used to conduct more research. This time frame should also include assigning and explaining tonight’s homework assignment, journal entry #2. The prompt for this entry is, “Describe your thoughts on how media and technology influence people’s health behaviors and decisions regarding drugs and alcohol.”

Day Three: Wednesday
On the third day of the lesson plan, the lesson begins by having the students get together in their groups. The students will then begin sharing amongst their groups what they discovered in their research in the style of Robert Slavin’s “Jigsaw” cooperative learning method. This method requires that each student research a piece of the information, become the “expert” in that area, and later teach it to the rest of their group. In this case, each student has become an expert on their specific question pertaining to the group’s assigned drug. Each student will take turns providing answers to the questions based on the research they have done. This is the time for information to be explained and collected so students can piece the information together to get the big picture. The group should take notes or fill out the rest of their worksheet to show that they, at a bare minimum, have all the information required for their presentation. After this, the students will then be given free reign to decide, as a group, which information they feel is necessary to include on their poster. The poster requires information from all four sub-topics but doesn’t have to include all the information found in the personal research. The students will then create a draft of their poster on an 8” x 11” piece of paper. This draft is to allow
students to organize their thoughts as well as outline how they have chosen to display them. This should take no longer than 35 minutes.

The teacher will have to approve all drafts and will offer advice and guidance when necessary. After a group’s draft has been approved, groups will begin constructing their actual poster boards together using given art supplies for the remainder of the class. Before class is over make sure to assign and discuss briefly journal entry #3. The prompt for this assignment is, “Predict how the decisions you make about healthy behavior and choices regarding drugs and/or alcohol have consequences for yourself and others.”

Day Four: Thursday

Day four provides a particular highlight to the curriculum as the lesson will begin with a guest speaker from the Hispanic Health Council. The HHC representative will begin the lesson with a presentation that will provide a brief overview on the children’s assigned drugs and afterwards lead a discussion about making informed, responsible, healthy choices. Bringing an outsider into the classroom serves multiple purposes. The most important being that the representative, practiced in presenting on the subject of illicit substances, provides the entire class with accurate information pertaining to the subject of the curriculum. Furthermore, their presentation on the subject would undoubtedly be more entertaining and informative than a presentation from the teacher. A common scenario in elementary school classrooms is students become bored with listening to the same teacher with the same teaching style for weeks on end. A guest speaker will hopefully spark student interest and provide a change from the normal routine students experience throughout the year. Along with a different voice, students will see an example of a good presentation on their topic. This is should be an excellent educational experience where the
entire class, including the teacher, can take part in learning. The presenter will be given 45 minutes of the lesson for their presentation and discussion.

The remaining 35 minutes will be used to put the final touches on the poster boards and also for the groups to practice presenting the required information as a team. During this time, the teacher will be walking around the room and giving feedback on each presentation. This time is designated for each group to perfect their posters and presentations. Poster boards must be completed before the end of this class period. The final journal entry is assigned with the following prompt, “Reflect on the speaker from today’s class. Include three interesting facts and your feelings about what you heard and learned today.”

*Day Five: Friday*

The last day of the week-long curriculum will begin with students continuing to practice their presentations with their group for the first 20-25 minutes. This additional practice will hopefully allow students to shake some of the nervousness and butterflies associated with talking before an audience. The practice session will be followed by each group’s presentation providing the necessary information on their respective drugs and explaining the message/theme of their poster board. Each group will be given 3-5 minutes for their presentation, then 2 minutes for questions afterwards. Poster boards will be collected after each presentation. If the assignment is done correctly, these posters then can be hung in the hallways of the school to promote drug awareness to other students. Posting the boards for other students in the school was a decision made in accordance with curriculum reformist James Bank’s ideas of an educational experience that promotes social
action. Although small scale, the gesture will function as baby steps toward getting students involved and invested in their school community.

After each group has presented, there will be an open forum discussion, much like that of the first day, in which we will discuss what was learned throughout the week. The teacher will guide this conversation as before and notes should be taken. At this point, corrected journal entries will be returned. The journal response from the first discussion should provide students a source of comparison to the knowledge they have gained and how the curriculum has changed their initial perceptions. This should take approximately 15 minutes.

After the discussion, the final writing assignment will be handed out. The final essay fulfills Objective 4 requiring students to write an organized three-paragraph (18 sentences) essay with good grammar and diction to the following prompt: “Describe what you have learned this week from our lesson on drugs and other unhealthy habits.” Students will be advised to draw from the week’s assignments and experiences including their journals, research, the presentation from our guest speaker, and the presentations of their classmates. This will allow students to explain what they have retained from the curriculum while developing their grammar and writing skills. These papers will become a resource for the teacher to improve the curriculum based on the content of the student’s papers. As an additional bonus, this final paper provides an opportunity for preparation for the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) as students are expected to write an organized three paragraph essay for the exam. The writing assignment will be due after the weekend.
Evaluation

Journal Entries

Journal entries will graded loosely on a scale from 1 – 5. The grading will be based on whether students have followed the minimal guidelines of ten sentences and provide an answer to the proposed question. Effort goes a long way in this assignment and can function to provide students a chance for easy points. A score of five is given when students have exemplified substantial effort in effectively responding to the prompt using ten or more sentences. Students are not graded on grammar or diction, but well written entries can be a measure of increased effort. All journal assignments will be graded with respect to each student’s writing abilities.

Poster Board Presentation

Poster board presentations will also be graded on a scale from 1-5. This is the only assignment for which groups will receive a single grade. This assignment requires the use of a lot of classroom time but gives many different opportunities for each individual to display particular strengths to complete the task; public speaking, artistic expression, research skills, and organization of ideas, to name a few. A poster board will receive a five if all members participate to effectively answer the research questions, fulfill all guidelines of the poster board, and provide insight to the decisions made in developing their poster.
Final Paper

The final paper functions as a culmination to the curriculum allowing students to describe what they have learned from the week. This assignment will be graded using the same 5-point scale as the aforementioned assignments with a particular focus on good grammar and diction. A student will receive a five on the final paper if they are able to clearly organize what they have learned throughout the week using good grammar and diction incorporating knowledge obtained from the lessons and activities from the week.

Group Work

Group work will be evaluated on the same scale but will be determined by the students of each particular group. They will grade each person in their group based on their experiences working with them on a scale from one to five. They will also provide an evaluation grade for themselves. As a measure of group work students will be required to turn in their research worksheets, notes, and indicate the question they researched. Inclusion of this information may function to provide some indication to the teacher whether the student determined evaluations are fair. The teacher will combine the feedback from students with their own perceptions to provide a final evaluation.
Conclusion

In the end, this curriculum on drugs and other unhealthy substances fulfills all of its objectives as outlined in the lesson plan above. This curriculum was designed drawing on our experiences in our Hartford Public School placements incorporating knowledge learned in our Educational Studies 200 level course Analyzing Schools taught at Trinity College. We hope that our curriculum can be a resource for teaching students in the Hartford area the negative effects of drug and other illicit substances. Although we consider it inappropriate for the age group, this curriculum format can be repeated to promote sexual responsibility as well.

Work Cited

   <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&Q=320954&sdePNavCtr=#45443>

This week in class we will be studying the effects of legal and illegal controlled substances. These include the following: tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and ecstasy. You will be divided in groups to prepare a visual poster board on one of the above substances. You will be evaluated on your ability to be creative and fulfill all guidelines of the assignment. Your group will receive one grade so use your time wisely and work together for the best results. Your presentation will include answers to the following questions:

- What is the drug? Is it natural? Is it a stimulant or depressant?
- What are the effects of this drug?
- Is it legal or illegal? Why?
- Is there any other pertinent information on its history, use, production, etc.?

Furthermore, the presentation should have an underlying message or theme that will function to supplement the information presented. Examples include:

- How to say no.
- Avoiding peer pressure.
- The dangers of use.
- A theme of your choice after approval by the teacher.

It is probably wise to consider what information you want to present before starting the poster board. Also consider creative ways to display your message. The goal of the assignment is for you to teach information you gathered about your substance to your fellow classmates. The information should be presented in an organized manner and all decisions in the presentation of the information must be explained. Don’t be afraid to go beyond the expectations. Increased effort will be evident in your final grade.

Checklist

___ All students contributed in the presentation of the information
___ Followed guidelines and answered posed questions.
___ Poster board is complete with all choices explained
___ All students contributed to the research of the topic
___ Students demonstrate that they have learned from the assignment
# Drugs And Your Body

How much do you know about these words? Mark your answers with an X.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>I know what this word means.</th>
<th>I have seen or heard this word.</th>
<th>I don't know what this word means.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>drug</td>
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<td>side effect</td>
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<td>stimulant</td>
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<td>caffeine</td>
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<td>depressant</td>
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<td>drug abuse</td>
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<td>addiction</td>
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<td>inhalants</td>
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<td>hallucinogen</td>
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<td>smokeless tobacco</td>
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<td>nicotine</td>
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<td>alcohol</td>
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<td>intoxicated</td>
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<td>alcoholic</td>
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<td>alcoholism</td>
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Put a check (√) in the box after you complete each task.
- Practice saying each science word out loud.
- Spell each science word out loud.
- Write a sentence for each vocabulary word you know.

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**Notes for Home**  Your child practiced writing and spelling the science vocabulary words.

**Home Activity:** Ask your child to use the science words in oral sentences.
Writing Assignments for
Drugs and Other Unhealthy Habits Curriculum

Journal Entry #

Write 10 or more sentences in response to the prompt below

1. Describe what you already know about your assigned drug. Is there anything particular you would like to know or clarify? Also think about and describe how family, friends, and school may affect decisions regarding healthy choices.

2. How do you think media and technology influence people's health behaviors and decisions regarding drug and alcohol use?

3. Predict how the decisions you make about healthy behavior and choices regarding drugs and/or alcohol have consequences for yourself and others.

4. Reflect on the speaker from today's class. Include three interesting facts and your feelings about what you heard and learned today.

Final Writing Assignment

Drawing from the multiple activities and lessons this week, write a minimum of three paragraphs or 18 sentences using correct grammar and diction to describe what you learned about drugs and other unhealthy substances. Think about how your perceptions have changed, have they? Did you find the information interesting or useful? Edit your papers carefully using the corrected journal entries as a guide to eliminate common mistakes.