Make Our School Playground Better!

Successful businessman Lindsay Fox once said, "If you believe you can make a difference, then you will make a difference. Believe in yourself, your family, and your community, and you will win." You and your classmates are a school family that is setting out to make a difference. Together, we will win by making our school a better place for everyone. In class, we have been learning about writing to persuade an audience. You have been asked to think about problems with your school and ways your school could be improved. The class has decided to help the school playground solve its problems with litter, graffiti, and overall appearance. So, let's get to work!

Project Tasks

1. First, in groups of four, investigate the playground for the problem you would like to target. Recording your observations of the problems in the playground using the "Observation Guide" will achieve this goal.

2. Next, your group needs to agree on the one problem you believe you could fix. Obtain the digital camera from the teacher to take pictures of the problem you have decided to focus on.

3. You will brainstorm with your group possible solutions to that problem. Your group will then research the solutions listed. Interview teachers and students in your school to get their points of view on the problem you are addressing. Record your questions and answers on the "Interviewing Guide" (page 134).

4. Design a new playground, which implements your solution. The design should include four elements of a new playground (for example, gardens, equipment, play areas, and trash receptacles). Include the design in your presentation. Create your design using digital photography, a model, or a sketch.

5. You will know you are finished with your research when you are able to put the following things into the presentation.

    - Problems with the school playground, including evidence
    - Your solution to the problems
    - A point of view from a teacher at the school
    - Points of view from students at the school
    - A plan to implement the solution
    - The cost for implementing the solution
    - A design of a new playground incorporating your solution to the problems

Keep record of these questions and prompts throughout the project using the "Task Sheet" (page 135).

6. You can choose what program to use to create your presentation. I would suggest two programs you have practiced with in the library and the computer lab: Animoto (https://animoto.com) and Prezi (https://prezi.com). However, your group can use another electronic format for your multimedia presentation that I (the teacher) approve.

7. Once you have completed your presentation, save and email the link to me. I will then embed the videos or presentations in the classroom blog. I will arrange for the principal to come to the classroom so each group can present its project. It is your job to convince the principal that your solution needs to be implemented.

Use this form to investigate the playground for the problems that you observe. Record observations for four different problems of our school playground.

Observation Guide

Problem 1: _____

Describe the problem. List three or more details about the problem.

_____

_____

_____

Problem 2: _____

Describe the problem. List three or more details about the problem.

_____

_____

_____

Problem 3: _____

Describe the problem. List three or more details about the problem.

_____

_____

_____

Problem 4: _____

Describe the problem. List three or more details about the problem.

_____

_____

_____

What are the challenges of these problems?

Use this form to plan and conduct your interview.

Interviewing Guide

Before the Interview

Person's name: _____

Date: _____

Purpose of interview: _____

_____

_____

Questions I Want to Ask

Question: _____

Answer: _____

_____

_____

Question: _____

Answer: _____

_____

_____

Question: _____

Answer: _____

_____

_____

After the Interview

What did you learn? (Draw conclusions.)

_____

_____

_____

Complete this form with your group throughout the project to help you create a strong solution and presentation.

Task Sheet

The problem with the school playground, including evidence:
Your solution to the problem:
A point of view from a teacher at the school:
Points of view from students at the school:
A plan to implement the solution:
The cost of implementing the solution:
A design of a new playground incorporating your solution to the problem:

Scoring Rubric

Acceptable student performance is level 3 or higher.

Objective 1: Students will design a new playground incorporating reasons that support the proposed solutions.				
	1 SIGNIFICANT REVISION NEEDED	**2 SOME REVISION NEEDED**	**3 PROFICIENT**	**4 EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS**
Evidence	Evidence of the problem is minimal with only one picture. No details are provided with the evidence.	Product contains some evidence of the problem with few details and contains only two pictures.	Product contains evidence and some details of the problem and contains three pictures.	Product contains evidence and details of the problem and contains four or more pictures.
Research and Solution	Product contains little research on a solution to the problem. No teacher or other students' points of view are included. There is no information on how the solution could be implemented.	Product contains some research on a solution to the problem. No teacher or other students' points of view are included. Product contains little information on how the solution could be implemented.	Product contains research on a solution to implement to solve the problem. Teacher and other students' points of view are included. Product contains some information on how the solution could be implemented.	Product contains thorough research on a solution to implement to solve the problem. Points of view from a teacher and other students in the school are included. Product contains information on how the solution could be implemented.
Playground Design	Product does not contain a playground design for the presentation.	Product contains a design with little detail but leaves a solution out of the design.	Product contains a somewhat detailed design of a new playground with a solution included.	Product contains a detailed design of a new playground with a solution included.

Objective 2: Students will create a multimedia project (using Prezi, Animoto, or another tool) to present to their principal showing the problems they found with their school playground and possible solutions.

	1 SIGNIFICANT REVISION NEEDED	2 SOME REVISION NEEDED	3 PROFICIENT	4 EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS
Originality	Presentation is a rehash of other people's ideas or graphics. It shows very little attempt at original thought.	Presentation shows an attempt at originality and inventiveness in one or two areas.	Presentation shows some originality and inventiveness. The content and ideas are presented in an interesting way.	Presentation shows considerable originality and inventiveness. The content and ideas are presented in a unique and interesting way.
Effectiveness	Presentation is lacking several key details and has inaccuracies that make it poor at persuading the audience.	Presentation is missing at least two key details. It is incomplete in persuading the audience.	Presentation includes most material needed to gain a comfortable understanding of the problem and chosen solutions but is lacking one or two key details. It is adequate at persuading the audience.	Presentation includes all material needed to gain a comfortable understanding of the problem and chosen solutions. It is highly effective at persuading the audience.
Presentation	Delivery is not smooth, and the audience's attention is often lost.	Delivery is not smooth but able to maintain the audience's interest most of the time.	Presentation was rehearsed and has a fairly smooth delivery that holds the audience's attention most of the time.	Presentation was well rehearsed and has a smooth delivery that holds the audience's attention.
Technology Use	Product makes use of font, color, graphics, effects, and such, but these distract from the presentation's content. There is no audio use. Transitions are a distraction to the content.	Product makes use of font, color, graphics, effects, and such, but occasionally these distract from the presentation. There is no audio use. Transitions distract from the presentation.	Product makes good use of font, color, graphics, effects, and such to enhance the presentation. There is good use of audio. There is good use of transitions.	Product makes excellent use of font, color, graphics, effects, and such to enhance the presentation. There is excellent use of audio. There is excellent use of transitions.