Grade 6 - Magazine Inquiry

Rationale

The rationale behind this project is to create an ELA Inquiry unit that provides students with several opportunities to democratically choose how they would like to pursue their own ELA learning in a constructivist classroom environment.

The creation of a collaborative magazine will allow for several disciplines based inquiry rubric to be accomplished while providing projects that fit within Gardner's multiple intelligences, including use of illustrative, digital media and kinaesthetic texts.

Contextual Outline

The Magazine Inquiry Unit is designed to fit within the Grade 6 Alberta Education curriculum. This project will be applied within a school that has a moderate-to-high familiarity with the Inquiry Method of learning (some modifications could be made to accommodate schools/classes with low exposure to inquiry). The school culture places a high value on literacy and social engagement through partnership with community organizations. This school is located in an urban centre and has access to a strong creative arts industry. The Magazine Inquiry Project would begin in October and have a projected completion around mid/late November (6-8 week timeline).

Goals

There are several goals inherent in this inquiry project that meet Alberta Program of Study requirement for ELA curriculum. A pedagogical goal within this project is to help develop a love of ELA competencies in students that connects to their community and personal environments. The concept of using magazines as catalysts for idea generation as well as a summative assessment goal encourages students to view essays, magazine articles, current events and contextualized reporting as viable sources for reading, critical reflections, personal composition of articles and socio-cultural awareness.

The structure of this inquiry project will allow for:
     - variety and creative space for individuated development of quality comprehension, communication and writing skills; and,
     - student opportunity to construct multiple texts in their own "voice" and be able to connect with other student's creative voices.

General Outcomes

Students will listen, speak, write, view and respond: **to explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences; to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts; to manage ideas and information; to enhance the clarity and artistry of communication; and to respect, support and collaborate with others**

Alberta Education, Program of Studies: English Language Outcomes

This inquiry project should provide a broad enough ELA landscape to accommodate all five of the ELA General Outcomes *(See Appendix A).* The instructor of this course must be familiar with and refer to all five general outcomes of the PoS in order to ensure that each student-generate project within the Magazine Inquiry connects directly to general and specific learner outcomes in a sufficient manner.

Big Ideas	Understandings Students will understand and appreciate	Essential Questions
Collaborative Texts are powerful	Creating collaborative texts that are powerful involves a variety of individual/group contributions that encourage people to explore, comprehend and respond to many ideas, feelings and experiences	In what ways do working together on a magazine make collaborative writing easier/ difficult or better/worse quality of project?
Variety of Writing Styles and Texts	Within one collaborative text their can be a wide variety of styles and types of text that each fulfill a specific purpose	In what ways do all parts of a magazine work together for the benefit of the whole?
Writing for an Audience	The quality, tone and conventions of creating texts changes when there is an authentic audience	Why do different kinds of articles interest different people? How should I write to "capture" my audience?
Every Writer has their own Voice	Every person has their own unique way of expressing their thoughts, ideas and feelings: their voice. Creation of collaborative texts is one way to identify, apply and refine one's own textual voice	What is my unique style and why does it make my work interesting?

If Students understand and appreciate that (…) then they will be able to :	
Creating collaborative texts that are powerful involves a variety of individual/group contributions that encourage people to explore, comprehend and respond to many ideas, feelings and experiences	Interpret texts critically to evaluate tone, meaning, ideas and experience
	Critically engage and respond to a variety of print, visual and digital texts to determine the author's intended meaning
	Compare/Contrast opinions and ideas in an emphatic and productive manner in order to generate your own opinions on a specific issues or topic
Within one collaborative text their can be a wide variety of styles and types of text that each fulfill a specific purpose	Invent, apply, perform and produce unique texts to a collaborative project while recognizing how it contributes to the whole.
	Interpret and translate the intended meaning of oral, print and media texts
The quality, tone and conventions of creating texts changes when there is an authentic audience	Assume role of the audience to consider the effectiveness how they are communicating through their text.
	Design text(s) that adjust literary conventions and tone in order to best express content.
Every person has their own unique way of expressing their thoughts, ideas and feelings: their voice. Creation of collaborative texts is one way to identify, apply and refine one's own textual voice	Assess their ability to communicate with their own creative voice.
	Consider opinions and perspective presented in the work of their peers and provide meaningful feedback

Formative Assessments	
Ongoing Documentation	Students will be collecting and archiving (digitally and physically) draft documents, notes, survey and support materials that were used for the creation of their text(s)
Feedback Loops	Students will participate in regular peer, self and mentor feedback opportunities which allow them to
Quality of Research	Students will be regularly challenged to consider the accuracy and effectiveness of their research skills, collection of information and applicability to their topic.

Summative Assessment #1	
Formal Feedback Students will participate in 2 formal feedback assignments that will partner them up with another person/group. Students will use a feedback template to provide specific, critical and valuable feedback to their peers with the express intention to support and refine the work.	Understanding #1, 3 & 4 Respect, Support and Collaborate (Gen. Outcome 5) Enhance the clarity and artistry of communication (Gen. Outcome 4)
Summative Assessment #2	
Written Reflection Students will write a personal reflection related to the Magazine Inquiry project that touches upon: their article(s)/contribution, the experience of collaboration, participation with member of the wider community, the final product. This may be an open-ended reflection or guided questions	Understanding #1 - 4 Comprehend and Respond (Gen. Outcome 2) Respect, Support and Collaborate (Gen. Outcome 5)
Summative Assessment #3	
Article Contribution(s) Students will be assessed comprehensively on the their individual and or group article contribution(s). Attention will be given to voice, clarity, organization, effective use of chosen text(s). Group projects will require additional documentation of individual contributions, feedback and self/group assessments	Understanding #1 - 4 Explore thoughts and ideas (Gen. Outcome 1) Comprehend and respond to texts (Gen. Outcome 2) Manage ideas and information (Gen. Outcome 3) Enhance Clarity and artistry of communication (Gen. Outcome 4) *For groups:* Respect, support and collaborate (Gen. Outcome 5)

Differentiated Learning

ELA provides extensive opportunity for differentiated learning, especially within an inquiry unit framework. Students with learning disabilities and/or giftedness will be able to create unique contributions to the collaborative magazine based on their abilities, areas of interest, desire to work independently or in a group, as well as through multi-modal textual creation. Some examples of differentiated learning are:

- **Gifted Learners:** May choose to write a longer research essay on an interesting topic. He/ She would be responsible to self-evaluate their work as well as work with a journalist mentor to refine their writing and voice for their audience.
- **ADHD Learner:** A student who thrives in a kinaesthetic environment would be able to create a sensory-visual text through videotaping a dramatization of an event, live action report,

sample of an "upcoming" arts & cultural event. Visual texts will be added to the online magazine as well incorporated into the published text through QR Codes.

- **Cognitive Delay:** Students with a cognitive delays are able to identify a topic that interests them and design a multimodal method to share with the community audience according to their ability. They may enjoy creating illustrations, comics, small fact boxes, assist with the publication/layout team, work with a scribe to generate their own opinion or human interest article connected to a self-generated topic.

Given the desired results and the targeting performances, what kinds of instructional approaches, resources, and experiences are required to achieve those results?	
Creating collaborative texts that are powerful involves a variety of individual/group contributions that encourage people to explore, comprehend and respond to many ideas, feelings and experiences	• Reflective writing/reading exercises using a variety of texts • Responsive "Observe, Wonder, Infer" exercises using a variety of texts • Scaffolding of skills related to individually chosen texts (i.e. crafting interview questions, journalist questioning methods, design layout exemplars) • Graphic organizers for content and layout • Mentors (Journalists, Publishers, Editors, Advertisers) • Peer review and peer editing
Within one collaborative text their can be a wide variety of styles and types of text that each fulfill a specific purpose	• Variety of student generated and reading level appropriate sample articles/magazines • Surveys of community reading preferences • Online e-magazines • iPad/Tablet Magazine samples
The quality, tone and conventions of creating texts changes when there is an authentic audience	• Physical resources for print copy • Digital resources for digital components • Audio/Visual resources for extension textual components • Determining who the audience is and how best to reach them
Every person has their own unique way of expressing their thoughts, ideas and feelings: their voice. Creation of collaborative texts is one way to identify, apply and refine one's own textual voice	• Seminar instruction from active authors, essayist, editors • Experimentation with textual voice • Brainstorming and archiving of "juicy" words and captivating phrases • S.T.E.A.L. exercises that help author show, not tell. • Excerpts from authors/journalists who exhibit unique stylistic voice

Key Terms/Concepts

Articles (Exposé, How To, Human Interest, Interview, Informative, Essay, Humour)

Editors (Art, Creative, Design, Picture, Copy)

Digital Media

Editor in Chief

Masthead

Left, Middle, Right Thirds Design

Typography

Quotations & Pull-Quotes

Cross-Curricular Opportunities

There are several cross-curricular opportunities presented in this inquiry unit due to the student generated content of the publication. In the nature of a comprehensive inquiry project it is difficult to draw concrete areas of cross-curricular learning, however, students are encouraged to build on prior knowledge and to connect their magazine publication to current events and issues of their community, leading to a natural connection for promoting and communicating other learning. Some key general areas of cross-curricular learning are:

- Promotion and/or introduction of democratic decision making in determining the components of the collaborative magazine.
- Democratic principles of student autonomous learning through student generated articles, content and publication.
- Connections to current events and local news (Social Studies) through article creation.
- Connections to concurrent science curriculum (Flight and Air & Aerodynamics) through archiving, promoting and communicating about the science of flight and air.

W H E R E T O	
W	Large storyboard layout (bulletin board) that visually maps the magazine contents. Colour code missing pieces of the magazine that may be overlooked (miscellany, table of contents, advertisements). Online blog to archive progress.
H	Bring in guest speakers about journalism and magazine creation/editing. Monetize the magazine and choose a charity for the proceeds. Invite charity to the magazine launch.
E	Share interesting articles on similar themes. Highlight contributions that exhibit mastery and/or growing competency. Connect magazine contributions to "real life" situations in the school or community. Democratic decision making and reflective conversations regarding issues.
R	Create a peer review system that help refine created texts. Partner each groups with parent/volunteer advisors in their chosen area of the projects (i.e., connect students doing interview with reporters, student designers with professional designers).
E	Provide ongoing opportunity to self-evaluation through formative feedback sheets.
T	Students can choose what type of text they would like to create (articles, blog, digital, illustration, etc) that contribute in some way to the magazine project. There is extensive opportunity for differentiated learning and modifications.
O	Sequencing of discussions and idea generation that builds an awareness of the conventions of magazine publication, developments in digital texts that allow for differentiated opportunities, and the inclusion of student organizers (visual and textual) that will assist in content organization.

Inquiry Unit Rubric

The Magazine Inquiry Unit design consistently fits within the Galileo Research Organization's *"Discipline-Based Inquiry Rubric"* at either the "Developing" or "Accomplished" categories. Some key areas of "accomplished" inquiry design are:

AUTHENTICITY

This project creates opportunities to create or produce something that contributes knowledge while requiring a complex array of roles and diverse perspectives. This inquiry extends outside of the school and is mapped to school curriculum.

ACADEMIC RIGOUR

The inquiry leads students to build deeper knowledge and understanding through offering a menu of approaches organized around the topic. Students are encouraged to develop critical thinking skills related to evidence, viewpoint, supposition, connection and significance.

ASSESSMENT

Ongoing assessment is designed into the inquiry project to provide formative support through teacher, peer and self-evaluation. Assessment guides learning. Students become co-regulators of learning to determine next steps and organizational strategies. Outside individuals are involved in assessment.

BEYOND THE SCHOOL

This inquiry is grounded in real life concerns and extends past the school community as a way to support community organizations through awareness and donations.

APPROPRIATE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology is a key element of this inquiry project through the integration of publishing, digital media and communication technologies to education and complete the magazine. Students are tasked with choosing appropriate technology for their contributions as well as learning new technologies related to self-publication. A digital presence and archive provides an online audience and communication platform.

ACTIVE EXPLORATION

In order to complete the project each student (or student working group) will be required to explore ideas through engagement with several types of audiences and resources ranging from data collection, interviews, design layout, media research, and communication.

CONNECTING WITH EXPERIENCE

In order to best model the publication of a magazine students will have the opportunity to learning from established publishers and authors about the process of creating a magazine. They will have opportunities to work one on one with adults in the publishing industry as a resource person/mentor.

ELABORATED COMMUNICATION

Students will be given several opportunities to strengthen their oral, written, visual and performance communication through this project. Apart from the final product of a completed magazine, student will have individual components that will require them to consider audience, interviewing skills, visual performance, and developing their own "voice".

Resources Required

Exemplar Magazines	Audio-Video Equipment
Laptops / Tablets / Computers	Graphic Organizers
Design Books	Financial Support (Celebration & printing)
Publication Mentors (Authors, Editors, etc)	Community Mentors (Review, interviews, etc)
Inquiry Journals	Parent Support (Off-site research/interviews)

Summative Assessment Rubrics

ASSESSMENT #1 : FORMAL FEEDBACK

Category	Descriptive Question	Working towards Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
Enhance & Improve	Was the feedback offered constructive/ helpful for your peer?	Feedback was not helpful or somewhat helpful to enhance or improve work	Feedback was helpful for peer to enhance and improve work	Feedback was helpful for peer. To enhance and improve work. Peer's work reflected changes based on feedback.
Evaluative/ Accurate	Was the feedback offered a critical evaluation of the work? Was it accurate?	Feedback did not consistently evaluate the work accurately and with critical evaluation	Feedback was consistently accurate and a fair evaluation of the work	Feedback was communicated accurately and with a high degree of critical evaluation
Attitude	Was the feedback communicated in a positive way?	Feedback was not communicated positively	Feedback was communicated positively	Feedback was communicated positively with empathy and encouragement
Description	Was the feedback communicated using specific and descriptive comments?	Feedback was not consistently specific and descriptively based on the work	Feedback was consistently specific and descriptively based on the work	Feedback was communicated with detailed description showing high degree of attention to the work.

ASSESSMENT #2: WRITTEN REFLECTION

Category	Exceeds Standard	Meets Standard	Working towards Standard	Needs support to work to standard
Reflection	Wrote about what was learned from work on inquiry project. Wrote explicitly about how thoughts may have changed, questions still remaining, and what were important understandings	Wrote clearly about what was learned from inquiry project experience. Some inferences about changed thoughts, remaining questions and important understandings	Had difficulty writing about what was learned from inquiry project. Few inferences about changed thoughts, ideas or understandings	Did not write about what was learned from inquiry project experience
Metacognition (Thinking about Thinking)	Fully explained how the inquiry project and process of creating texts went. Analyzed what went well and what could be done differently or better	Explained how the inquiry project and process of creating texts went. Wrote about how it could be improved.	Tried to describe how the inquiry project went. Made inferences about how it could be improved	Did not describe how the inquiry project went. Did not think about how it could be improved
Conventions	Followed standard writing conventions so that audiences can understand writing. Strong organization of thoughts and ideas.	Followed standard writing conventions so that most audiences can understand writing. Good organization of thoughts and ideas.	Inconsistently followed standard writing conventions. Had difficultly organizing thoughts and ideas to communicate with audience	Often did not follow standard writing conventions. Poor/ no organization of thoughts and ideas
Collaboration	Explicitly wrote about the experience of creating a collaborative text. Articulated understanding of multiple role within small groups and within the larger project community	Wrote about the experience of creating a collaborative text from within a single perspective. Focused on their own role and contribution.	Wrote inferences about the experience of creating a collaborative text.	Did not describe the experience of creating a collaborative text.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT #3 : ARTICLE CONTRIBUTION(S)

Category	Exceeds Standard	Fully Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Working towards Standard
Comprehension of key ideas and details	• Clear purpose • Writes using own words and language • Uses multiple sources/ideas	• Clear purpose • Stays on topic • Accurate details & examples • Write using own words	• Purpose inconsistent • some details with inconsistent accuracy	• Unclear Purpose • Some details may have been copied • Poor accuracy with details/ information
Choice of Text / Style ‐ Impact of chosen text ‐ use of unique features	• Choice of multimodal text provided exceptional impact • Use of technology very effective	• Choice of multimodal text provided good impact • Use of technology effective	• Choice of multimodal text had little effect on impact • Limited use of technology	• Choice of multimodal text had negative impact • Negative use of technology caused confusion.
Organization ‐ features ‐ organization & sequence ‐ conclusion	• Clearly organized and interesting • Effective introductions and conclusions • Effective use of titles, visuals, headings	• Clear introduction and conclusion • Good use of visuals, headings, titles • Organized and interesting	• Unclear introduction or conclusion • Some use of visuals, titles, headings • Organized	• Unclear introduction and conclusion • Few/no visuals, titles, headings. • No consistent organization
Use of Conventions ‐ spelling ‐ punctuation ‐ grammar	• Well written/ presented with attempts to use complex language	• Writing/ Presentation easy to understand with few errors	• Noticeable errors that may make writing/ presentation confusing	• Many errors that make writing/ presentation difficult to understand
Voice/Clarity - development of personalized style and ideas	• Use of expressive language that flows smoothly • Variety of sentences and/or styles of communication • Communication deeply aware of audience	• Variety of sentences and/or styles of communication • Use of expressive language • Aware of audience	• Inconsistent variety of sentences and/or styles • Language often simple • Inconsistent awareness of audience	• Language is simple and repetitive • Style is simple and repetitive • No/Little awareness of audience