

Classrooms with a Cause

Facilitator Guide



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What is *Classrooms with a Cause*? It...

- Introduces a step-by-step framework that connects students with a local/global issue that they identify (childhood hunger, mentoring, recycling, community gardening, and more.)
- Helps students and teachers apply knowledge gained in one or more content areas to address a specific issue area with a project strategy.
- Provides students with an opportunity to apply their learning and make an important difference in an issue they care about.
- Integrates 21st century "4 Cs" career and workforce readiness skills (Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Creativity and Innovation, Communication, Collaboration).



Note: The Student Guide is a **Word Document**; YSA encourages you to edit the guide to fit your class. If you chose the general template, remember to fill in the blank fields once your students have selected a cause.

How to Get Started:

Make sure you have downloaded the relevant *Classrooms with a Cause* Student Guide (**issue-specific**: Childhood Hunger, Mentoring, Recycling, or Community Gardening, or the **general template**). Decide whether your students will work in individually, in small groups, or as an entire class.

- For **individual** projects, whether you are fulfilling a service requirement for your school or preparing for an end-of-the-year capstone project, the Student Guide provides a step-by-step framework that will result in a meaningful service project.
- Optional - For **small groups or pairs**, give students roles and responsibilities (i.e. group leader, note taker, presenter, etc.)
- For **large groups**, build in opportunities for students to make large-group decisions and delegate.

During the first few days of your service project, the coming weeks may look intimidating, especially if this is your first service-learning experience, but YSA is here to help with every step of the way! In our experience, getting strong student buy-in early on is crucial to generating the momentum you need to ensure a positive service learning experience for everyone.

- Encourage students to think critically about the different topics you discuss to help students connect with their community's needs.
- Put things in perspective; keep the students thinking about next steps and ways to turn their ideas into meaningful action.
- Give your students something to react to. Keep an eye out for articles or videos about issues that your class could apply to their community.
- Don't hesitate to email sganske@ysa.org with questions, suggestions, or ideas, or visit <http://www.ysa.org/projects> to see what other teachers have done.

How to Build on Past Projects:

If your school has done service projects in the past, continuing the project this year is a great opportunity to create a sustainable program.

- On page 4 of the general template, fill in the blank fields with the appropriate information for the previous project.
- This page is designed to help your students take their project to a deeper level; we recommend using the page to help your students reflect on how they can improve or expand past projects.

Suggested Evaluation

4 Cs Rubrics:

4 Cs (Critical thinking and problem-solving, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity & Innovation) rubrics can be found at the end of the student edition of this curriculum.

- Each section of the rubrics includes the corresponding page in the Student Guide.
- Each page of the Student Guide includes a reminder to students to refer to the appropriate rubric, self-assess, and hand in the rubric for teacher/mentor assessment.
- YSA encourages you to adapt the rubrics to fit your project and complete the appropriate section of the rubric after each activity.

See the figure to the right for an example:

Communication				
Write about and speak about the student's project – to other students, the community, social and traditional media, and public officials.	See page:	Have you:	Rate your confidence in using this skill (5=high, 1=low).	Please have your teacher/mentor fill out this section:
	Page 12 (Contacting Issue Experts)	Listened to others and found chances to learn while having a positive attitude?	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Page 16-17 (Social Media: Tips and Tricks)	Communicated for many different ways including asking questions, sharing ideas, giving instructions, giving praise, and motivating others?	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Page 19 (Presentation Template)	Communicated thoughts and ideas in a way that everyone can understand through different ways of communicating such as speaking and writing?	1 2 3 4 5	Rubric

Classrooms with a Cause

Activity

☐ Check-in: Are you using **Communication Skills**? See page 22 for a full rubric.

Contacting Issue Experts

Issue experts can help you identify community needs and effective strategies and resources to address those needs; refine your project idea by providing feedback; and spread the word about your project.

On the *Contacting Issue Experts* page of the Student Guide, students identify, contact, and build partnerships with local experts on topics relevant to their project.

After this activity, the box highlighted in green above reminds them to evaluate their communication skills. On the 4Cs Rubrics page, the See Page: column (highlighted in red) guides students to the communication skill they should have used on the *Contacting Issue Experts* page.

Presentation to a Public Audience:

- Consider presenting to a public audience, which can include other classrooms in your school, parents, community partners, elected officials, etc., near the end of your project.
- The format is similar to a science fair, without the judging. It gives students an opportunity to either create awareness, or share the action that they took to address an issue in their community, while developing critical communications skills.
- The Presentation Rubric found on **page 19** of the Student Guide can be used to assess students' knowledge about the content they have learned at school, their knowledge about the selected issue area, and their skills to communicate their knowledge to others. The rubric is aligned to the Common Core Standards

Sample Timeline

A Classrooms with a Cause service project may be as short as 4 weeks or as long as two months, depending on your students and the nature of the project. The timeline below is one example of a broad range of potential project lengths.

	Activity	Student Guide Page(s)		Rubric for Each Page	
Week 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Hand out the Student Planning Guide. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify/talk about the cause. <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the 4Cs. <input type="checkbox"/> Read/discuss Measuring Impact page. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a plan to measure impact. <input type="checkbox"/> Connect the cause with what you learned in school this year. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete the <i>Classrooms with a Cause</i> Student Contract.	General Template	1-10	General Template	3: Creativity and Innovation 5-8: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
		Issue-specific	1-10	Issue-specific	2: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving 4: Creativity and Innovation 5-8: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
Week 2-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Contact Community Partners/Guest Speakers. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Check-In page. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Work Plan & Resources Checklist.	General Template	11-14	General Template	11: Communication 12: ALL 13-14: Collaboration
		Issue-specific	11-14	Issue-specific	11: Communication 12: ALL 13-14: Collaboration
Week 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Take Action!	General Template	15-17	General Template	15-16: Communication 17: Collaboration
		Issue-specific	15-17	Issue-specific	15-16: Communication 17: Collaboration
Week 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Present your project to the community. <input type="checkbox"/> Celebrate your work.	General Template	18-19	General Template	18: Communication
		Issue-specific	18-19	Issue-specific	18: Collaboration