

**PROJECT SMART PARTICIPANT TEAM REPORTS FOR FALL & SPRING SEMESTERS  
FOR OSWEGO HIGH SCHOOL WITH IHE SHARON KANE  
EDU 525 CREATING COLLABORATIVE SPACES FOR LEARNING**

Participant's Names:

**Matt Bock, Shawn Caroccio, Benjamin Hall, Kim Nelson**

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

Our intent is to strengthen the connection between the CTE programs (specifically the WBUC TV program) and the general education programs at Oswego High School. Our project will be built upon the foundation we set in our class with our WBUC team members. We will use the students' current knowledge of filming and creating segments to create different films that highlight classrooms (instruction and student successes) and the expectations at Oswego High School. Each team member will be assigned to a segment team to create short videos about the expectations at Oswego High School to be used on our Freshmen First Day next year. This will be a collaborative effort with faculty, staff, administrators, and students. The videos will be used to create consistency throughout the school, and to help freshmen become comfortable with school policies prior to the first day of school. Freshmen will also be exposed to the work that stems from our TV program at our school to increase the awareness of the typical general education student to all that CTE programs have to offer. There seems to be a disconnect between CTE and the core classes. Many students would benefit from participating in CTE programs, but never will because of a lack of awareness and a perceived stigma regarding CTE and CITI (BOCES). The final edited videos produced by the WBUC team will be based on the collaborative work we do with our students throughout the year.

Our project incorporates all four of the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes: embodied learning, communication, collaboration spaces, and change. The TV studio is a classroom/workspace that provides significant opportunities for students to **collaborate** with their team members, including other students, directors, and faculty, to produce shows of which the team can be proud. Weekly post-production meetings are held to provide positive feedback and constructive criticism about our shows. By holding these meetings, students, directors, and faculty work together to praise specific students who have stood out that week (in our class and in other classes), and to collectively discuss strategies that can be used to help improve performance for the following week. This is also a time to nominate teachers and students who are doing great work in other classes. This will foster collaboration not just among the WBUC team, but with our entire OHS community. This helps to **embody learning** by making team members self-aware of how others view their work to improve their own performances. It also will encourage students to be proud of their own work or that of their peers in their other classes so that WBUC team members are invited in to highlight successes. It encourages students to **communicate** by listening to others and making collective decisions on how they are going to approach the next show. By making these decisions together, the class is able to **change** their course of action by being flexible and by physically helping other team members at their workstations to learn new skills. It encourages mindfulness in how students and directors treat other team members and how they approach strategies to improve both individual and team performances.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

There are so many wonderful things that students and teachers are doing at Oswego High School that no one knows about. By highlighting different teachers, classrooms, and students, we hope to raise the awareness of the accomplishments, programs, and learning that is occurring at OHS. CTE programs, and specifically WBUC, are a wonderful resource and meet the needs of many students who do not feel like they belong in the typical

mainstream high school track. By increasing the connections, we hope to increase interest in CTE programs to better serve the student body at OHS.

This work is important because it is a team effort to collaborate with all members of OHS (faculty, staff, students, and administrators) to create consistency with our school's policies and to convey that information to all incoming freshmen on Freshmen First Day. It is important for current students to show future students the daily workings of our school so that our expectations are clear as well as to ensure that the incoming freshmen feel welcome, supported, hopeful, and enthused. It is also important to show incoming freshmen that all members of OHS work together to make the school a safe place for learning. It encourages upperclassmen to be mindful of helping freshmen as they learn to navigate the building and learn the policies and expectations of our school. By highlighting successes, students become mindful of finding the positive in people and sharing that with others. By using student-produced videos, our hope is to encourage students to join a CTE program.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

1. Early December 2017 (Kim): Seek approval from Patrick Wallace, OHS Principal, to use student-created videos on Freshmen First day for the 2018-2019 school year.
2. Early December 2017 (Kim/Matt): Lead an activity with our Project SMART class to start to increase teacher knowledge of the WBUC program and how it operates.
3. December 2017 (Kim/Matt/Ben/Shawn): Survey current freshmen to determine content of Freshmen First Day videos (in English classes)
4. December 2017 (Kim/Matt/Ben/Shawn): Survey current faculty/administrators/staff to determine content of Freshmen First Day videos (via email)
5. December 2017 (Ben): Start by coordinating with classroom teachers to allow the WBUC students to come in and film something that they would like to highlight that is occurring in their classroom.
6. December 2017 (Shawn): Accompany 10<sup>th</sup> grade students on a field trip to CITI and will highlight all that the CTE programs have to offer. He will also encourage them to ask their counselors any questions they have regarding CTE programs and consider them when scheduling their classes for next year.
7. December 2017/January 2018 (Ben): Survey a segment of the senior class and attempt to see why they chose or did not choose to take advantage of CTE classes while in high school. The intent will be to try to tailor our efforts to eliminate any perceived stigmas or biases towards CTE.
8. January 2018 (Kim/Matt/Ben/Shawn): Review feedback from surveys (from students, faculty, staff, and administrators).
9. January- April 2018 (Kim/Matt): Develop a new segment to be shown on WBUC that highlights what is going on in the classrooms, with students, etc. In addition, the segment will encourage students to ask their guidance counselors about CTE programs.
10. January 2018-April 2018 (Kim/Matt): WBUC team films shows and provides positive feedback and constructive criticisms to improve segments and shows through post-production meetings.
11. February 2018 (Shawn): Coordinate with guidance counselors to try to highlight what the CTE programs have to offer and try to encourage students who show an interest to incorporate CTE into their schedules for the 2018-2019 school year.
12. March-April 2018 (Ben/Shawn): Look at the number of students who select CTE programs (at OHS or CITI) for the 2018-2019 school year. They will gather the data and compare it to the previous year to identify any trends and hopefully see an increase in interest.
13. April 2018 (Kim/Matt): Meet with Mr. Wallace about format and design of video segments.

14. April 2018 (Matt/Shawn/Ben/Kim): Survey students and teachers to assess their reactions to the new programming we highlighted throughout our project on WBUC.
15. April/May 2018 (Kim/Matt): Assign Freshmen First Day video project to current WBUC student segment teams (discuss student ideas and filming); edit segments; WBUC production meeting/group conferences to watch segments and provide positive feedback/constructive criticisms.
16. May 2018 (Kim/Matt): Final edits of video segments
17. May 2018 (Matt/Shawn/Ben/Kim): Work collectively to analyze all the results of the project. Attempt to draw some useful conclusions and a plan of action for next year. The goal will be to continue to try to highlight student and teacher successes and all that CTE programs have to offer.

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

We will collect surveys from OHS students, faculty, staff, and administrators with feedback from past Freshmen First Days as well as suggestions for content for the 2018 Freshmen First Day video segments. This will directly inform the content of our 2018 Freshmen First Day video segments. This will help us to understand the needs of freshmen and how upperclassmen can help provide future freshmen with an easier transition into OHS as well as to help them understand the expectations at OHS.

We will conduct surveys of students, teachers, and guidance counselors in the spring to see what impact (if any) our project had on their awareness of what was occurring in classrooms, student success, and what CTE programs have to offer. We will also use scheduling data for next year to see if we may have generated any additional interest in CTE programs at OHS or at CITI. We will provide our results in our spring teacher and student learning report.

WBUC students will be assigned post-production feedback forms that will include positive feedback, constructive criticisms, and corrective strategies to continuously work collaboratively to improve our shows. Students will be held accountable for making the changes discussed during the post-production meetings to demonstrate their learning.

We will keep notes on our own observations throughout the process as well as note informal feedback we get from colleagues and administrators.

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

We will use the equipment in the TV studio to create our shows throughout the school year as well as the Freshmen First Day video segments. No costs will be incurred.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

Our action plan was carried out in the manner we laid it out for the most part. We gathered a great deal of feedback from students and faculty regarding the 2017 Freshman First Day and what they felt it was lacking or where there was confusion that could be addressed. WBUC students collaborated with the drama class to create a series of videos to be aired at the 2018 Freshmen First Day based on that feedback. We did decide that we would need to follow up after the Freshmen First Day in the fall of 2018 to try to reassess the impact/effect the videos that were created had on students. We also felt it would be better to get staff feedback immediately after the experience for more thorough analysis of the effectiveness of the videos.

One area that we felt was lacking was the goal of showcasing more of what was happening in classrooms around Oswego High School. We focused more on highlighting the CTE programs, producing the video segments for Freshmen First Day, and gathering input from stakeholders. For next year we would first reassess the effectiveness of the Freshmen First video segments and then move our focus on to highlighting exciting things happening in the building and promoting the CTE programs.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

We looked at the number of students who registered for Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses offered at CITI for the 2017-2018 school year (133) compared to the number of students who registered for these same courses for the 2018-2019 school year (135). After many students attended a field trip to explore options that are available at CITI, and after guidance counselors and English teachers at Oswego High School shared information about the TV Communications and Production elective with students, several more students have expressed that they would like to add these courses to their schedules for next school year. While these numbers show that there are a significant number of students enrolled in these classes, we wanted to see how we could make the goal of these programs more readily accessible to students who may be more interested and successful in career-based classes than traditional ones.

Many teachers do not know about the CTE programs offered both at CITI and at our school. A CTE program is described as “a two four-year formalized program of study in a specific industry area that prepares high school students for seamless transition into two-year or four-year college programs and/or entry level jobs. Students in a CTE Program fulfill rigorous and integrated instruction of academic and industry-specific content as well as work-based learning experiences like internships. By completing of CTE Program of Study, students not only receive their High School Regents Diploma, but also have an opportunity to pass industry-recognized certification or licensing examinations that lead to credentials, as evidence of their college and career readiness” (“Benefits of a CTE Program of Studies”). By learning more about the CTE programs offered at CITI and at Oswego High School, teachers are more likely to encourage students to follow a path that supports their interests in a specialized career.

Because many teachers and students were not familiar with the CTE program and given the recent publication of an NPR article titled “High-Paying Trade Jobs Sit Empty, While High School Grads Line Up For University” (April 2018) that reflects on the need for students to enter trade jobs after they graduate high school, we thought it was important for students and teachers to become familiar with the programs these institutions offer. We chose to use the WBUC student-produced television program (given that digital media technology is one career-based course offered at both CITI and OHS) as an example of this type of course and to disseminate information to the general population at OHS. Students currently in the TV Communications and Production courses produced segments that allowed them (and us) to collaborate with other teachers and students in the building to highlight exciting events and lessons (see attached links). WBUC students broadcasted these segments to OHS and to the Oswego community, which allowed people to see how this career-based class works. It also encouraged collaboration with our colleagues. Through the use of these segments, we hope to encourage even more students to enroll in CTE programs in the future (2019-2020 school year).

WBUC students, who collaborated with a drama class, produced segments to be featured during Oswego High School’s 2018 Freshmen First Day. The goal in creating these segments was to build consistency in how this information is disseminated to students through their teachers. This will allow students to receive the same information and will put less stress on teachers to make sure information is accurately shared with students during the allotted time on Freshmen First Day.

It seems as though more teachers are tuning into the daily morning announcements produced by the WBUC classes. In this way, it has fostered a more collegial relationship amongst teachers. More teachers are sharing what they are doing in their classrooms in order for us to be mindful of the wonderful lessons happening around

our school and to encourage one another. The segments and shows produced by WBUC students have also sparked conversations between students and the WBUC teachers and counselors, which will hopefully develop into higher enrollment in CTE courses in upcoming years.

**Sample Segments (School-Based):**

Oswego Unified Sports: <https://youtu.be/OSdq4i4mwYU>

Math Club Pi Day: <https://youtu.be/T-Q58yMWmMk>

ENL Segments: <https://youtu.be/33O-TrGr0Yw>

Key Club Door Decorating: <https://youtu.be/yELlmgENWeg>

Powder Puff Game: <https://youtu.be/lZfHZVWpdzA>

**Sample Segments (Freshman First):**

Lockers: <https://youtu.be/l8EY82jHEel>

Guidance Office: <https://youtu.be/BWmbhFdcMY0>

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_\_\_\_\_ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

Through the use of surveys, we learned that most students at Oswego High School plan to enter a two or four-year college upon graduation. However, we also found that some students plan to enter the workforce or are unsure of their future plans. Forty-two percent of the students we surveyed reported that they only knew a moderate amount about CTE programs offered at CITI and at Oswego High School, which often drove them away from enrolling in such programs. Seniors were surveyed about why they may or may not have chosen to enroll in these courses. The majority responded that they were unaware of many of the programs offered and/or that they did not realize that they could receive an Advanced Regents diploma, many with national recognition certifications and credentials.

Given this information, we wanted to create and disseminate information to more students. We also wanted to encourage work done by WBUC students to be its best in order to grow the program. By holding regular weekly post-production meetings with our current TV students, we were able to praise and constructively criticize students' work so that they were putting out their best work and enticing their peers to join them in our classes. Given recent conversations with our WBUC students, several of their peers have expressed their interest in joining the WBUC program in the 2018-2019 school year and/or registering for a career-related course at CITI.

“Benefits of a CTE Program of Study.” *New York City Career and Technical Education*. New York City Department of Education.

2015, <http://www.cte.nyc/site/content/benefits-cte-program-study>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2018.

Gross, Ashley, and Jon Marcus. “High-Paying Trade Jobs Sit Empty, While High School Grads Line Up For University.” *NPR*.

NPR Ed, 25 Apr. 2018,

<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2018/04/25/605092520/high-paying-trade-jobs-sit-empty-while-high-school-grads-line-up-for-university>. Accessed 27 Apr. 2018.

Participant's Name:

Heidi Sheffield

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

Last year my project, in part, focused on centering/meditation in my classroom. I will continue this work this year as I “fell down” last year when I surveyed students in the fall but not in the spring. I have already held collaborative fishbowl discussions with each English 10 that included discussion about mindfulness and the centering we have done. I value the input of my students in this aspect but all aspects as they are why I teach. It is crucial that we (students and teacher) work well together to move through the school year successfully. Success means passing English 10, but it means so much more than that. I want my students to be able to work collaboratively with each other and it is a work in progress. I work to help them build this skill throughout the academic year. Additionally, fishbowl discussion has also covered the use of therapy balls as seating in the classroom. I used them successfully when I taught 7<sup>th</sup> grade English in Hannibal. In the resources section of this report, I cover how I would like to possibly incorporate them into my 10<sup>th</sup> grade English classroom. This ongoing project connects to the course themes of embodied learning, collaboration, communication, and change.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

Mindfulness and collaboration are important life skills, workplace skills, and public-school skills. If I can help my students reach a better understanding and help foster more success working collaboratively as well as mindfully, they will leave better able to handle themselves and each other in life—wherever that takes them.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

Ongoing—notes by teacher, return to daily centering practice with self and students.

December, 2017—student led fishbowl discussions on mindfulness and therapy ball use in classrooms

January, 2018—first survey on centering and sharing of results with class discussion, possible student led pursuit of securing donated therapy balls for classroom seating

Spring, 2018—second survey on centering and sharing of results with class discussion

April-May: Write-up of findings and reflection. I will think about how I might share my experiences with a wider audience through an article or conference presentation.

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

Student learning will be documented through my notes, student centered fishbowl discussion, surveys and discussion on centering/mindfulness done with students. My learning is always ongoing through my observations, notes, and, most importantly, listening and hearing my students and the important things they share daily.

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

I would like to pursue some further sources for the meditation/centering we do—audio, books. Additionally, part of this centering relates to the use of therapy balls in the classroom. I am hoping some willing students will want to look into having therapy balls donated to our classroom for student use. I may request funding from Project SMART for some therapy balls.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

My plan did not change all that much as I followed through with my original action plan. I did not wind up securing any therapy balls. I had some students who were interested in pursuing obtaining some but did not actually follow through enough to get some for classroom use. I did survey these students about centering this spring as I did not last year.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

The centering has continued to be a beneficial addition to my classroom this year. Early on, students reported experiencing one or more of the followings during a typical school day:

Stress 61%  
Sadness 22%  
Anxiety 35%  
Depression 17%  
Anger 35%  
Fear 12%

After centering, I continued to find that students were able to attend to class better because they had a moment of quiet and stillness. I tried to vary the meditations to try to reach all students. Of course, I did have students who were not interested in centering, but they were respectful of their peers and sat quietly or doodled which is meditative in itself. I did have one class where the majority were not receptive to centering, so I abandoned the practice with that particular class as most did not participate in it. There have been times when I have not done centering for various reasons, but students always ask to do it which indicates that they see a benefit to it. Students seemed more focused and there seemed to be less restlessness after centering. The special education teacher who works with me in one class also observed that centering was beneficial.

As far as the meditations were concerned, I used a book called *Meditation Express* which contains one-minute meditations. I also played music as background sometimes. I generally kept the meditations to one or two minutes.

Since I was leading the meditation, I was always observing my students. I had to remind myself to participate too! It certainly helped me feel calmer and more focused when I did.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_\_\_\_\_ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

Early on, students were surveyed and reported the following:

78% of students who answered the survey reported they liked centering.

22% of students reported they did not like centering.

64% reported feeling calmer, more relaxed, and more focused after centering.

21% reported feeling the same after centering.

13% reported feeling tired after centering.

This spring, I surveyed students again and reported the following:

89% of students reported they liked centering.

11% of students reported they did not like centering.

Of the 89% who liked centering, they reported feeling calmer, more relaxed, and more focused after centering. A few in the three classes who did centering reported feeling the same after centering.

Students reported the following:

"It's quiet and you can calm down. I think it helps me a lot."

"I feel nice and relaxed."

"I enjoy the peace and quiet and hearing my breathing and heart rate."

"I feel good after I do it. I feel not as tired or stressed."

"I like the silence when everyone participates. It's really comforting and isn't overwhelming."

"I like that centering calms my thoughts and helps me start the day with peace."

"I feel more focused and alert."

"I like how it feels afterwards and how it's a change of pace from the rest of school."

"I feel very cleansed and relaxed after centering. I feel like I can learn and breathe better."

"The best part about centering is that I can just focus on myself."

This data shows the success of centering for the majority of students. It attends to the social and emotional learning of students. Centering allows students to go inward, have a moment of quiet, focus on themselves, try to let go of any strife they enter the classroom with, and come out it better able to focus on class as well as feel good about themselves. The classroom atmosphere was calmer as well depending on the day. Sometimes, students had issues that centering certainly didn't solve, but the daily practice gave them a quiet moment to reflect on themselves.

My observations concur with the student comments above; I felt a calmer atmosphere. We all need time to breathe and just be for our own mental health.

**Participant's Name:** Jill Huard-Burns

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

Test Anxiety can be an issue that can hinder performance on NYS Regents Exams. While some of my students (seniors) will be taking it for the first time, some of my students will be on their fourth attempt on the exam. This exam is considered to be a "High Stakes" exam. If these students don't pass this January, 2018, they will have to retake it in June; again, on a specific date and time. Students cannot graduate high school unless they pass this exam. I work with 15 seniors in this fall semester of 2017.

My Action: Objectives

Identify through a survey and factors that cause test anxiety for my students

Initiate an open dialogue with my students to get a better understanding of the anxieties for this exam

Collaborate on ways to ease anxiety

Create mindful spaces as students continue to prepare for the exam

Implement positive breathing techniques starting January 2, 2018

Incorporate positive mindset strategies while student continue to prepare for the exam

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

There is a need to create collaborative spaces and mindfulness to address test anxiety in AIS classes as it applies to the NYS ELA Regents. The NYS English Regents as well as other NYS Regents are requirements for high



school graduation. Regents exams are given only three times per year. Knowing this limitation, it is possible for students to feel enormous pressure to pass this "High Stakes" exam(s).

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

Fall Semester:

Step 1 - Draft a survey as it relates to anxieties students may feel before, during, and after the Exam

Step 2 - Administer the survey to students currently taking AIS for ELA Regents

Step 3 - Collect and tally the data from all my students

Step 4 - Analyze the data

Step 5 - Present findings

Plan to administer in January 2nd/3rd, approximately three weeks from the NYS ELA Regents Exam

Repeat in the beginning of Spring Semester

These steps will be performed by Jill Huard-Burns

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

The data collected will show the impact of English Regents Exam on teacher learning by obtaining a better understanding of students' anxieties before, during, and after taking the NYS Regents, and how to best communicate their concerns.

The data collected will show the impact on student learning by implementing testing and strategies for behavioral change for the upcoming English Regents' Exam.

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

New York State School Boards Association (NYASP) (2015). Anxious for Success: High Anxiety in New York's Schools. Retrieved from [www.nyssba.org/news/.../anxious-for-success-high-anxiety-in-new-york-s-schools/](http://www.nyssba.org/news/.../anxious-for-success-high-anxiety-in-new-york-s-schools/).

Questionnaire on Attitudes Toward Examination [www.psych.uncc.edu/pagoolka/.html](http://www.psych.uncc.edu/pagoolka/.html).

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

There are no changes in my Action Plan

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** I examined my survey and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

In the Fall and Spring Semesters I implemented a twenty-question survey about attitudes and test practices of students taking Regents (high stake) exams. The following represents the findings based on the survey questions based on tallies.

1. Over half of students are extremely nervous about timed Regents exams.
2. Students overall did not find it difficult to sleep.

3. Most students think about the consequences of failing.
4. Most students rush through an exam just to get it done.
5. Most students seem to perform worse on Regents exams than local exams.
6. More than half of the students don't feel rattled when there are noises in the testing room.
7. Most students do not become overly nervous if they have difficulty answering the first several questions.
8. About half the students don't read all the passages.
9. Most of the students' emotional feelings did not interfere with their performance.
10. Almost all the students did not feel their heart beating fast during the Regents exam.
11. Most students did not feel self-conscious if other students left after the two-hour mark.
12. About half of the student's glance over the directions and do not read them carefully.
13. Most students become physically uncomfortable while taking the Regents exam.
14. Most students make careless errors while taking the Regents exam.
15. Most students did not have to take several minutes to calm down to begin the Regents exam.
16. Most students found it difficult to think clearly.
17. Almost all the students did not have an issue with eating the day of the Regents exam.
18. Almost all the students read the directions before taking the exam.
19. Most students think that they perform worse when the Regents exam is important.
20. Almost all the students feel they could have done better.

The information I took away from the survey overall is that there seems to be a lack of common sense, perhaps understanding, or a degree of learned helplessness as to how students approach to the ELA Regents exam. It seems as though they set themselves up failure by simply not following what is being asked. Even though the survey indicates that students read the directions, I am inclined to believe that they don't follow them and more importantly, students don't refer back to them. The low writing scores for all my students stems from not fulfilling the requirements set forth in the directions. What I have also encountered with some of my Spring Semester students is that they don't understand what is being asked. For my students, making sure they understand the directions and how to use them is top priority.

The finding that I found most surprising is that some students don't read all the passages. Students will scan some of them or not at all. For multiple choice, students have said that they don't refer back to the "lines" in the passage to answer questions or they will only look at the "lines".

When students decide to cut corners on a Regents exam, they cheat themselves out of passing grade. This is where I need continuous communication with students; to have them make sound decisions/choices on how they approach the ELA Regents exam in order to be successful.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** I examined the tallies and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

1. Almost all students are motivated to pass the ELA Regents in June
2. Most students are willing to practice and use strategies to be successful
  - Carefully reading all materials: directions and texts
  - Highlight and/or annotate to obtain a better understanding of directions and texts
  - Building confidence by implementing test strategies like slowing down, carefully selecting answers, planning responses before formally writing them.
3. End of course
  - implementing Mindset strategies to have students be thinking positively about the ELA Regents exam
  - introducing breathing exercises so that students can have a sense of calm before the exam

#### 4. Exam Day

- Students will receive a writing kit of a mechanical pencil, a black pen, a yellow and a blue highlighter, a pack of smarties and a small pack of gum all rubber banded together with an inspirational note of encouragement.

Participant's Name: **Kari Free**

#### **ACTION:**

Working with content area teachers to incorporate ways to help our ENL population be more successful in school. Collaboration that will benefit students now and in the future. I plan to create a professional development workshop and deliver it to OHS teachers. This fits with the course themes of collaboration, communication, and change.

#### **RATIONALE:**

I have been the ENL teacher at the high school since 2010. While the faculty is open to new ideas, there has never been any type of program or professional development specifically focused on ways content teachers can help ELLs be more successful. Graduation rates for current ELLs throughout the state are low. We need to work together to figure out how to help these students pass these course, Regents and then graduate. We also want to attend to the social and emotional needs of English Learners and help them to feel confident about their growing language skills and to feel safe and included in our school community.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:**

1. Identify areas to focus on.
2. Ask content area teachers about their experiences with ELLs (possibly a survey?).
3. Work with RBERN to come up with PD that will benefit teachers and students

January: I will have conversations with several content area teachers who have ELLs in their disciplines. I will ask them to tell me what their concerns are, what strategies they presently use, and what they would like to know more about in terms of working with ELLs in their specific curricular areas. I will also speak with administrators about what needs they see and talk with my English Learners to find out what they wish their content area teachers knew about them and their learning. I will keep notes from all conversations.

January-February: I will gather materials from RBERN and other sources. I will look for trade books and online texts connected to several curriculum topics that I will be able to use in the PD course I will be in the process of developing.

March-April: I will continue to plan the PD workshop, talking with teachers and students to get feedback on my work in progress. I will advertise the in-service workshop.

May: I will teach the workshop.

#### **EVALUATION:**

I will collect responses from all teachers who come to the workshop and analyze them to determine what worked well, and what next steps might be appropriate.

**RESOURCES:**

I will work with RBERN (Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network) to see what they can provide free of cost. They do PD throughout the region specifically for ENL. I will work with the school librarian to determine what resources are in the library that might help content area teachers who have ELLs in their classes, as well as the English Learners themselves.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

The ENL department created a document that teachers can look at during the school year that will help them differentiate instruction for the ELLs in their class. They will start using the document during the 2018-2019 school year.

The ENL department will be planning PD during the summer (2018) that addresses cultural sensitivity and how we can help teachers get to know their ELLs who do not speak fluently.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

Teachers at OHS want to help ELLs. Many of them do not know what each student needs. With the new document created by the ENL department along with planned professional development, content area teachers will be better prepared to help ELLs succeed in their classroom.

Earlier this year, a teacher came to me and said he wanted to help a student in his class he just did not know how. I asked him if he would be interested in attending professional development provided by the district. He said yes and explained what would help him. After talking to him, I started questioning other teachers. Quite a few told me they feel they need some type of professional development to help them understand the needs of the ELLs in our district. The ENL department is working to develop classes so these teachers will be able to help our students in the classroom.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_\_\_\_\_ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

I examined how three students did in a classroom with a teacher who is knowledgeable about ELLs and differentiation and a teacher who is not knowledgeable about ELLs and differentiation. The three students were much more successful in the class with the teacher who knew about their culture, their background, their English proficiency level and what their needs were. With the other teacher, students struggled and were not successful.

The three students spent the first two quarters of the 2017-2018 school year in a content area class with a teacher who was not knowledgeable about the needs of English language learners. The English language learners were expected to do everything the general education students were doing. There was no differentiation or accommodations based on their English proficiency level.

Out of the three students in the class, two failed those first two quarters and one passed the first quarter then failed the second. Students were not able to do the work due to the language barrier. By the end of the second quarter, students were frustrated and did not want to do anything in the class.

The three students were moved to a new class. All three students passed the third quarter. All three students were/are able to complete all assignments. The teacher uses visuals when teaching and often demonstrates what is expected from students, so they can see what they need to do before they do it. Students have expressed how much better it is for them in the new class. They enjoy the class and feel successful. They are learning the content because the teacher is knowledgeable about how to educate ELLs and differentiates instruction.

## Entering

As an Entering English Language Learner, the student has great dependence on supports and structures to advance his or her academic language skills.

Classroom teachers are responsible for the following highlighted scaffolds:

Extra time on all assignments and assessments (1.5)	Tests Read	Oral response for tests/ assignments	Visuals to accompany assignments	Copy of notes/ graphic organizers	Use of glossary or translator in native language	Prioritize key academic content of all reading packets/ study guides	Check for understanding after instruction	Student may not be able to generate verbal responses	Allow visual/yes or no responses	Highlight main idea/ vocabulary from texts
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**IEP: Yes or No**

**Home Language:**

**ENL Teacher Notes/Support:**

**Further Resources:** <http://www.ocmboces.org/rbern>

[NYS Blueprint for ELLs Success](#)

## Emerging

As an Emerging English Language Learner, the student shows some independence on supports and structures to advance his or her academic language skills.

Classroom teachers are responsible for the following highlighted scaffolds:

Extra time on all assignments & assessments (1.5)	Tests Read	Oral response for tests/ assignments	Visuals to accompany assignments	Copy of notes/ graphic organizers	Use of glossary or translator in native language	Prioritize key acad. content of all reading packets/ study guides	Check for understanding after instruction	Student may not be able to generate verbal responses	Allow visual yes or no responses	Highlight main idea/ vocabulary from texts
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**IEP: Yes or No**

**Home Language:**

**ENL Teacher Notes/Support:**

**Further Resources:** <http://www.ocmboces.org/rbern>

[NYS Blueprint for ELLs Success](#)

## Transitioning

As a Transitioning English Language Learner, the student shows some independence in advancing his or her academic language skills.

Classroom teachers are responsible for the following highlighted scaffolds:

Extra time on all assignments and assessments (1.5)	Tests Read	Visuals to accompany assignments	Copy of notes/ graphic organizers	Use of glossary, or translator in native language	Prioritize key academic content of all reading packets/ study guides	Check for understanding after instruction	Allow short oral and written response for content assessments	Highlight main idea/ vocabulary from texts
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**IEP: Yes or No**

**Home Language:**

**ENL Teacher Notes/Support:**

**Further Resources:** <http://www.ocmboces.org/rbern>  
[NYS Blueprint for ELLs Success](#)

## Expanding

As an Expanding English Language Learner, the student shows great independence in advancing his or her academic language skills.

Classroom teachers are responsible for the following highlighted scaffolds:

Extra time on all assignments and assessments (1.5)	Cloze notes or outline of notes	Use of glossary or translator in native language	Prioritize key academic content of all reading packets/ study guides	Check for understanding after instruction	Highlight main idea/ vocabulary from texts
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**IEP: Yes or No**

**Home Language:**

**ENL Teacher Notes/Support:**

**Further Resources:** <http://www.ocmboces.org/rbern>  
[NYS Blueprint for ELLs Success](#)

**Participant's Names:** Rachel Henderson, Lisa McPherson & Katherine Mills

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

We will collaboratively create a document for teachers and administrators in our school to use that will work to begin creating a sense of community among all stakeholders in the building. We will specifically address the issue of students who are experiencing or have experienced trauma, and we will suggest strategies and resources that teachers can use in their classrooms. By enhancing the school community, we will improve the ability of that community to address students in trauma. Our work connects to the themes of embodied learning (through some of the strategies), collaboration, communication, and change.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

To truly help students who are in Trauma, our faculty and staff needs to be at the top of their game. This does not happen without fostering a feeling of community in the building. This document will be a list of activities and ideas that any school/administrator/teacher can adopt to help create a sense of community in their building.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

January: We will meet together and begin outlining the document we will be creating. We will share ideas and resources and keep notes of our progress.

February: We will talk with the librarian, as well as several administrators and teachers, to find out what activities they have used successfully to help students deal with trauma, and to create a sense of community within their classes.

March: We will continue gathering resources and strategies and implementing them in our own classrooms and other settings within the school.

April 2018 - Create Document of ideas with pictures and personal commentary (for those implemented)- all members

May 2018 - Edit document and finalize. Share with teachers and staff in the building.

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

As we create the document, we will also be implementing some of the ideas. At the end of the year (May) we will send out a survey to the faculty/staff asking them to give some honest feedback on the activities that we implemented and the document we created. We will analyze the data and use the information to plan changes and/or implementation for use during the next academic year.

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

Cost - Varied - Costs will be incurred for implementation of various activities. Social Fund at OHS will cover some. We may request funds from Project Smart if we find particular materials we need.

Resources - Pinterest for ideas

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

We have been continuing research into ideas to improve morale as well as implementing some of them with the staff at OHS. It seems to be well-received.

We have also begun documenting our process through pictures and working on the written summary.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

Fostering community helps with stress - We have observed that when teachers gather to eat, they stop to talk. Many times, these discussions are with people they don't see in their daily paths. This ability to "network" and share stories has helped teachers to put their own work in perspective. This was seen at the monthly breakfasts, where we observed teachers sitting with people outside of their own departments. Overheard conversations such as "How are you - I never see you", "How are things in your 'neck of the woods'" also confirmed this. The "thank you" that we got are huge proof of the great need the building has for stress relief.

Clubs and student organizations have also participated in these gathering ideas through Valentine's hearts on lockers, classroom decorations and lollipops for all (Key Club). In addition, the building administration took the time to say thank you for the positive interactions we have created. The principal, Pat Wallace, actually decided to do his own "BBQ" on a 1/2 day to bring the faculty together.

Overall, it has been proven time and time again that no person is an island. If we give and receive affirmation for the job we do and the effort we put into making a positive work environment, we all succeed; together

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_\_\_\_\_ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

N/A - target is teachers and staff

**Participant's Names:** **Billie Jo Peterson & Stacey Van Campen**

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

Students will work outside of their normal class times to convert the HS Cafeteria into a gallery space and a place for observers and participants to experience the making of art through demonstration or doing. HS students will also assist younger artists in the organizing and making of art using a multitude of media and techniques which explore the themes of embodied learning, community, collaboration and change. We are totally redesigning the Artfest!

The gallery will take place on May 12, 2018, from noon until 4:00. Our audience will consist of Parents, students of all ages, faculty and staff, as well as community members.



**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

Through this experience students will gain an understanding of how to curate a show and also how teach what they have learned throughout their time at OHS. Teaching to others will reinforce their learning. Students will also have to work more collaboratively, something that many students do not associate with art making.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

Present to the Art department for feedback on the idea (Billie Jo & Stacey – January)

Present to upper level classes and have a discussion on how they might be involved in the redesigning of the art fest. (Billie Jo & Stacey – January)

Have students design a new poster along with invites and save the dates (Stacey-February)

Have students work on Art Career Posters (Billie Jo and Stacey- February)

Display Adv. Art Students Portfolios and where they are going to college (Stacey – February)

Design demonstrations/activities (Billie Jo – February/March)

April – Department Meeting to align everything and ask WBUC to advertise/interview artists.

May- Set up is Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup> after school. The show is May 12 from 12-4.

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

Document the number of people who attend, the number of people who participate in our art activities, have a sign-in book for visitors to leave feedback, we could incorporate a suggestion box. We can also hand out a survey to the students involved.

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

We have reserved the HS Cafeteria for two days in order to set up and take down. We do not have a budget - grant writing???? Youth Bureau??

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

Funds were secured from Walmart (\$40) for refreshments and we should be able to use this resource again next year. Bosco's grocery also graciously donated a veggie tray (out of the 2 veggie, 2 fruit trays ordered) – if we ask again at the beginning of the school year, they may be able to donate it all.

~ After presenting our plan to the middle school and elementary teachers, one HS student worked with his Elementary ~ Art Teacher and her third-grade students to put together the “wings”, and one HS student worked with an Elementary ~ Teacher from Fitzhugh Park to engage the community in yoga and mindfulness activities that afternoon.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

Things to consider next year:

~ Teachers/Administrators LOVED the personal invites from the students...get them out even earlier next year and print more!!!

- ~ Art Fest became the Final Project for the Advanced Art Class. Much class time was spent brainstorming/researching and working on sketches, paintings, mounting/matting and prepping for the Community Mural. The Service Learning component was a nice addition too.
- ~ More Student direction in Ceramics and Sculpture classes.
- ~ Have students in charge of donations for recycled materials, ideas for projects (ceramics & sculpture students).
- ~ Make time for brainstorming about project ideas in class (Studio in Art, Ceramics and Sculpture).
- ~ Raku firing during art fest next year?
- ~ More involvement for first year art students (Studio in Art). Not many of them made it to the show or were able to help with set-up or take-down.
- ~ More involvement from the Art department as a whole.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_\_\_\_\_ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

The Advanced Art students who had their portfolios on display and those who were working on the mural had an amazing day. There was a lot of positive feedback and it was a very relaxed environment (unlike some of the gallery settings) so meaningful conversations took place throughout the day. Word is also getting back to us that younger siblings and adults who haven't made art in recent years were inspired to create. More copies of the coloring pages have been sent home and photos of "works in progress" by younger children have been sent in to show us. That was the goal!!!!!!!

Ceramics...

The following article appeared in the Oswego County Today on May 18- <https://oswegocountytoday.com/oswego-city-school-district-hosts-annual-art-fest/>.

**Participant's Names:** Laura Bateman, Elizabeth Crannell, Tami Palmitesso

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

We are planning to bridge the gap between elementary school/middle school and high school graduation. It is important for the students and teachers to think with the end in mind. Which is one of our practiced habits for success. We plan to organize a graduation march for the elementary schools and then another for the middle school. The teachers will be able to see students they have taught in the past, who will be successfully graduating high school. The younger students will see family, friends, neighbors, and role models walking the halls in their cap and gown. This project, involving seniors marching through the halls of the middle and elementary schools, connects with the course themes of embodied learning, collaborative spaces, cooperation, and change.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

This project will bring a sense of community to our entire district, at all levels. It is valuable for the younger students to see the seniors' success. They may recognize a neighbor, family member, or friend and become motivated and inspired by their graduating.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

- Meeting with Superintendent, parent representative, director of personnel, principal regarding logistics, and a timeline for making this project possible (January)
- Organizing the ordering of graduation gowns to keep and use for this event, or deciding how to distribute and collect the caps and gowns (February)
- Creating a schedule between the elementary schools and transportation for event (March)
- Organizing route for each elementary school so all classes are able to see the parade of graduates (May)
- Arranging for news coverage within and beyond the schools (May)
- Survey teachers and talk with students to obtain data

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

We will survey the senior students to get their input on the impact of this event on both themselves and a description of what they saw and experienced during the day. We will also survey teachers in the middle and elementary school to determine the value they put on the experience, and conversations they were able to have with their classes after the event. The data will help us determine whether to continue the practice next year, and if so, what changes might be beneficial.

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

- Financing for caps and gowns to be kept at OHS and used year after year. Even if a specific number could be purchased from project SMART, this would really enable us to launch this event and continue it annually.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

We haven't had to change very much. We have been spending time meeting and discussing with the district principals on possible dates and times that would be the best fit for all. After much discussion, we have decided that Monday, June 18<sup>th</sup> would be the best day. Now that the day has been decided we have been working on the booking the buses, preparing the sign-up sheet and directions/rules for the students. We received the caps and gowns for the graduates to wear. As per the superintendent's suggestion, the graduates should visit the school(s) they attended, along with other schools they would like to visit. We had to take into consideration that some of the students may have siblings or other younger children they are close with that they might want to visit. Thanks to our superintendent being so supportive of this event, we were approved for as many buses as we need to make the event possible. We have also been working on contacting multiple news outlets to be sure this event is very well publicized to all members of the community. It's always great when the Oswego City School District is in the news for something so positive across all grade levels in all seven buildings.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

We are planning to send a teacher survey via google forms to evaluate their experience and suggestions for improving the event for the future. Through the current conversations we have had with our colleagues, it is evident that many teachers are looking forward to seeing their past students. The teachers have also shared that in years prior to this year, they seldom got to witness the results of their hard work and share the success of their former students. The principals at the elementary level all approved to have the graduation parade in their buildings and are also excited to be a part of this event.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_\_\_\_\_ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

We believe that this experience will inspire young learners to work hard and strive for the best. As the young students watch the graduate parade they may recognize older siblings, neighbors, cousins, and friends and easily be able to envision their future as a high school graduate. We will send pictures after the event to be added to our report for the website.

**Participant's Names:** **Timothy Bishop & Gloria Canale Giberson**

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

Our project is to develop and maintain a peer-tutoring program aimed to assist struggling students taking lower level Spanish classes. Transitions such as building to building and within the language sequence itself often prove to be added challenges, especially to new students first entering the high school. To alleviate some of the stress surrounding their studies, we are working to create a program in which students may find additional support from peers throughout the school day. As students are paired, based on need and schedule, the hope is that they will foster relationships that will extend beyond content and include other areas of concern such as making new friends, meeting high school expectations, getting involved in extracurricular activities, managing stress, developing effective study skills, meeting community service requirements, and other topics of interest. By organizing and providing a learning environment, all students are able to engage in a positive, collaborative atmosphere that is both beneficial to both parties. Our goal is to foster mentoring relationships amongst high school students while providing additional means of support, both academic and emotional, as underclassmen navigate their way through their high school years.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

The implementation of a peer-tutoring program encourages students to advocate for themselves by taking the initiative to ask for help when needed as well as to offer one's services when able. The program promotes service by encouraging older students to share some of their personal time and skills in an effort to improve the life of another. Overall, the project promotes a collaborative learning environment that encourages home and school relations, teacher to student relations and student to student relations. Parents are informed that these services are available to their children via Jupiter Grades messaging, during Open House and Parent-Teacher conferences. Classroom teachers may also reach out directly to parents of students whom they identify as eligible for this program. Via regular communication, the parent and classroom teacher collaborate to ensure that the student is receiving and benefiting from the services provided. Parents as well as students are made aware upfront that failure to comply with expectations (i.e. respecting the tutor's time and effort) will result in termination of services. Implementation of monthly reports will serve to further foster and maintain home and school relations. Reports will detail the number of sessions attended per month, topics discussed, and suggestions made for independent practice.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:**

September: Assess and evaluate students on fundamental skills (Tim and Gloria)  
September: Contact recommended students and ask about interest/availability in tutoring (Tim and Gloria)  
October: Create a list of available tutors (Gloria)  
October: Reserve an approved location for the peer tutoring (Tim)  
October: Begin a list of students whom we feel would benefit from the service. (Tim and Gloria)

October/November: Advertise services to parents; inquire about interests (Tim and Gloria)  
November-June: Maintain services; assist in scheduling; request feedback from students and tutors (Tim and Gloria)  
January: Revise tutoring schedule based on semester change (Gloria)  
February-May: Continue implementing the program and collecting and analyzing data

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

A sign-in and out sheet will keep track of the number of participants utilizing this program. Written comments and suggestions from students and tutors will help us to evaluate and modify the current program. A summative survey will be administered the last week of classes in June. Regular, informal feedback will be gathered throughout the year as classroom teachers touch base with both tutors and tutees (i.e. informal interviews). Additional discussions amongst language teachers regarding student grades, performance, etc. will inform us of the effects of the program. Program directors will meet every month to evaluate progress and modify as needed. Program directors will meet to collaborate and write a reflection detailing what has been learned as a result of the implementation of this peer-tutoring program. Successes will be shared and promoted via building liaison meetings and in further detail with the building principal so that this program can be extended to include other content areas. Discussion of a physical peer tutoring location and expanded program will be discussed and considered by the school principal.

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

There are no costs to us. The most valuable resources involving this project are the students will to sacrifice their time for the benefit of others. Instructional materials will be supplied per the request of the tutor/need of the student. Finally, a location will be needed and has, to date, been secured.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

Three separate appointments were made on various occasions to meet with our principal, Mr. Wallace, to discuss the possibility of creating a space and program for peer tutoring in all content areas. Unfortunately, due to weather cancelations, all of those meetings never took place and have yet to be rescheduled. We plan to do so in the fall.

Due to the nature of schedule changes, we did have some instances where tutors who were once available were no longer able to meet with students due to a schedule conflict. We are discussing the possibility of expanding these opportunities after school for next year. We realize there is afterschool help, but this program focuses on the four core areas of which foreign language is not included.

Due to sickness and frequent absences and therefore difficulty coordinating schedules and additional work, we solicited informal feedback from both the tutors and tutees. We made this change also because there were not many participants as this was a new program that we are slowly growing as we troubleshoot, reflect and modify.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

At the onset of the academic year, language instructors (Mr. Bishop and Mrs. Canale Giberson) contacted students in upper level Spanish courses to offer an opportunity for them to share and reinforce their skills and knowledge with younger students also studying Spanish. This program also provided the opportunity to many students to earn volunteer service hours based on the clubs and organizations in which they participate. Once a list of volunteers was gathered, instructors collaborated to sort through the list of possible tutors and guarantee that said tutors had the appropriate referral and recommendation from a foreign language teacher. Once approved, students reaffirmed their commitment and instructors verified their schedules/availability. Once we had the resources available, we were then able to advertise to students in need. We reached out directly to students as well as to parents via email, phone calls and/or in person (e.g. during Open House, parent-teacher conferences,

etc.). Once a need and common time were established, tutors coordinated with the tutees to meet in the library at a predetermined date and time. Tutors checked in on occasion with the classroom teacher for guidance, materials and feedback. At the turn of the semester, when some schedules are apt to change, we followed this process again in order to ensure that we have an accurate list of available tutors. Typical sessions ran the duration of a class period (approximately 43 minutes), took place at a table in the media center/library and revolved around the needs of the tutee and/or explicit instructions from the classroom teacher. Sessions were tailored to meet the needs of the particular tutee.

At this point we do not have written documentation (other than a make-shift schedule of tutors available) but plan to create such documents for the next academic year. This would include announcements for all Spanish teachers to read to their classes to solicit tutors, notes to be sent home to parents/guardians offering such services but also explicitly stating conditions, letters for students to use with club advisors to document service hours, etc.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_\_\_\_\_ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

Services boosted confidence in tutees. Word of mouth also encouraged other students to seek same services.

Tutees (and parents) were very happy and appreciative of the services provided. One parent shared, "I think this is such a great opportunity for our students, especially those new to this building and the ways of the high school".

Tutees felt that the personalized sessions allowed them to hone in on their own personal needs. One freshman remarked, "Sra. Canale, the time with my tutor has helped me so much. There was so much I didn't remember or understand from last year. This was a great place for me to ask those questions to catch up."

Tutors were appreciative of the materials and suggestions provided by the classroom teacher(s) as well as the ability to showcase, reinforce and share their skills with fellow students. One tutor commented, "This is such a great way to reinforce what I know and help others. On top of that it's sure better than sitting in a study hall."

Achievement was gradual as we did not have as many students participate as we would have liked. Schedules were limiting, and we worked solely with our classes this year but hope to expand next year. One case in particular has certainly demonstrated evidence of achievement and progression of learning. This student was in a unique situation as she transitioned from a level one high school course (often designated as our repeat-failure course as well as for the very few, like this student, taking language for the very first time) unlike her classmates who matriculated from the advanced level one course at the Middle School. Needless to say, she was at a disadvantage but utilized the tutoring to try and catch up. While it was a struggle the majority of the year, not having the critical foundation to succeed, she just recently scored a 93 on a quiz, one of the highest grades in her honors class.

**Participant's Names:** **Tai Jackson and Mary Koskowski**

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

For our project we will teach two in-service courses that provide 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers at Oswego High School the opportunity to collaborate in an effort to identify difficulties that our freshman population faces during their transition to high school. The first course will be used to analyze data on the current 9<sup>th</sup> graders' behavior, attendance, and academic success and identify areas of strength and weakness. We will then utilize this data in the second course

to develop cross-curricular programming and/or initiatives that will improve the shortcomings identified from the data, as well as build from strengths that were identified.

Working together as a larger 9<sup>th</sup> grade team and with administration will allow for **collaboration** throughout content areas and the building as a whole. Teachers and administrators will be able to share what has worked and what hasn't in their classrooms or areas specifically with freshman students. These sessions will also allow time for **communication** with colleagues that is not built in to our normal school day. Our work will hopefully evoke positive **changes** to our current and future freshmen classes.

In addition to analyzing data, we will also read literature pertaining to positive transitions from middle school to high school. When possible, we will use our findings to make immediate changes that could have a positive impact on our current freshman students. For example, if we identify an area of the building where a majority of referrals are occurring we will work with administration to better monitor that location.

We will also seek feedback from current and past students to acquire more subjective data regarding policies, procedures, and teaching methods that these students felt they benefited from or struggled with. For example, we have tried both binders and folders as organizational systems during different academic years. We will seek student input as to what they liked or disliked about these, and how they felt they helped them manage their coursework. We may look at acquiring this information using a written or digital survey. This will promote **embodied learning**, as students will have the opportunity to reflect on their learning experiences and feel as though they have a stake in creating an even more positive experience for future students.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

The current freshmen population has demonstrated difficulty transitioning from the middle school to the high school for a variety of reasons, which has resulted a negative impact on their academic and social-emotional success. Statistics have shown that students who are not successful their freshman year have an increased chance of dropping out of high school. We believe that by working with other freshmen teachers we will be able to put procedures into effect to help more students have a successful freshmen year.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

1. Submit proposals to Carrie Plasse to obtain approval to teach in-service classes (December; Mary & Tai)
2. Collect and organize data to be used during first in-service class from OHS administration (January, after Q2; Mary & Tai)
3. Plan first in-service class (late January-early February; Mary & Tai)
4. Teach first in-service class (February; Mary)
5. Use data analyzed in first class to plan the second in-service class (early March, Mary & Tai)
6. Teach second in-service class (late March; Tai)
7. Present the findings and products from in-services classes to OHS administration and discuss implementation. (Mary and Tai; Late April).

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

We will initially evaluate the current freshmen data (number, types and locations of referrals, attendance, and academic performance). We then use this data to develop resources and/or protocols to be shared with all 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and administration in an effort to improve the deficits and accentuate the strengths of our freshmen. The products of the second in-service class will serve as documentation of teacher learning. Data demonstrating

impact on student learning and success will likely be observed during the remainder of the current academic year and the following school year. Both student and faculty input will be gathered to assess the benefit of any changes made as the result of our findings. This may be acquired through written or digital surveys. We will also keep note on any informal feedback, comments, concerns, or commendations we receive specifically pertaining to our freshman population, as well as our own observations.

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

We will need to acquire data on the current freshman population, which is available from school administration. At this point, there is no cost for our project. If approval is granted by OCSD personnel office and funding is available, we would like to attend the Positivity Project training (tentatively in January).

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

Due to difficulty acquiring needed data and scheduling professional development offerings we took our project in a direction in which we did not need to rely on others to complete. We shifted from examining data to exploring how implementing the Positivity Project with our freshman students could help strengthen and build character traits that would make their transition to high school as successful as possible.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

Having time to explore the plentiful resources made available by the Positivity Project was incredibly helpful, motivational, and eye-opening. We were able to identify many instances when we take time out of our classes to teach character strengths already and see how we could utilize their content to be more proactive than reactive. For example, when many of our students were grieving the loss of the beloved athletic trainer in our district, we were able to use it as an opportunity to discuss and teach empathy to our students who were not as profoundly impacted by this loss. We realized how difficult it can be to explicitly teach character to our students; crafting a definition, providing relevant examples, and emphasizing the “other people matter” mindset can be incredibly challenging with young teenagers as the audience. The resources available through the Positivity Project have made this type of important, valuable instruction much more accessible for classroom teachers. We look forward to fully implementing this supplementary curriculum next year.

One of our biggest takeaways was a minor, but important detail. The fact that the Positivity Project chooses the language of character *strengths* is insightful and a welcome change from the more common practice of identifying deficits in our students. The conscious choice to acknowledge the 23-character strengths already existing within every individual and then designing the program in a way that focuses on further developing their presence within each participant is the positive shift that is so badly needed in our school by both teachers and students.

Upon presenting our findings during our last class session, we received great feedback from our colleagues. Those that had participated in the *Lost at School* book study that has been offered as professional development encouraged us to present the Positivity Project as an alternative or supplement to administration. They, too, were very impressed with the positive approach.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_\_\_\_\_ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

While we will not be able to fully analyze the impact on our students until we implement these resources during the 2018-2019 academic year, we were able to infuse small pieces into our classrooms and noticed subtle but positive results. We introduced our students to the “Other People Matter” mindset using some of the Positivity Project’s resources. Our students were surprisingly responsive to the message, and some began using the language after only minimal exposure. After a brief introduction to the character strengths we also proposed our idea to present an award to the student who best exhibits the strength that is focused on during each week. The



students were very receptive to and excited about this idea. They offered suggestions for where to display the winners (in the display case outside Miss Jackson's room) and prizes (candy, gift cards, free homework passes, etc.). Their ideas will be helpful in ensuring we engage our next group of students right from the beginning. We received good feedback about the resources we chose to use; the students found them engaging and age appropriate. This gives us confidence that when we are able to implement the Positivity Project from early in the year we be successful in shaping the ways our students think, speak and act not only in our classrooms, but as members of the community.

**Participant's Names:** Sarah Kimak & Joseph Houppert

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

Our project involves reinstituting a recycling program at Oswego High School. There have been programs in the past, but they have fallen by the wayside. Our first step is to get permission from administration and custodial staff to pursue this project. We will then contact our school's rubbish removal service to determine what exactly can be recycled in our classroom bins and in our large recycling receptacle outside the building. Next, we plan to assess which classrooms/offices are lacking recycling bins and purchase recycling bins for those in need. We will implement the program from the "top-down", where we educate faculty and staff about the new recycling protocol and ask them to teach and model this for the students. We will print signs for classrooms about what may and may not be recycled.

In addition, we will be collecting returnable cans and bottles for cancer research. Each can/bottle collected is worth six cents when returned to a particular redemption center. The money raised is split between the Upstate Cancer Center, Carol M. Baldwin Foundation, and the American Cancer society. This project involves making students and staff aware of where they can recycle returnable cans/bottles for donation, rather than throwing them away or in with the other recyclable materials.

Promote self and social awareness by researching appropriate recycling criteria required by the Oswego County Department of Solid Waste and adapting that information into a program that can demonstrate this awareness by students, faculty, and staff at the Oswego High School.

Understanding and facilitating change to create knowledge and promote reflection. Recycling efforts at OHS are inconsistent and minimal to date. Through this project we hope to gain knowledge that will cultivate understanding and facilitate change in and outside of the classroom and school environment.

Communication – compassion and advocacy. This will be a very important aspect of this project. Communication will take place through a hierarchy of individuals beginning with administration, faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders in the community.

Change – Instead of throwing everything away as solid waste, mindful practices and well-being (individual, social, and environmental), will focus on individual and community change, with educators as change agents.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

This work is important because our school does not have a functioning recycling program. We need to be responsible citizens and teach the students to be aware of the choices they are making and the impact that has on our planet (i.e. pollution, landfills). We can show them that with many people making a small change, we can have a big impact, both environmentally and socially (i.e. reducing landfill waste, raising money for cancer research). In addition, almost every person can name someone they know who is affected by cancer.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

- 1- October 2017- **Get project idea approved** – by administration, custodial staff, Dr. Kane
- 2- October 2017- **Get background information on current recycling program**– call Butler Disposal (Todd Butler), Oswego County Department of Solid Waste/Bristol Hill Landfill (Laurie Krul), Laurence Segal (cans for cancer man), custodial staff (Ben Driskell, Kevin Schlaffler)
- 3- October 2017 – **Spread the word to students** – signs next to cafeteria recycling can, paint the recycling can purple, get on morning announcements to discuss the initiative, get article in school newspaper, polled students in our classes about what to recycle and where at OHS
- 4- November 2017- **Teacher Survey and Classroom Recycling Inspection** – Inspected various departments to determine whether they have a recycling container, and if so, their location in room and what types of materials were placed in them. Surveyed teachers about their knowledge of current recycling at OHS. Lead a discussion.
- 5- December 2017 – **Continue addressing students** – walk around in lunch periods to start discussions with students and bring attention to the recycling location
- 6- December 2017 – **Obtain posters to hang around school/classrooms** – Call Laurie Krul for posters, get can/bottle posters printed from OCSD copy center.
- 7- January 2018 – **Research how many new recycling bins we need** - Try to make contacts to see if there is money available or extra recycling barrels around school for rooms that don't have them. Calculate cost associated with purchasing needed bins.
- 8- February 2018 – **Address the faculty** – mini-presentation at a faculty meeting discussing current recycling procedures and what we should be doing from this moment on, ask for them to keep a can/bottle recycling bin in their classrooms for donating.
- 9- March 2018 – **Purchase and place recycling bins in rooms that need it** – Ensure all rooms and offices have a recycling bin.
- 10- April 2018 – **Earth Day activities with classes**– related to recycling (i.e. read books, read science magazines, watch videos, relate the importance of recycling programs to social-environmental-health-economic-societal issues).
- 11- April 2018- **Collect data on progress of recycling project** – Go around to the same rooms again and see if the classrooms are doing a better job with recycling. Follow-up survey for teachers regarding recycling.
- 12- May 2018- **Analyze Data from before and after project/Complete final report.**
- 13- May 2018 – **Thank the participants/Share Data** – Get on announcements and in school newspaper again stating how many cans/bottles were donated and how much money went to cancer research. Show them that they made a difference!

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

We will poll teachers before and after introducing the recycling program. The teacher survey will be used to determine their knowledge of appropriate recyclable items. We will also poll our classes again.

There will be an inventory of classroom recycling bins before and after recycling program to see if the bins are being better utilized.

We will keep track of the number of cans/bottles collected throughout the duration of the project. We will document student learning by polling our students and random students in other locations asking them if they know where they could recycle cans/bottles in our building.

### **RESOURCES:**

Funding to purchase new recycling bins for classrooms/offices that are lacking one. Possible sources of funding for this portion of the project will be district money or Project SMART funding, if available.

The costs incurred for the can/bottle donations will be spray paint for the cafeteria recycling location, a small receptacle for interested classrooms, and gas to transport the collected cans/bottles to the redemption center. All cans/bottles collected will be donated directly to cancer research.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

We had planned to continue addressing students in December by walking around the lunch room to point out the recycling location for returnable cans/bottles, but due to scheduling constraints, we were not able to do this.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

We surveyed the teachers in our Project SMART class in November. The survey had three questions:

1. Do we have a recycling program at OHS? If so, describe it. If not, explain why.
2. Do you have a recycling bin in your classroom? If so, where is it? Describe what you and your students place in the bin (be honest).
3. What kinds of materials are recyclable and should be placed in classroom bins?

The survey was given to 26 teachers in our Project SMART class during our November meeting. Twenty three percent of those teachers said we had a recycling program in place at the high school. Seventy three percent of those same teachers said they had a recycling bin in their classroom. In our initial poll, most teachers said the materials that should be placed in the bins are paper, cardboard, plastic, cans, and bottles.

During our November class we asked teams of teachers to visit other classrooms at OHS. They determined whether these rooms had recycling bins and they recorded the materials found in those bins. Of the 140 rooms visited, seventy seven percent of the rooms had recycling bins. Some of the materials found in the recycling bins included; water bottles, cardboard, paper, general trash, candy wrappers, straws, staples, and paper towels.

The results of this survey indicated that many teachers were not certain if we had a recycling program at the Oswego High School or what materials should be recycled, even though they had a recycling bin in their classroom.

We were able to purchase 12 new recycling bins with Project SMART funds. Through emails that were distributed to the OHS Faculty & Staff, we asked if any classroom/office was in need of a bin, or if they had an extra one. We identified 22 classrooms/offices that were in need of a bin. In addition, 6 extra bins from classrooms were donated to our relocation efforts. The custodial staff was able to locate a few more extra bins at the district level to ensure that all 22 classrooms/offices would have a recycling bin.

In April, our Project SMART class was given the same survey questions. One hundred percent of teachers asked in the survey said we had a recycling program in place at the high school. Of the teachers polled, one hundred percent also said they have a recycling bin in their classroom. In our final poll, most teachers said the materials that should be placed in the bins are those listed on the posters we provided for each classroom.

During our April class we asked teams of teachers to visit other classrooms again at OHS. They determined that

ninety seven percent of these rooms had recycling bins. Materials found in those bins were mostly paper and plastic bottles, however some bins did contain used tissues and bottles with caps.

From this data, we conclude that most teachers are now aware of the recycling program at the high school. Almost all classrooms have been provided with a recycle bin and most of these classrooms have improved their recycling efforts. In addition, we have noticed a dramatic increase in the number of teachers who are utilizing the returnable can/bottle recycling box in the faculty room. The recycle box used to be filled every two weeks, but now it has to be emptied a couple of times each week. In addition, teachers are using the large labeled "trash can" for recyclables in the faculty room. This large bag gets filled approximately every two weeks.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined our results and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

Prior to Earth Day (which fell over Spring Break), we handed out a survey to our students asking 5 questions about recycling at OHS.

The survey had the following questions:

1. Does the Oswego High School have a recycling program? If so, describe it. If not, explain why?
2. Is there a recycling bin provided in your classroom(s)? Have you been instructed on how it should be used?
3. What types of materials are being recycled in your classroom(s)?
4. Do you think the recycling efforts have improved at the Oswego High School in recent months? Please explain how.
5. Do you have any suggestions on how we could improve our recycling efforts at the Oswego High School in the future?

A total of forty-one students responded to the survey. Ninety two percent of those students are now aware of a recycling program at the Oswego High School. One hundred percent of the students indicated that there were recycling bins in their classrooms. Only two percent of the students said they had not been instructed on how the recycling bins should be used. Although most students had been instructed in using the recycling bins, a few students did indicate that the instruction did not occur in all classrooms. According to the survey most students were well informed about the materials that can be placed in recycling bins in the classrooms. Seventy five percent of the students surveyed said that recycling efforts have improved at the Oswego High School in recent months. Some suggestions offered by students to improve recycling efforts were: more education, increase the number of signs or posters around school, present recycling information in an assembly for all students and faculty, and to make it mandatory in all classrooms.

From this data, we have concluded that while many students are aware of the recycling program at the high school, efforts to improve the program should continue. Many students (particularly the upperclassmen) have stated that for years they were told by teachers that the school "doesn't recycle", that only paper could be recycled, and that whatever was placed in a recycling bin would just get thrown into the garbage at the end of the night. While these statements were previously true (to some degree), the high school has been recycling, and it's not only paper that is able to be recycled. The upperclassmen have stated that some teachers make it clear that we are now recycling, and others do not. They even mentioned that some teachers are still under the impression that the school is not recycling. This indicates to us that further efforts are required to inform and educate the students and staff that we have an active recycling program here at the high school and it takes a community effort to make it successful.

For Earth Day, we also shared some information with our students regarding the current status of the planet, and what we're doing (both good and bad) that impacts the planet. We read the book One Plastic Bag by Miranda Paul aloud to the students. We also found a YouTube link of the book. In addition to the book, several YouTube videos were shared with students that contrast the beauty of the planet with the ugliness of litter and a lack of recycling. Students seemed appalled to hear about some of the earth's issues, particularly regarding the plastic

pollution. The birds on Midway Island and the Great Pacific Garbage Patch seemed to impact them the most drastically. When students were asked if this was a problem locally, or just elsewhere, many indicated that they didn't think this was a problem in Oswego, New York. We then showed them pictures taken this summer of the plastic pollution at Sandy Island Beach State Park, where there are protected sand dunes and areas for the endangered bird, the piping plover. Students expressed their shock at the amount of pollution at a state park, and especially on protected land.

The links to the videos that were shown are as follows:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHskUChyKgs> One Plastic Bag book (begin at 1:07).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmVLcj-XKnM&app=desktop> Mother Earth – narrated by Julia Roberts

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1I7on22jA48> Midway Island birds with plastic in their stomachs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zrn4-FfbXw&app=desktop> Ocean Plastics trailer clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azwKxDVGmns> explanation for how the pacific garbage patch forms

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uof3pzi-UGQ> floating farms

In addition to reading the book and showing videos, one of our classes wanted to do something more to make a difference on Earth Day. They decided to do an Earth Day cleanup around the school grounds. This was student initiated, which indicates to us that our students care and want to make a difference in the world around them. With administrative approval and support, the class braved the chilly weather and managed to collect two very large garbage cans full of garbage from the school campus. There was a visible difference in the school grounds before and after the cleanup. During the cleanup the students made comments about how “disgusting” people are that all of this garbage ended up as litter. It was appalling to them how much garbage we actually found, and the variety of things we found. At the end of the cleanup, they felt good about what they did to help, and were very happy with the results.

During our informal initial poll of our students at the beginning of the year regarding recycling, only two students in our classes knew where they could recycle returnable cans/bottles in the cafeteria. With a second poll, 37 students knew where they could recycle their bottles/cans. We also realized that numerous students do not have a lunch, or do not eat in the lunch room, so that reduced the number of students who knew where the purple can was located to donate cans/bottles.

A feature in the school newspaper was written regarding our can/bottle efforts by a student. Please see the attached article.

A feature was presented on the morning announcements regarding the can/bottle efforts. This was put together by a student. The link to view the video is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4ly4pt3VKY&feature=youtu.be> .

Throughout the course of the year, approximately 5000 cans and bottles (\$300 worth at \$0.06 per can) were donated towards cancer research. This information will be shared with the faculty/staff, and students via email and a morning announcement.

**Participant's Names:** Sarah Williams & Renee Warren

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

Our project is to create an affirmation station for some of our classes, which includes World Literature and English 11 Regents. Affirmation stations will consist of book pockets that are affixed to a backing (cardboard, Styrofoam) board for each class. These pockets will serve as “mailboxes” for each student to leave positive notes in for their classmates.

By creating an environment where kindness is important student engagement and academic success will go up. This project will encompass several collaborative spaces, including emotional, social, cognitive, and self-awareness. As noted in *Mindful Teaching and Teaching Mindfulness*, “Promoting SEL involves teaching students to develop and demonstrate skills in five-man competencies; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making” (David 37). Many of these themes are crucial to the success of this project, and themes frequently discussed through literature and found in many texts.

To accompany the stations, we are planning to share some books that focus on characters who need affirmation to overcome or survive challenges. Examples include but are not limited to: *Speak*, *Catalyst*, *Far From the Tree*, *Lost Boys of Sudan*, *I'll Give You the Sun*, *Turtles All the Way Down*, etc... We plan to periodically do a book chat to share these types of texts and encourage our students to read them.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

In school and society our students are subject to critique and feedback on a daily basis. From grades to a coach's comments to parents' comments, this feedback can be both helpful and distressing. Students are also subjected to constant media streams via online social platforms and media, which are often not the most supportive mediums. This constant, and often negative, feedback and critique can be very difficult to deal with for many students. Often these students react by becoming stressed which can lead to more serious issues, including depression and other mental illnesses. Bullying can and does occur under the guise of offering “constructive criticism” or as a result of an attempt to be humorous. It is an issue faced by many teens both in and out of school. Our project is one attempt to foster positivity in the classroom, to offer a safe way for students to positively support and celebrate one another within our individual classes. It is our hope that nurturing positivity in a small environment will cause students to go out and spread positivity outside the classroom and school.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

1. Development of the idea
2. Source materials (with Dr. Kane)
3. January - Develop an introductory activity for the classes. We will use this activity immediately after Christmas break. This activity will introduce the idea of validating others around us in positive and kind ways.
4. January - After this activity, students will be personalizing their own “book pocket”, which will serve as the mailbox for the notes from peers as well as for teacher feedback. These book pockets will be affixed to tag board, one board for each class.
5. January - Affirmation activity #1 will be to write a letter to themselves. The teacher will model by sharing her own letter with the class.
6. (January – April) After the first letter, the teacher will give various prompts as the semester goes on to have students write affirmation notes to each other. The second prompt will be assigned with a designated recipient, using the same format as a “Secret Santa” type exchange. This will make sure that each student receives one letter they wrote to themselves and at least one from a classmate. Sample prompts include:

Write a letter to someone in this class who you have noticed (and maybe admired) this day or week OR  
Write a letter to a person who worked in your group, giving them positive feedback.

7. (January – April) All letters/notes will be signed by the student and approved by the teacher before they are placed in the mailboxes. This will allow for the teacher to address any concerns with the content of a letter and to model appropriate notes for individual students if necessary.
8. (January – April) The teacher will keep track of who receives a letter, giving various prompts to ensure that everyone receives at least one a semester.
9. (January – April) We will observe how this functions in our classes and if it is overwhelming for us as teachers. We will also note the changes in environment, attitude, work ethic, and general class atmosphere. We will also note comments students may have about the affirmation stations. These comments may be noted during verbal class conversations, written surveys, or Google Forms surveys.

Each of these steps are shared responsibilities, driven by our own students and classes.

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

- Anecdotal evidence (observed behavior and students comments)
- Copies of notes (names removed)
- Student survey
- Teacher written journal reflection about the process and stations

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

Book pockets: These are less than \$80, sourced by Dr. Kane via Project SMART grant funds.  
Tag board / Styrofoam board

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

**Sarah Williams:** Although I did use the affirmation station with four of my classes, I did not use it with my AP class. This was due to time constraints. If I began in September another year I would include them. I also did not keep a separate journal for this project, although I did record the number of affirmations and write notes as the year went on.

**Renee Warren:** I also used the affirmation station with my four Regents level classes, and because of time constraints did not use it with the Honors class. I kept a record of which students wrote notes and also when they received a note.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

**Sarah Williams**

- Anecdotal evidence (observed behavior and students comments): The first day I presented this project the students seemed very excited. We had previously watched a few videos about kindness and valuing others and were in the middle of a literary choice unit based around the following texts: *Skin Deep*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *A Lesson Before Dying*, and *Catalyst*. In all these texts young adults do not feel valued or affirmed, so as I explained the project we talked about how important others having affirm us is to our emotional well-being, and how important that is to motivation in school. We had also written and discussed college essays, as well as the process of moving on from OHS after graduation. Many of them voiced support for the “affirmation station” as a way for us to value each other prior to graduation and to reflect on the good parts of life, not just the bad.

- Writing the first note, a note to themselves, proved to be difficult. Many of the students struggled to write something positive about themselves. I was surprised by this, but also saddened. How awful that they ended up as seniors at OHS with nothing good to say about themselves? I did end up working with some students to brainstorm ideas. However, everyone did eventually write a note to themselves. It is interesting to me that some of them have left their personal note in the pocket all year, returning to read it again and again.
- After the initial prompt, I used other opportunities throughout the year to have them write other notes. For example, after working in a group for a major speech I had them write to a group member. I also allowed cross-class notes, and many write to others in my senior classes. Even students in my AP class who were not involved in the project were the recipients of letters.
- Up until February break the notes flowed back and forth pretty regularly. Since then, specifically after senior trip, the flow has slowed down. I did see a return to notes after our faculty suffered a recent loss, though, and while reading and working with the text *Tuesdays with Morrie*. Both of these prompted students to return to writing, which I celebrated.
- One aspect of the project that I liked was it gave me a quick and easy platform to share my own positive feedback with students. I try to send home our good news cards as the year goes on, but often run out of time to follow through. This was faster as it was in my room and did not involve looking up any addresses. I could also clip out relevant newspaper article and put them in their mailboxes. Some students commented that they appreciated that as well.

### **Renee Warren**

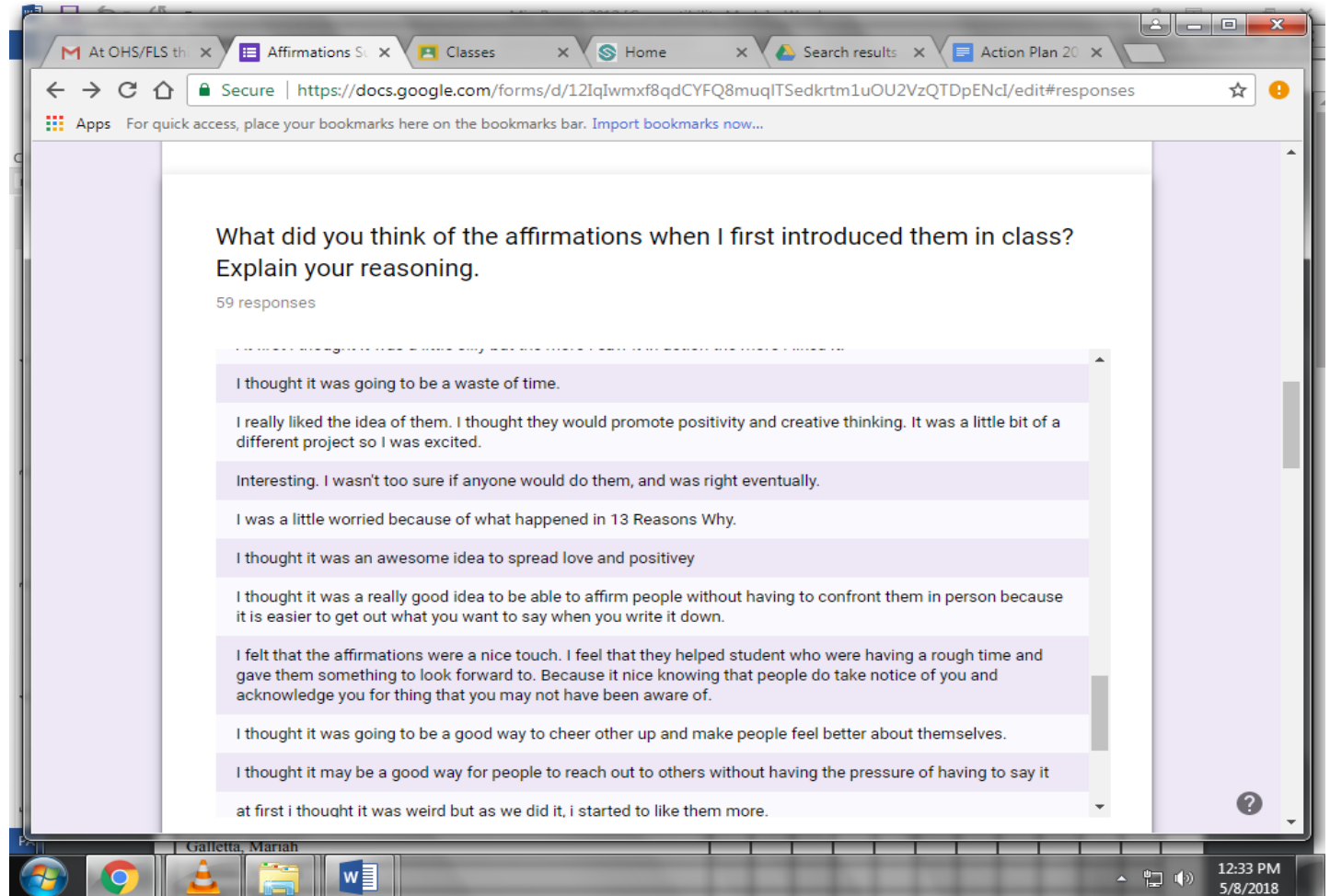
- Anecdotal evidence (observed behavior and students comments): To begin the project I wanted to show an inspirational clip to show students how easy it is to focus on one task in our life to begin a series of positive reactions. We discussed how easy it is for us to become overwhelmed and then give up or to shut down. Therefore, I showed them a clip entitled, "Change the World" with a positive challenge from US Navy Admiral William McRaven. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sK3wJAxGfs>). This clip challenged them to perform a simple task of making their bed every day to set a positive tone for their lives. While some laughed at the suggestion, we were able to discuss McRaven's idea and the significance of "starting somewhere" and being positive to overcome adversity. He challenged listeners to "measure a person by the size of their heart" [not by external appearances]. The "the power of hope" and the "power of one person" was part of the final message. This then shifted our discussion to being more positive in our actions and conversations and the potential impact that would have on others in our building, our families and our friendships.
- Their first note of affirmation was supposed to be an easy one; however, many struggled to find something positive to say about themselves. There was one student who sat staring at the sheet of paper for the entire period! She couldn't find one thing to write to herself. When the bell rang, she asked a friend to write something for her. This really made me sad because this student has so many positive things about her! (This same student had no problem writing to others and did several notes!) This provided me with the opportunity to see how several of the students felt about themselves that I would not have known otherwise. I was able to provide sincere, positive affirmations to each one of them!
- While I did provide other opportunities/prompt for students to write to others, if they were not specifically prompted or tied to a grade, I found relatively few wrote affirmations on their own. This reinforced the need to do this project earlier in the year, even if the format were changed somewhat to reflect new students. I wasn't sure if students were not used to being positive or if they were not used to writing their "feelings" on paper. I was surprised at how difficult this project seemed to be for many of them. As I stopped giving formal prompts (but still reminded them that they could write affirmations to anyone in the four classes) the notes slowed. The week that we lost a faculty member I expected to see a rise again; however, even after a reminder and suggestion that it would be a good time to write one, few did. Only five notes were in the basket that week!



## ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:

To obtain feedback on the project we sent out a survey via Google Forms. We asked all the students (approximately 150) we had worked with for the project to complete an anonymous survey. We received 59 responses from our combined cohort, which is quite a few more than we had anticipated since the survey was voluntary.

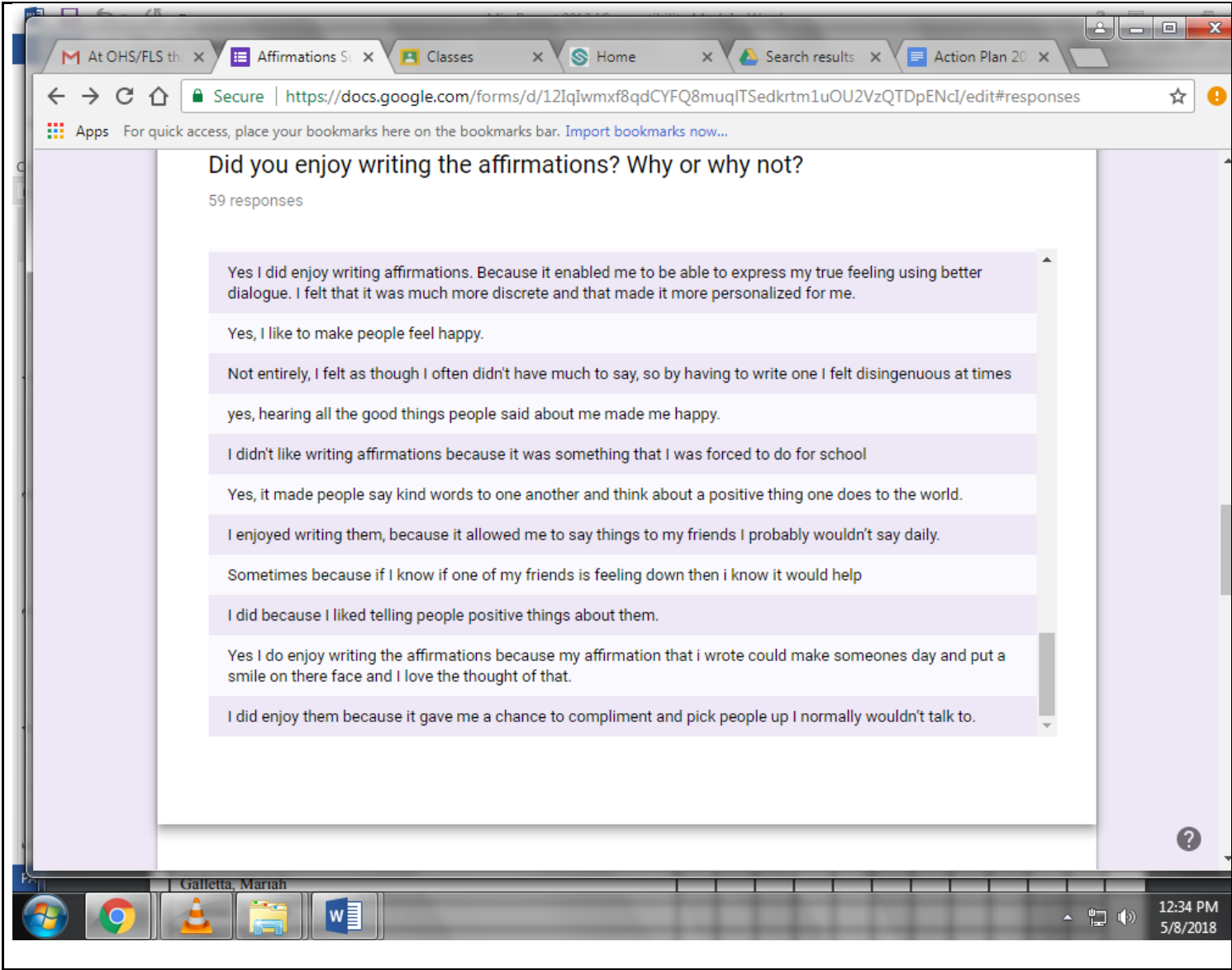
Here are some of the questions and responses:

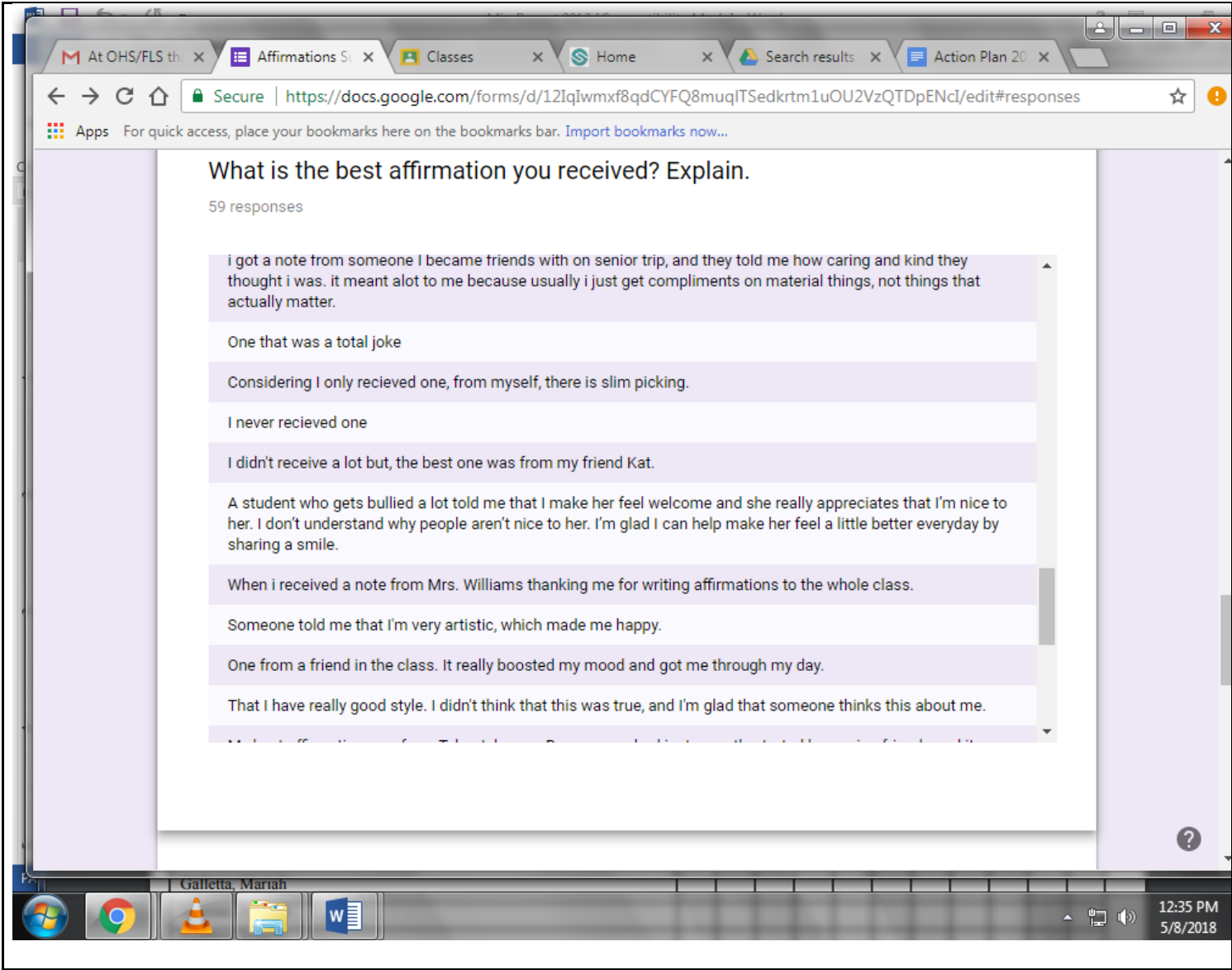


The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a Google Forms survey. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/12IqIwmxf8qdCYFQ8muqITsedkrm1uOU2VzQTDpENcl/edit#responses>. The survey question is: "What did you think of the affirmations when I first introduced them in class? Explain your reasoning." Below the question, it indicates "59 responses". The responses are displayed in a list of text boxes, each with a vertical scrollbar on the right. The responses are as follows:

- I thought it was going to be a waste of time.
- I really liked the idea of them. I thought they would promote positivity and creative thinking. It was a little bit of a different project so I was excited.
- Interesting. I wasn't too sure if anyone would do them, and was right eventually.
- I was a little worried because of what happened in 13 Reasons Why.
- I thought it was an awesome idea to spread love and positivity
- I thought it was a really good idea to be able to affirm people without having to confront them in person because it is easier to get out what you want to say when you write it down.
- I felt that the affirmations were a nice touch. I feel that they helped student who were having a rough time and gave them something to look forward to. Because it nice knowing that people do take notice of you and acknowledge you for thing that you may not have been aware of.
- I thought it was going to be a good way to cheer other up and make people feel better about themselves.
- I thought it may be a good way for people to reach out to others without having the pressure of having to say it
- at first i thought it was weird but as we did it, i started to like them more.

The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the user's name as "Galletta, Mariah" and the system clock as "12:33 PM 5/8/2018".





At OHS/FLS th x Affirmations St x Classes x Home x Search results x Action Plan 20 x

Secure | <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/12IqIwmx8qCYFQ8muqITsedkrtm1uOU2VzQTDpENcl/edit#responses>

On a scale of 1-5, how much did you like the affirmations?

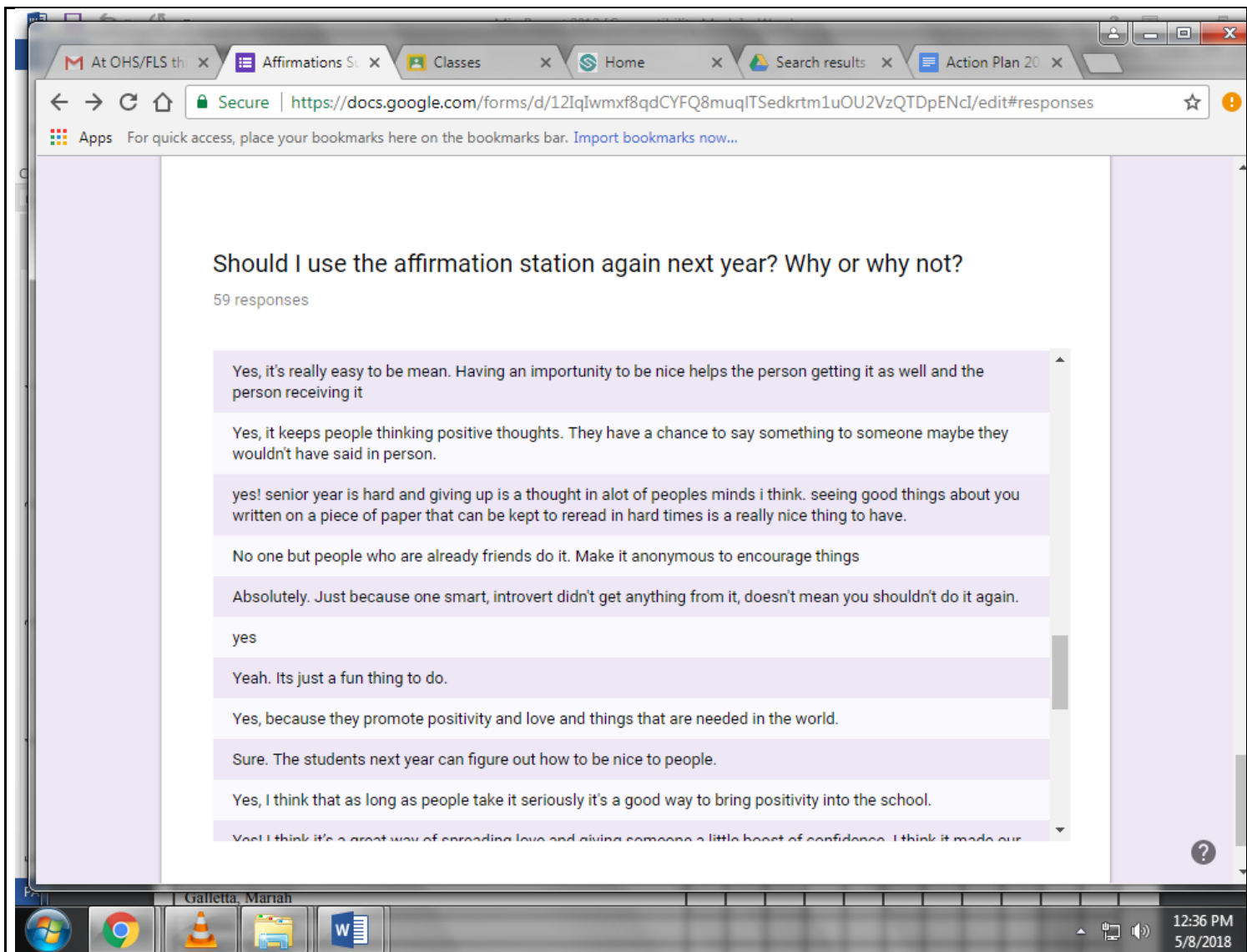
59 responses

Rating	Count	Percentage
1	4	6.8%
2	2	3.4%
3	7	11.9%
4	19	32.2%
5	27	45.8%

Should I use the affirmation station again next year? Why or why not?

Galletta, Mariah

12:35 PM  
5/8/2018



After looking over the results, we do feel that we made a difference this year for some students. Anecdotally we heard students comment that they wished we had begun this earlier. We both wonder if we had done so if the participation would have been more consistent and self-initiated. It is something that both of us will probably continue with in the future, especially since a majority of the respondents encouraged us to do so.

**Participant's Names: Gretchen Fronk & Gina Iorio**

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

Our project for this year focuses on bringing together a variety of students to work together on projects such as puzzles, chess, Legos and art pieces. The goal is to see whether or not students will partner with those they don't normally "hang out" with and if they do, what type of chemistry they have when working together on a challenging project. The idea is to bring diverse students together (gender, age) to help each other figure out various mental challenges and support each other in doing so. We are hoping to see positive, collaborative effort, which might foster sustained acceptance and create a positive social and emotional school community.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

Our rationale for this project is to build camaraderie within our building; for students to recognize the worth in all people. It is also to facilitate time for students to engage in “different” forms of learning besides the typical academic learning. We believe that learning can take place in activities such as chess (patience, forethought) and puzzles (spatial organization, hierarchy), activities that are not normally thought of as typical fundamentals to academic learning. Additionally, we believe that spending small breaks doing activities that are outside the “normal” academic work required throughout a student’s day in high school, is beneficial to a student’s emotional well-being and mental state of mind. Sometimes, people need to take a step away from their current focus and “reboot,” so that when they return to that focus, they do so with a better concentration level.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

Purchase/donation of puzzles, Legos, art crafts, games—Fall semester

December-April: Certain activities will be placed out for students to engage with during certain times of the year. The library will utilize three of its study tables to house various puzzles, Legos and games. Students will be able to sit at any table of their choice, sign in for that particular activity, and spend a period working collaboratively with others towards the completion of the activity. Additionally, specific days will be set aside for four classes (three sophomore and one senior) to have “breaks” from their regular English class work, to have time to “reboot” through coloring, games, puzzles, etc.

January-May: conduct informal interviews with students to collect data. Received feedback, and make changes

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

**Documentation** – This will happen in a few ways. We will keep ongoing notes on comments, number of students playing and who (sign-in sheets), which activities are most used, written reactions from students, etc. The sign-up sheets will record the students interacting (gender, age), when and for how long.

**Data** - A variety of data will be collected including annotations of observations, sign-in sheets, in-formal interviews with students and written feedback.

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

Money is most certainly a necessary part of this project. Funding will largely come from the high school librarian’s budgetary allotment for the school year. We will also be asking for donations of games, puzzles, etc. that will be added to our collection of activities. In the four classes, students will be allowed to bring in their choice of activities to engage in.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

The one change that I (Gretchen) made, in my classroom, was to add the Breakout EDU game. Having attended a gaming conference that used this particular game, I thoroughly enjoyed playing the game, so asked how I might be able to get the kits for my use. Much to my surprise Oswego County BOCES (Citi) already owned six kits! I spoke to the head librarian and she delivered the kits to me two days later. I did have to do some research to find appropriate games to use with the kits, but this was not too difficult. The time-consuming part was the prep work to set up the games – hours. I allowed my sophomore classes to play the games that I set up for them.

\*\*\* A little background on Breakout EDU: If you have ever gone to The Escape Room (Destiny has one), then you will get an idea of this game. They are very similar to each other. Breakout EDU, in essence, is a box with multiple locks on it, a smaller box with a lock, a UV flashlight, a UV pen, and a thumb drive. The game involves a background story that “Sets the scene” and various clues to unlock the different locks. The person or group is trying to win the game by solving the clues and opening all of the locks and ultimately, to get into the large box. I used a couple of the pre-established Breakout EDU games found on the Breakout EDU website. The games are online, but I had to print everything out and set up each aspect of the game. This was the time-consuming part! Five hours plus for two games! I also bought lollipops to place in the large box as a prize. This is a great game that promotes collaboration and problem solving. Do be aware that each kit is quite expensive - \$150 apiece. So, if you want to utilize this game, I would suggest inquiring with your local BOCES program.

In the library, I found that students were very eager to try the games, since they were new and something I (Gina) had not done in ten years. However, over time, and with more choices, I found that students no longer wanted to participate in any of the activities except for UNO.

In the beginning I had students coming down every day to play with my two chess boards. Students would gather around, wait for their turn and watch their classmates play one another. One student, a male 9<sup>th</sup> grader, did not know how to play and taught himself the rules of the game. My LEGO kits were popular at first too, but after the first month, no one would touch them. I did have stickers by numbers which remained popular, but I only had two due to funding and they were \$29.99 a piece. Chess, checkers, puzzles, mind puzzles and Scrabble were all very popular in the beginning, but students lost interest in these as the year progressed.

I also had a Little Bits kit, which allowed students to create things. I made challenges, and for two months I had students working with the kits, but again, interest waned.

I think that I bought too many things, too quickly, and the novelty wore off for my students. They had so many choices; they may have been overwhelmed. If I were to do this again, I would limit the number of things I would present to students. For example, I asked for donations of puzzles. When I asked the faculty and staff to donate some, I had none. By the end of the first week, I had over 25 puzzles. There were so many choices that students did not know what to pick. Next year, I will only have a selection of two puzzles to pick from and then as the year goes on I may add to their selection.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

The students LOVE having “free time” or Fun Day as we called it in my (Gretchen’s) classroom. The students who visited the library also found enjoyment in activities that they consider fun, yet actually use their brains to figure out. My students ask, frequently, for another Fun Day. I do have to give them one every few weeks. I do this to keep the interest high for these days and to allow for class work to still be focused on and completed. What I have found is that the students really do have more energy and focus after being given free time. They appreciate that I have recognized that they sit all day in chairs and, for the most part, aren’t doing much verbal interaction. So, to be given this opportunity, they are appreciative and willing to work harder afterwards. It is like in elementary school, when the little ones are full of energy and recess is used to get the wiggles out. Just because the little ones have grown into big kids, doesn’t mean that the wiggles don’t exist and need to be gotten out. I do find it a tad bit sneaky that I am tricking my students by providing games that make them think and reason out moves. But, this is a good thing and skills that they need to proceed in life.

The students did gravitate to particular games. These included card games (mainly War) Jenga and Chess. The next most popular activities included coloring and Billiards (one student brought in his portable pool table!). I will need to purchase one of these! Students did get quite competitive. I wasn’t expecting this level of emotion to emerge. At times, there was yelling and loud laughter, with the occasional “You’re cheating.” But, I feel that these reactions are evidence of the learning that was going on. Socially, the kids had to figure out how to interact with each other and do so in a fair and equitable way, in a manner that all involved were accepting of. This type of learning is not regular mixed in with tradition academics yet is required to function properly within society. The students had to problem solve their differences within the games; I tried to keep my role to observer, so as not to

interfere with this learning. I did, on one occasion, step in, because I felt that an adult presence and de-escalation was needed. This happened during one of the Billiards games. Yeah, I was expecting that game to bring on the most expression! The kids were extremely heated with each other because they each felt that their way of the playing was the correct way, and the other player was not adhering to the rules. By stepping in, I was able to “teach” that differences do occur and that we need to figure out how to handle them in a mature way that enables all to be happy and continue on with the activity. Outside of this example, the students were able to problem solve and collaborate to keep things running smoothly.

Another observation I noted, was that these Fun Days allowed individuals’ strengths to surface. By that I mean that students who would normally be the center of attention ended up in the background and those that typically are the wallflowers were able to shine. The games provided a different type of learning that isn’t normally found in the academic world, so those that are otherwise reserved and quiet in the classroom could lead the activity they were involved in, as they were comfortable in doing so. And those that rise to the top of the academic achievement were suddenly in foreign territory. I loved watching students push themselves to learn a new game, mostly Chess, by willingly pairing with another student who would teach them the game. How often do we see this happen, willingly, in our classrooms? Opportunities such as these can then be applied to students’ regular studies with something as simple as “Remember when you were playing Chess for the first time and you” put yourself out there” and took a chance?”

I found that students would teach each other Chess, which was interesting to watch. Both genders gravitated to the games. When it came to LEGOS, the girls would try to figure out the kits, and the boys would try to create cars, buildings, and succeeded with a still standing large tower. One nice thing I saw was a foreign exchange student looking at the LEGO table. A group of students asked him if he had ever used them before and he stated he had not. They did not have them in his country. They invited him over to build The Capitol Building.

Gaming in the library brought all student groups together, which is something that, as educators, we want to encourage. Scrabble, Chess and UNO broke down the class barriers that existed in our school community.

While I (Gina) was excited to try games and puzzles in the library, my idea was met with some resistance from a few teachers because they wanted the library to be for studying only. However, I believe in natural consequences and as long as students were following the rules of the library, I encouraged them to play games. Teachers who participated in the Project SMART class were very supportive of my ideas.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined our data and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

Students LOVE having the time to physically get up and move around! They enjoy doing something different that the normal classroom experience. A few of the comments that the students have made are: “Nice opportunity to relax,” “Relaxing,” “Good break.” While observing students as they participated in playing games, coloring, etc., I (Gretchen) found that there were a lot of smiles, laughter and interaction. Students really enjoyed being able to chill out and engage in an activity that helped them “lose themselves” a bit. A few of the comments from students that exemplify this observation were: “After playing with friends, I feel like I have more energy and I’m ready to start the day.” “I am more awake now and energized.” “I felt happy and more excited for the rest of the day.” “I was kind-of in a bad mood. After playing Jenga, I feel more relaxed and in a better mood.” “...wasn’t worried about the atmosphere around me. I felt calmer and more relaxed.” There was quite a bit of repeated responses indicating that the students felt more relaxed, calmer and happier after playing a game. What was also interesting to see, in the students’ written responses, was the number of students who found escape in playing games. Three of these students’ responses were: “I felt sad because I just had a death in the family. But after playing, my mind went somewhere else while I was doing the activity.” And “I was upset and tired and miserable. I feel 100x better and happier and my mind forgot what I was upset about and was focused on the game. It was lots of fun.” And “When I came in I was kind of mad about things in my mind. Once we started playing, I lost thought of what I was thinking about before. I was concentrated on something else. I was laughing and more happy.” What an amazing revelation; games can have a strong impact on students’ emotions.

What I also enjoyed seeing was the interaction of students that I don’t normally see pair up. This became more and more frequent, as if the students are becoming more comfortable and eager to play different games, as the year progressed. The most noticeable groupings were those that included the more marginalized students with the more outgoing ones. These are typically two groups that don’t ever interact, yet here they are in my classroom, comfortably talking and playing a game together.



As with Fronk's classes, I (Gina) found gaming allowed students to relax from their academics and they seemed less stressed at the end of the period. In addition, students were off their phones and were talking to one another. They were competitive and had to resolve conflicts without my intervention.

Students also wanted to build a community within the library. There was less drama, which was wonderful. The library became a more relaxed atmosphere and one of the students wanted to buy a fish tank for the library. He asked, and I gave permission. We currently have a two-gallon tank with two gold fish. The students have named the fish, check on them every day and find them fun to watch.

**Participant's Names:** **Karin Button & Thomas Caswell**

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

Students in Criminal Justice will collaborate to create one-page comics consisting of 6-9 panels regarding landmark judicial cases involving civil liberties. Next, students in Spanish 4 will collaborate to translate each comic into Spanish. The results will be shared with the public by publishing both English and Spanish language versions to Twitter via @CJcazwizzle.

This project will involve the course themes of communication and collaboration. In terms of communication: observing each other's writing patterns in terms of structure, verb conjugation, visual representation through art, negotiating conflicts in civil rights and translation; all as a means to model effective communication. Collaboration will include engaging in online spaces, and cross-curricular cooperative work designed to intentionally support academic learning, including community engagement.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your rationale for the project. Why is this work important?

Understanding and promoting civil liberties is important to help students develop an appreciation of civic values and interpretation of law. Translation is an art, requiring one to interpret language often based upon circumlocution, depending on the level of skill of the translator. Furthermore, providing visual representations of important civil liberties concepts in both English and Spanish will increase the scope and reach of the project.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of action steps you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) responsible for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your timeline (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

1. Caswell will work with Criminal Justice students on a project to create the initial comic book pages.
2. Button will work with Spanish 4 students to provide meaningful translations of the comic book pages.
3. Caswell will publish both English and Spanish language versions of the comic book pages on Twitter via @CJcazwizzle.
4. Button will develop a student survey to determine what students have learned and how collaboration within and outside of class has impacted their learning.

**EVALUATION:** What data will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

The student work in both English and Spanish will demonstrate their understanding of civil liberties and language interpretation. The student survey results will provide insights regarding the impact that this project

has had on student learning through collaboration, and the effectiveness of each teacher in facilitating such collaboration.

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

Students will use online Pixton software to develop the comic book pages and online word references when they struggle with translation. Students will use Chromebook and desktop PCs that are already available for use within the school.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

The collaborative project was completed as described in our original proposal. However, coordination between the classes, and the translation process itself, proved challenging, in ways that sometimes surprised the students themselves. For example, some student groups chose the shortest available comic topics based on word count but failed to consider how this might in fact be more difficult to translate into Spanish.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

Spanish students working on the translations often needed to be reminded that the concepts needed to be simplified and reworded. To achieve this end, Spanish students needed to discuss their cases in English in order to analyze the concepts within the content, particularly the rulings of the Supreme Court which were quoted. Student groups needed to work together to come to consensus regarding the meaning of these concepts prior to actually translating the work into Spanish. This proved very challenging and at times frustrating, but ultimately resulted in appropriate and equivalent translations in their finished product.

To improve this collaborative project, the following modifications should be considered:

- Better scheduling and coordination would prove beneficial so that the Criminal Justice students could introduce their work to the Spanish students in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of the concepts involved and to promote better cross-collaboration between the classes.
- Overall, more time should be allotted for the translation work. Spanish students were given 2 weeks in school, and an additional week would yield better results, for a total of 3 weeks.
- Prior to choosing a comic, the teacher should lead a lesson in analyzing a sample comic in order to best model the process of analysis, summarizing, and finally translating.
- After choosing a comic to translate, student groups should first provide a summary of the content in English in order to ensure comprehension prior to attempting translation.
- Allowing time at the end for Spanish students to modify the existing comics in order to create fully Spanish versions of the comics would lead to greater student satisfaction.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_\_\_\_\_ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

1. Students found that choosing the shortest content was more difficult to translate. Students seeking to minimize their work chose the shortest word count, but later were begging to swap with other groups or choose an altogether different topic. Only through this experience would students realize the difficulty involved when inferring meaning from limited text.
2. Surveyed students needed a lot of support with translation. Upon realizing the scope of the work involved in translating, it proved beneficial to have additional practicum student teachers available to assist and provide more individualized guidance in their work. While unintended, these extra resources were invaluable to the process.

3. Despite struggling, students expressed great satisfaction with their work. Nearly all of the surveys indicated that students were frustrated initially, but with the support of their peers, practicum students, and teachers, they found that word-for-word translation was not the best tactic. Rather, as they began to translate more holistically, they gained confidence in their abilities and the final products they created.
4. Students desired greater collaboration between classes and across disciplines. Better scheduling of the semester-long Criminal Justice class and the full-year Spanish class would have allowed the Spanish translations to be fully incorporated into the comics. Spanish students wanted to work more with the art, and Criminal Justice students would have benefitted from seeing their work completed in a new format. Both groups would likely have achieved a greater understanding of the concepts expressed within the comics.

Final thoughts:

Ensuring that both student groups collaborate more closely at the beginning of the translation phase, and at the conclusion, will help extend and enhance the benefits of this worthwhile project. We have found that the project is worth further refinement in order to expand on these benefits to maximize student and teacher learning.

**Participant's Names: Heather Sugar & Carrie Patane**

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

Overall, our project incorporates the outgoing senior class reaching out to the incoming freshman class. Our plan is to ask the seniors (probably in senior English classes) to create a message (either written or drawn) on a sticker that will be placed on a banner that will be revealed on 100 Days to Graduation, so the seniors can see their work. It will then be displayed in the building for the incoming freshmen to see and will be incorporated into Freshman Orientation and Freshman First Day.

The themes for Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning cultivate and support student learning in several ways with our project. In regard to **embodied learning**, our project encourages our outgoing senior population to think about what their four years at OHS has been and what it has taught them ... about not only themselves, but also about others. How can they be more effective at communicating needs and wants? How will these experiences help them as they leave OHS and embark on the next step of their life-journey? Some ideas for literature to include/use as suggested reading for the students that incorporates well with this might be the following books: The Pregnancy Project, by Gaby Rodriguez; American Street by Ibi Zoboi; This Is Where It Ends, by Marieke Nijkamp; Fanboy and Goth Girl, by Barry Lyga; End Game, by Nancy Garden; The Mockingbirds, by Daisy Whitney; and Turtles All the Way Down, by John Green. In regard to **communication**, the students are not only reflecting on what they've learned over the course of their high school journey, but they have the opportunity to share it with the incoming freshman population. In regard to **collaboration spaces**, the students will have the opportunity to reflect/project on the "mark" they're leaving on OHS, and what opportunities they'll have to leave their mark on their future communities (whether Oswego or elsewhere). How can they contribute to or make those communities better places to live and grow? Finally, in regard to **change**, the students will be examining their own growth over their four years here at OHS. What opportunities have they taken to grow when they've been presented? When have they NOT taken that opportunity, and what was the result?

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

This work is so important! By involving all the seniors in our project, they can not only reflect on the types of things that have helped them positively throughout high school, but they'll have the opportunity to work alongside other students they might not know as well and learn what helped those students in their journeys. Part of the goal of this is to help the students learn to embrace the things that are positive influences in others' lives. One take away we hope the students will get out of this project is that everyone has a story, so don't assume you know what's going on in someone else's life.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

1. Speak with senior English teachers to present plan to them and ask them to take one (two?) class period in which they have their students complete their stickers (Heather/Carrie; January English department meeting).
2. Request a day (or two?) to visit Senior English classes to explain our plan and model it. This will allow us to not only get some face time with the students, but also to touch base with former students. While modeling, we can share our own experiences of high school to encourage/guide the students to the realization that everyone does have a story (even teachers!). (Carrie/Heather; January/early February)
3. Speak with Senior class advisor about revealing the finished product during Senior 100 Days to Graduation (Carrie/Heather; January).
4. Senior English teachers will return stickers to Carrie and Heather, who will look over them and apply them to a banner (which, after the project is completed, will read "BUCS ARE", or something related to that). Stickers to be completed during February and March.
5. Throughout project: we'll be available to meet with students that might be struggling/reluctant (Carrie/Heather)
6. Carrie and Heather will apply stickers to banner prior to the Senior 100 Days to Graduation, where final product will be revealed to Seniors (Carrie/Heather; March / Tami Palmitesso, SCA; April??)
7. Speak with Matt Bock/WBUC to see if they could film a short piece to be distributed via announcements (Carrie/Heather; March)
8. Heather and Carrie will speak with Mr. Wallace to determine the best placement for the banner, which will be placed in a prominent location that is easily visible to all, and that the incoming freshmen can take notice of (Heather/Carrie; March)
9. Heather and Carrie will speak with Mr. Wallace/administrators/guidance staff about banner being incorporated into Freshman Orientation (Heather/Carrie; March/April/May)

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

Data will be mainly observation and the information on the banner itself. We may ask the teachers to pay close attention to the discussions their seniors are having as they complete the task and take note of what types of positive remarks are made, as well as any negative remarks that are made. This information might be used to help all teachers in the future as we have discussions with our students in and out of the classroom. The hope is that we see a shift (over the years) from less and less negative types of responses to more and more positive types of responses.

**RESOURCES:**

The resources anticipated are senior English class time; stickers; and a banner. Carrie has spoken with Mr. Wallace about our project, and he has confirmed with her that he will be able to secure money to purchase the

banner used to display the seniors' works. Heather and Carrie will use English department funds to secure the stickers.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

We ended up revamping our project, in one significant way. After meeting with the Senior teachers during our January Regents week, they realized that due to many factors, there were too many time constraints; they did not feel they would be able to adequately help us with our vision. We thought about it and decided that maybe what we hoped to achieve would be even better accomplished by targeting this year's freshmen. So, we spoke with the English 9 teachers about incorporating a mantra unit into the Of Mice and Men unit they do each year, and they willingly agreed to help us. The action itself remained much the same: the students were introduced to the idea and power of mantras via a Google slides presentation that we, along with Carrie's student teacher, created, and then they thought of their own mantra and created a sticker that included the saying and visual representation of it.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence)

Students in each of the English 9 classes were introduced to the idea of creating or developing their own mantra, in conjunction with their unit on the book, *Of Mice and Men*, by John Steinbeck. They were coached in how to develop their own mantra by viewing and discussing a Google Slide presentation. Once the creative part of the mantra journey kicked in, the kids were very much taken by the process and what they could do to help themselves.

It turned out to be a blessing in disguise that the Senior English teachers didn't have the necessary time to help us. Asking students at the end of their freshman year to reflect on their year, and how they got through some difficult "growing pains" helped them to realize what they did to make it through those times. It also encouraged them to look ahead to the future and consider what they need to do to help themselves be successful individuals ... and even how they can help others as well.

It was interesting to note by the pre-mantra lesson survey that freshmen did not use mantras already in their everyday lives as a coping strategy, so this lesson will have a greater impact on the soon to be sophomores than it would have had on them if the seniors had created the mantras. It will be interesting to see how this lesson and the experience of creating their own mantras in their freshman year grows on them over the next 3 years.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined data from a survey the students (Carrie's English students) took before they created their mantras and found the following:

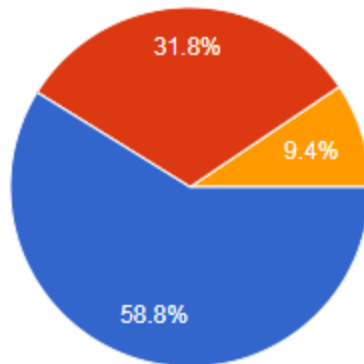
Students were introduced to the idea of creating their own mantras during their unit on the book, *Of Mice and Men*, by John Steinbeck. They first were shown a Google Slides presentation, which included a TED talk, and explained the goal of the project (to reflect on their first year at OHS, and what helped them through the year; it also will hopefully serve as a way to help the students through the remainder of their time here). The presentation showed the students explicitly how they might create their own mantra and why they are so important and powerful (for example, they have the ability to provide empowerment; strength; a sense of calm). Several examples of mantras were provided, as well as the expectation for how to go about creating their own "mantra stickers."

The following survey results were taken from a survey given prior to the mantra project beginning:

## Have you noticed the daily quotes in the front of the room?



85 responses



- Yes - I always look at them
- Sometimes- I look at them once and a while.
- No - I don't really look at them

The majority of the students (90.6%) look at the daily quotes Carrie places at the front of her room each day. They're aware of this seemingly small step their teacher takes to help them not just as students, but as people. The fact that so many (58.8%) look at them daily shows how much they look forward to this part of the day.

"Yes, if I'm having a bad day (morning), depending on what the quote is it can put me in a better mood."

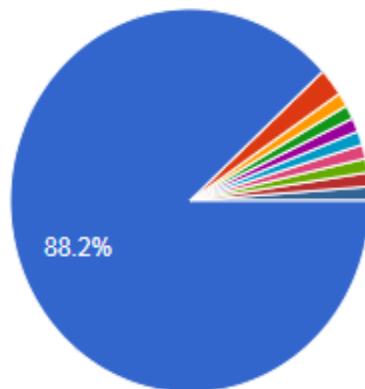
"Yeah they are inspirational and help with life things."

"Yeh they make me think about what a want to accomplish in that day."

## Should I continue to put up quotes next year?



85 responses



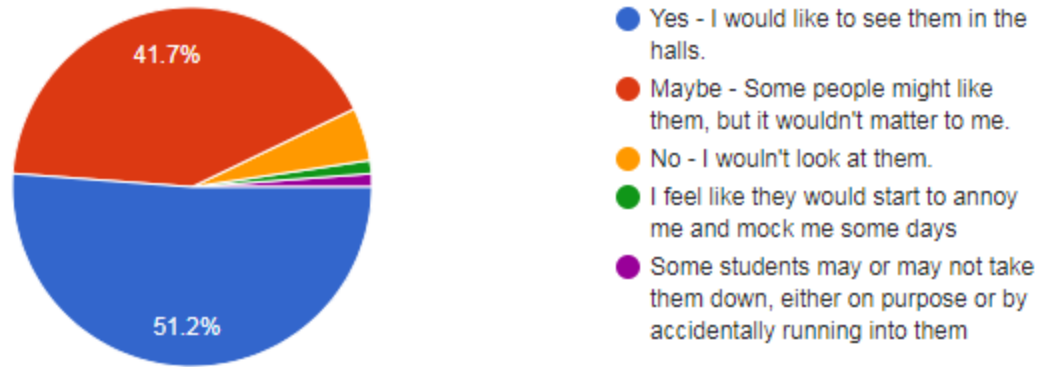
- Yes - put up quotes again up next y...
- No - don't put up quotes next year.
- Yes- put them up every year!
- I don't care
- I do not really have a preference
- I don't know
- Do a daily quote and talk about the...
- That's up to you.

▲ 1/2 ▼

It's easy to see that the overwhelming majority of the students enjoy the quotes and think they'll benefit next year's students as well.

## Do you think it would be beneficial to put up inspirational quotes around the building?

84 responses



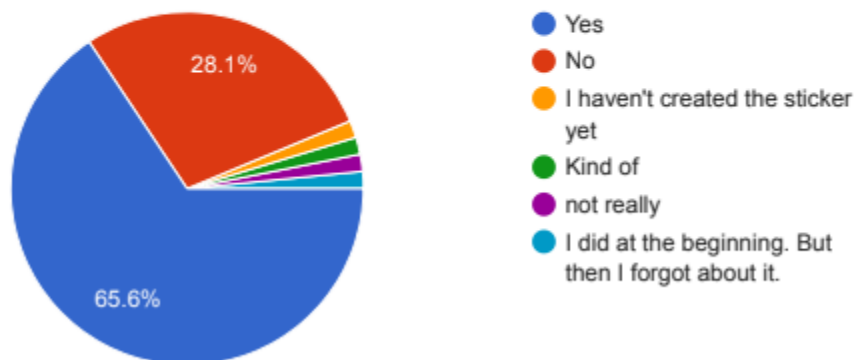
This isn't as highly recommended as the previous question, but when you take the "Maybe" category into consideration, it's plain to see that even though those students may feel they won't benefit from seeing the inspirational quotes around the building, they can see the value in them for other students.

Additionally, a follow-up survey was given, and those results are as follows:

First, the students were asked if they have used the mantra they have created. Of the responses received back, the overwhelming majority (65.6%) responded that they have used their mantras. Next, they were asked what situations they used their mantras in, if they responded that they had used them. Those responses varied from being used in school situations, to being used in extracurricular activities, to being used with friends, and at home. A few students responded that they have used their mantras in several areas of their lives, while alone, or while at work.

## Have you used your mantra since you created your mantra sticker for class?

64 responses



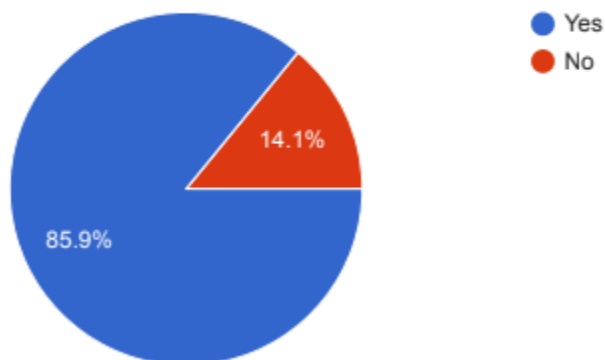
Below are some of the examples of mantras the students created:

- One day at a time
- Adventure is out there
- Whenever you feel like giving up, remember why you started.
- Don't worry about what could go wrong, think about what could go right.
- Always believe in yourself and good things will happen
- No one gives it to you, you have to earn it
- Someone will listen to you, even if it doesn't seem like it.
- Hey man, just think you're one day closer to the weekend

Students were also asked if they had come up with any new mantras since creating their initial one in class. Most students responded that no, they hadn't, although a handful of students had thought of a new one. That's especially interesting, because it implies that those particular students found the process worthwhile enough to think of and apply another mantra to their life situations, thus helping them even more.

### Are you more aware of how you can use mantras to overcome challenges?

64 responses



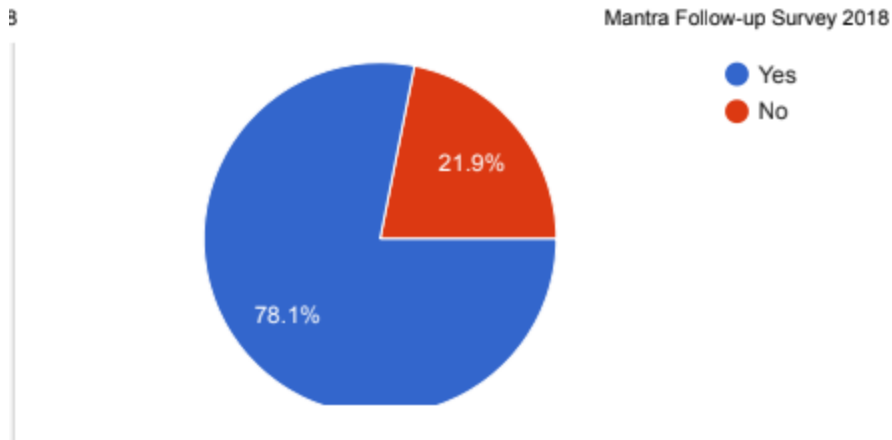
Students were additionally asked if they were aware of how they can use mantras to overcome challenges. The vast majority responded that yes, they had (85.9%).



## Have you become more aware of mantras being used by others around you or in the community or in public advertisements as "Communimantras"?

64 responses

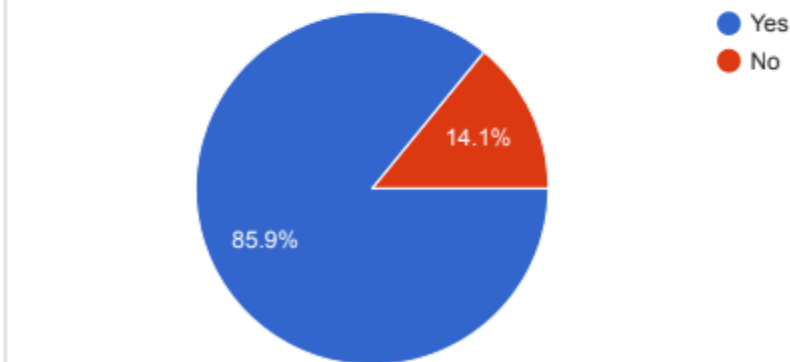
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78.1% of the students responded that they had become more aware of mantras being used by others around them, or out in the community (as "Communimantras"). The community statistic is intriguing because it shows that the students are aware of (or are becoming aware of) the world around them, and how others around them deal with stressors or challenges in their own lives. Not only that, the students feel strongly that the project should be continued, so they see the value in it for themselves and others around them and show that they have a desire for next year's freshmen to find success for themselves.

## Should we do this again with our classes next year?

64 responses



Finally, 85.9% of the students feel that mantras should be used with students in following years.

To conclude, this project was not only fun for the students (and teachers!), but informative as well. More students than either of us anticipated report a continuing desire to use their mantras. It would be interesting to have the

opportunity to check in with them next year to see if they continue to keep their mantra in mind and use it to their benefit, or if they've forgotten about it by then. Perhaps they'll have come up with something new. We will check in with the English 10 teachers to see if they can give the kids a quick survey for us as the end of the 2018-2019 school year approaches.

