

ACTION PROJECT ASSIGNMENT (15 POINTS) ¹

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has.” –Margaret Mead

GOALS

The purpose of this assignment is:

- To plan and implement an action project to educate/challenge yourself and/or others around issues related to the topic of your dialogue.
- To take the information, ideas, and skills you are acquiring in this class and to use it in your action project.
- To work collaboratively with a group of diverse peers.
- To reflect on what you learned from the experience of working together on this project (individually and as group).
- To share your project and what you learned from it (individually and as group) during your in-class group presentation.

EXPECTATION AND PROCEDURES

Each member of your team will be expected to participate and collaborate actively in the selection of a relevant issue, identification of goals and action steps, implementation of the action steps, and reflection on the experience. Refer to the *ACTION CONTINUUM AND SPHERE OF INFLUENCE HANDOUT* posted on this website to help frame and plan your effort.

Although you will be able to do some planning during class time, we expect you will schedule 2-3 meetings outside class to plan or carry out your effort, particularly as you get closer to the assignment due date. It is recommended, therefore, that you identify a block of time and location to meet as a group outside of class. As part of this process, you are asked to keep minutes of your meetings, and to take turns facilitating, time-keeping, and recording minutes. Each time you meet we encourage you to decide on a facilitator, note-taker and timekeeper for the next meeting. We also encourage thanking everyone for their ideas, energy, and dedication.

Instructors will oversee action project teams. Should you have any questions feel free to contact your instructor via e-mail.

¹ Educ ED 395Z: Exploring Differences and Common Ground, Social Justice Education Program, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Project Timeline

Date	Task	Assignment Due
Week: (in class)	First group meeting	
Week: (in class)	Second group meeting	Proposal Draft (handwritten)*
other dates that you will schedule as a group	continue meeting to finalize project proposal	
Week:	Final Proposal (1-2 pages) 5 pts
Week:	Implement Action Project	
Week:	Final group presentation.	Group Presentation (15 minutes) 5 pts Final Report (2 pages) 5 pts

SMALL GROUP TASKS

Part One: Developing an Action Project Proposal

Select an issue that is relevant to the topics addressed in your dialogue group and that the members of your action project team care about. For example, consider issues that you want to explore further, or that you want to help others explore; information or ideas that you want to share with others; or actions that you want to encourage people to take. Before deciding on an issue, spend some time talking about why that issue is important to everyone in your group, and describe where you think you are (as individuals and as a group) in terms of your own knowledge or awareness about this particular issue.

Identify goals/objectives for your project and describe which “next steps” you will be taking in addressing/creating change around this issue. For example, you may decide to collectively write a letter to a public official or a newspaper, actively address a campus issue, attend a campus event as a group to educate yourselves, or organize an event in one of your residence halls or student organizations about a specific issue or area of concern.

The Action Project Proposal (5 points)

Your team will write a one-page proposal describing what you want to accomplish and what steps you will take to accomplish your goal(s). If you are not ready to decide on an issue to focus on, feel free to outline your ideas for more than one issue. The proposal draft is due on _____. The draft proposal can be handwritten as long as it is legible. The facilitator will comment on your draft and email you feedback by _____. Your final proposal is due on _____. The final proposal should be 1-2 pages (typed, double-space, 12 point font).

Your proposal should cover the following points:

- What is your main goal(s)?
- Which action steps do you need to take achieve your main goal(s)?
- How will you divide up roles, tasks, and responsibilities within your group? (Please be specific about who will do which tasks.)

- How will you communicate outside of class?
- How often and when will you meet outside of class?
- How will you know if you accomplished your goals?

Grading criteria

1. Clear writing and organization (1 point)
2. Adequately describes the goals the team wants to accomplish (2 points)
3. Adequately describes the action steps, or how the team will accomplish its goals (2 points)
4. 1 point will be subtracted for lateness.

Part Two: Implementation

You should complete your action plan by _____. Your tasks for this stage of the project will depend on what you want to do. For example, if you choose to organize an event in a residence hall, you will need to reserve the space, acquire any materials or information you might need, plan the event, publicize it, and actually run it. We encourage you to create a clear task list and time line and to make sure that everybody in the group understands their responsibilities and can accomplish their tasks on time. Some questions to consider in implementing your plan:

- What is our To Do list? Who will follow up with what?
- What materials do we need? How will we get them?
- How will we communicate outside of class?
- Where and when will we meet outside of class?
- How do we know we are accomplishing our goals?

Part Three: Action Project Evaluation, Final Report, and Class Presentation

After you take your action(s), take some time to evaluate and reflect back on what contributed to make the experience easy or difficult for you as individuals, and as a group, and what you learned from this experience. Your group should identify and reflect upon 1-2 factors that supported, and 1-2 factors that hindered, your ability to plan and implement your action steps. For example, consider how your ability to work together as a team, or your ability to find adequate resources on campus to carry out your actions, helped or got on the way of achieving your goals. We also encourage you to think about what you would do differently if you had another opportunity like this.

THE ACTION PROJECT REPORT (5 POINTS)

Each team will prepare a 2-page written report (typed, double-space, 12 point font) focusing on the following questions. (You may want to refer back to your project proposal.)

- What were your initial goals/objectives?
 - Which action steps did you plan?
 - How did you carry your action steps?
 - Was your initiative successful and how do you know?
 - Which factors hindered or supported your effort?
 - What improvements could be made?
 - What did you learn from this group effort? Specifically, what did you learn about dialogue?
- The report is due in class on _____.

Grading criteria

1. Clear writing and organization (1 point)
2. Adequately addresses the questions listed in the guidelines (2 points)
3. Gives detailed examples of how the team achieved its goals (2 point)
4. 1 point will be subtracted for lateness.

The Action Project Presentation (5 points)

Each team will have 15 minutes during class on _____ to present your action project to your classmates. Each team member should be involved in the presentation. Your presentation should be informative creative, and should showcase the talents and personalities of your action project team in order to help the rest of the class understand your process and experiences.

Your presentation should address the same questions as your final action report. You may also want to mention how you divided up roles and tasks within your group, and how that worked for you. Each group should also prepare 1 or 2 visuals (e.g., posters, overheads, and/or handouts) summarizing some of the key points you will cover in your presentation.

Grading criteria

1. Clear and enthusiastic oral presentation (1 point)
2. Demonstrates creativity and team work (2 points)
3. Well organized and informative; adequately addresses the questions listed in the guidelines (2 points)

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Ayvazian, A. (2004). Interrupting the cycle of oppression: The role of allies as agents of change. In P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.) *Race, class and gender in the United States* (6th ed., pp. 598-604). New York, NY: Worth.

Harro, B. (2000) The cycle of liberation. In M. Adams, W. J. Blumenfeld, R. Castañeda, H. W. Hackman, M. L. Peters, & X. Zúñiga (Eds.), *Readings for diversity and social justice: An anthology on racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism and classism* (pp.463-469). New York, NY: Routledge.

Johnson. A. G. (2006). What can we do? In *Privilege, power and difference* (pp. 125-153). Boston: Mc Graw Hill.

McClintock, M. (2000). How to interrupt oppressive behavior. In M. Adams, W. J. Blumenfeld, R. Castañeda, H. W. Hackman, M. L. Peters, & X. Zúñiga (Eds.), *Readings for diversity and social justice: An anthology on racism, antisemitism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism and classism* (pp. 483-485). New York, NY: Routledge.

Piercy, M. (1980). The low road. In *The moon is always female* (pp.44-45) New York, NY: Knopf.