

**L.A.P.D. “Agents and Assets” Curriculum and Activity Guide
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Intro

The Los Angeles Poverty Department (L.A.P.D) is a Community Theater company for the homeless of the Skid Row section of downtown Los Angeles. Founded in 1985, the L.A.P.D has historically used theater with other means of public education, organizing, partnering and activism to call attention to the plight of the poor. Through its performance art, LAPD creates a direct communication between the performers the audiences. Through this connection the theater company is able to bridge a myriad of social and economic barriers. LAPD is dedicated to creating community on Skid Row and to the artistic and personal development of its members. The artistic focus is to create performance work that connects their members' lived experiences with the social forces that shape our lives and communities. One such performance entitled, "Agents and Assets" deals with the people whose communities have been most devastated by the drug trade and the counterproductive drug policies created by the government.

The text of "Agents and Assets" is a March 18, 1998, hearing transcript from the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (the committee charged with the oversight of the government's intelligence agencies). The allegations in question in this session were made in a 1996 series of articles by journalist Gary Webb in the San Jose Mercury News, which alleged CIA involvement in crack cocaine trafficking into the Los Angeles area.

Each performance is followed by a discussion on drug policy and approaches to recovery from addiction, as well as proposed public health models that emphasize treatment rather than incarceration. These discussions are initiated by presentations from scholars, recovery professionals, drug policy reform advocates, community leaders, and politicians, and quickly become general discussions with audience members. The intent is to create a discussion in which the lived experience of community residents is engaged and presented and where all present can speak as citizens on an even footing.

The following is the curriculum guide for the LAPD's performance "Agents and Assets." This guide looks to teach students about the three main themes that run throughout the LAPD's performance. These three themes are The Drug Trade in America and Addiction Recovery, Journalistic Practices and Methods, and Community Theater. The lessons and activities within this guide are designed in a similar structure as the performance itself in that space for discussion is given with the hopes of engaging students. The lessons are not only designed to teach the material, but are also designed to engage students and build their skills in the crucial areas of critical thought self expression and literacy. By literacy I mean the ability to process and understand information and by critical thought, I mean active engagement of that information through analysis, research and critique in order to form one's own informed opinion and truth. By self expression I mean the transformation of ones informed opinions and truths into a medium that can be shared and understood by others. The four main mediums of information that are targeted in this curriculum are reading, writing, discussion and what we like to call R.A.P. (Research, Analysis and Presentation). Each of these mediums of self expression and information are touched upon in each lesson and their activities.

Each lesson provides the students an opportunity to read, write, discuss, and “R.A.P.” during and after the lesson. This guide has also tried to incorporate numerous forms of media into the classroom in order to diversify the class and to simulate and prepare students to deal with the multimedia barrage they experience in today’s society. By the end of this curriculum students will not only have an educated grasp on Community Theater, drugs in America and journalism, but they will also have the capacity to engage and challenge their knowledge as well as express it to others in a clear and powerful way. The lessons learned are intended to facilitate students’ lives not only in their academic, but in their everyday careers as citizens and fellow human beings.

Just as this introduction has done, each individual lesson will begin with the goals of the lesson, detailing what it is comprised of as well as its connection to the LAPD. After each lesson there is a section of possible activities. Each activity covers one or more of the mediums of information. The teacher may choose to do some or all of these depending on the time he or she has to work with, as long as by the end of the lesson all of the standards are met. The lessons coupled by the activities will effectively teach the mechanics of reading writing, discussion, research analysis and presentation. In addition, this guide, its lessons and activities are all in line with the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s reading writing, speaking and listening standards. Teachers can see which activities and lessons fulfill which academic standards. It is suggested however that teachers look through the standards and become familiar with them to ensure they are choosing the right activities and implementing them correctly in the classroom.

Part of the art sanctuary’s mission is to teach through hip hop and thus the aesthetic of this curriculum is much in the vein of hip hop music and culture. Furthermore, each of the main topics that this curriculum covers is also deeply imbedded in what hip hop is. Hip hop is journalism for urban youth, in that it reports on their lives and expressions, hip hop is a community theater in that it allows a forum for performance and discussion of events and ideas within communities, and hip hop, for better and for worse, deals intimately with drugs in America. Therefore, a section on the relevance of hip hop has been included in each of the theme’s lessons. This hip hop section contains listening exercises and other interesting information and discussion. These sections are designed to further relate the material students learn in class with one of their generations largest and most pervading cultures. As a caveat, it must be said that some material covered in these sections is explicit, and that care should be given in how it is addressed, or if it should be addressed at all. Again, full discretion is given to the teacher as to what he or she chooses to bring to the classroom, however it should be said that these sections are extremely important to student’s development of critical thought about themselves and their culture. By allowing students to discuss freely their ideas and opinions about themselves, their music and their community we as educators allow students to integrate academics throughout their entire life, and gain a firmer understanding of who they are and who they want to be as individuals and as a community.

Curriculum Guide–Drugs–Vocabulary

Stimulant: Revs up the nervous system (increased heart rate, increased adrenaline, heighten sensory nerves)

Depressant: Depresses the nervous system, diminish functional activity, decrease heart rate, mute sensory nerves)

Overdose: The intentional or unintentional consumption of a drug in such a large amount that it threatens the life sustaining bodily functions of the consumer.

Adulteration: The mixing of Powdered Drugs with other, harmful substances of similar look and/or effect ie flour, baking soda etc.

Treatment: focuses on the rehabilitation of drug users, with the assumption that this is a medical or mental health issue rather than a criminal one.

Law enforcement: Deals with drug possession, and drug selling as criminal matters and punishes offenders through the justice system.

Eradication: attempts to reduce production of the illegal substances in other countries.

Interdiction: involves reducing the flow of illegal drugs into the United States by more vigilant patrolling of the nation's borders.

L.A.P.D

Community Theater

Lesson Goals

As stated before, the LAPD is a community theater group from the Skid Row area of Los Angeles. In order for students to fully understand the LAPD's nature and place in American social activism they must first understand what community theater *is*. In this lesson students will learn the definition history and uses of Community Theater. Through the activities students will learn what Community Theater is and its role in society, and the basics of acting, playwriting and production.

The goals of this lesson guide is (to use Dwight Conquergood's three A's of performance ethnography) academically to learn about this under-represented form of theater, artistically to learn how to create a form of community-based theater and socially to foster listening across divides and to give public voice to topics and viewpoints not generally addressed openly.

Definition:

- a. Community Theater is a very popular form of theatre in which all or most of the participants are unpaid or "amateur" in every sense of the word. Community theatre generally resembles professional theatre in all ways except in the unpaid nature of the artists. Community theatre is often seen as adding to the social capital of a community, in that it develops the skills, community spirit and artistic sensibilities of those involved. It can also create a place for debate, self-expression and interactivity that is important for the health of a community.

II. History

- a. Community Theater has been around since before the Revolutionary War, however, it wasn't until the turn of the last century that the idea really took off in America. With the advent of motion picture movies, many of the small-town professional playhouses were either closed or converted to movie-houses. Yet, there was still in these small communities, a demand for live theatre and thus amateur theatre groups and associations began to form all across the country. Today, there are literally thousands of community theatre groups around the country from gypsy troupes, to more established companies, to larger associations that have built their own theatre houses in larger metropolitan areas.
- b. The average community theatre does not aspire to professional status (although most aspire to professional standards). Only a small percentage of members go on to pursue a career in professional theatre. All of them, however, share a love and enthusiasm for theatre. Community Theater provides a space for celebrating, promoting and performing the dramatic arts using the pooled talents and resources of the community. As such many of these community theaters sponsor competitions, play writing contests and scholarship programs. Community Theater also creates a liable forum for discussion and debate about issues specific to the community itself, and thus can serve as both a diagnostic and therapeutic tool for social improvement, activism and change.

III. Examples

- a. The North Stars is a unique after school arts program for teens 13-18 years old who are middle and high school students. The North Star brings the students and local schools into the mix by using social history as a text to provide content for the expressive arts, which also teach activism, self-worth, and literacy. The *North Stars* study with a brilliant team of artist-instructors.
- b. Further information:

IV. Playwriting (Taken from Teaching Playwriting in Schools Teachers Handbook)

- a. **Vocabulary:** While teaching vocabulary try and get the definitions from the students themselves by asking them what they think each word means.
 - i. **CHARACTER:** who the actor pretends to be. (Characters want things. They have goals and objectives.)
 - ii. **DIALOGUE:** a conversation between two or more characters.
 - iii. **CONFLICT:** obstacles that get in the way of a character achieving what he or she wants. What the characters struggle against.
 - iv. **SCENE:** a single situation or unit of dialogue in a play.
 - v. **STAGE DIRECTIONS:** messages from the playwright to the actors, technicians, and others in the theater telling them what to do and how to do it.
 - vi. **SETTING:** time and place of a scene.
 - vii. **BIOGRAPHY:** a character's life story that a playwright creates.

- viii. **MONOLOGUE:** a long speech one character gives on stage.
- ix. **DRAMATIC ACTION:** an explanation of what the characters are trying to do.
- x. **BEAT:** a smaller section of a scene, divided where a shift in emotion or topic occurs.
- xi. **PLOT:** the structure of a play, including exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement.
- xii. **EXPOSITION:** the beginning part of a plot that provides important background information.
- xiii. **RISING ACTION:** the middle part of a plot, consisting of complications and discoveries that create conflict.
- xiv. **CLIMAX:** the turning point in a plot.
- xv. **FALLING ACTION:** the series of events following the climax of a plot.
- xvi. **DENOUEMENT:** the final resolution of the conflict in a plot.

V. **Drafting / Editing / Rewriting:** This is the most important stage for amateur playwriting. For many of your students editing and rewriting may be a new concept. Below are listed suggested guidelines and practices for approaching revision in the classroom.

- a. **Show it don't say it:** Things like emotions, settings and characteristics are best described without words. In our everyday lives we usually do not narrate our feelings, rather we *show* them in how we act and behave. Therefore, in order to properly replicate emotion in a play one must *show* it. (*see activity V*).
- b. **Spelling/Grammar**
- c. **Proper Format:**
- d. **Peer Editing:**

Activities

- I. **Ice Breakers:** In order for students to truly engage public performance they must feel comfortable with each other and with the teacher. Ice breakers will allow students to gain this comfort. It is extremely important that the teacher participate with the fervor, excitement and open mind that they would want and expect from their students. The teacher must be the example. These activities can be done at any point during the semester but preferably at the beginning as comfort and familiarity among students will improve the effectiveness of all other activities and lessons.
- a. **Name Game:** Have students form a circle. Have a ball of some sort that can be passed around. Start with yourself, give your name, an activity you like to do and your favorite musical artist or music genre. Pass the ball to some one else and they have to first repeat your name, your activity and your favorite artist/music genre. Then they give their own information, after which, they pass the ball to some one else and

the game repeats. At the end challenge the students individually to try and remember the most people's names, activities and favorite artists/music genres.

- b. **Commonalities:** Split the students into pairs. For the first round, each pair will have 30 seconds to find 5 things they have in common. For the second round, put two pairs together and give the foursome a minute to find something all 4 students have in common. Keep this going, each round doubling the time and number of students. The challenge is to find out how large you can get the groups. After each round students should share what their group has in common.

II. **Free Write:** At the beginning and/or end of the class, have students take five minutes to write whatever comes to mind. If some students would like a subject matter give them something

III. **Vocabulary Review:** (Satisfies 1.1.11. and 1.3.11)

- a. Have students read through a script (Agents and Assets script) or watch a play, movie or television show and identify an example of each vocabulary word (check the resource section for plays online). Make sure each student gets a chance to find an example. You can double up on some of the vocabulary if you have more than 16 students in your class.
- b. Have students take note of how the scripts are formatted. Encourage students to have similar organization in the scripts they will be writing.
- c. Have students analyze, and break down how the director/writer expresses his or her ideas and what those ideas are.
- d. Vocab Quiz (see resources section)

IV. **Group play:**

- a. Have the class as a group write a play, first go over the vocabulary and have them decide what they want the character(s), plot, setting etc to be.
- b. You do not need to stick to the vocabulary, rather let the students naturally work out the elements of the play intuitively as much as they possibly can.
- c. Asking questions can really make this activity take off. The more you probe your students about who their character is, what he or she wants, where the play is, what is happening, what happens next, ect... can really get your students thinking creatively.

V. **Script 1:** (Satisfies 1.4.11 A, 1.5.11. D, 1.2.11)

- a. After students have gone over in class how to write a short play, have them write, in class or as a homework assignment, a short 1-2 page script. The script should include all of the vocabulary elements. Stress that this is only an exercise and that it need not be perfect. If students want to be more ambitious in terms of page length and detail encouraged them to do so.

VI. Show and tell: “Whoa”

- a. Give each student an emotion, characteristic, or state ie angry, shy or cold, and have them act it out. Actors may speak but can only repeat the word “whoa” and must use their tone and body language to communicate its meaning.
- b. Have the other students talk about how the acting student *showed* and *expressed* his or her emotion or characteristic. What kinds of actions, facial expression, tones of voice and gestures did they make or do?
- c. Relate this activity to writing and stress how much can be said by the actions demeanor and behavior of a character or characters.

VII. Character Sketch:

- a. Break the class into groups and have them appoint a secretary in each group to record the information generated. Pass out one photograph or magazine picture, containing two to four people in it, to each group.
- b. Instruct the students to examine the photographs, looking for “clues” as to what type of characters these people are and what type of situation they are in.
- c. Have the students make a character sketch of each person in the picture: give each character a name, age, occupation and set of characteristics.
- d. Ask the students to briefly describe the relationships between their characters.
- e. For a follow up assignment to the activity, have students individually create their own character and write up a character sketch for them.

VIII. Script 2: (Satisfies 1.5.11 E and F)

- a. After students have learned techniques of how to format and edit their plays have them either edit their original play or write another, more fleshed out play 3-4 pages in length.

IX. Improve (Satisfies 1.6.11)

- a. Have students form a circle. Using characters from character creation or others that you have made up, and ask the students to try and assume those personalities. Without talking have the students become that character.
- b. Ask two students to go into the circle and give each of them different characters to assume. In addition, give them a situation and ask them to interact while staying in character. They should be free to talk while interacting.
- c. Again, have the other students talk about how the acting student *showed* and *expressed* his or her emotion or characteristic. What kinds of actions, facial expression, tones of voice and gestures did they make or do?
- d. Again, relate this activity to writing and stress how much can be said by the actions demeanor and behavior of a character or characters.

- X. Peer Review:** (Fulfils 1.6.11.A, B, D and E, 1.5.11. E)
- Group students in pairs and have them read each other's plays.
 - After this, pass out the peer review sheet and have them fill it out, and exchange them with their partner.
 - Keep switching the groups until everyone has read everyone else's piece and written a peer review on it.
 - Tell students to take the reviews home and incorporate them in their editing process.
- XI. Community Theater in Hip Hop:** Listening, Reading and Discussion Exercise (Satisfies 1.1.11.B, D, G, and H)
- Have students listen to "Brenda's Got a Baby" and follow along with the lyrics.
 - Discuss how this song is community theater in that it takes fictional story and uses it as a tool to discuss community issues, mainly youth pregnancy, domestic abuse and woman's issues.
 - Have students point out the vocabulary words from the lesson as they arise in the song. Try and prompt critique of the song as well.
 - Ask each student to pick out a certain section that they most liked or disliked and have them explain why.
- XII. Script 2 Resubmission** (satisfies 1.5.11)
- Have students resubmit their scripts after having edited it extensively by themselves and with their peer reviews.
 - Edit these scripts and pass them back to the students with your revisions
 - Make sure to be available to clarify any confusion or questions they may have about your revisions.
 - Focus on grammar. spelling and punctuation in your revisions.
- XIII. Script 3 Final Submission**
- XIV. "Investigative Reports"**
- Using the playwriting skills they have learned have each student write a performance piece on either the topic they addressed in their "reporting live" piece or any issue in their lives that they or some one close to them are struggling with.
 - Stress that topics could be anything, from violence to identity issues and can be tragic, humorous, direct and/or subtly. As long as students take their craft seriously.
 - Students must incorporate at least one other student in their performance piece either as a character, prop, narrator or any other sort of role.
 - Push students to develop their own style in their piece by reminding them of the many options they have as to how they want their piece to be ie monologue vs. dialogued, humor vs. drama ect.

Resources:

1. Tupelo Community Theater:
 - a. <http://www.tctwebstage.com/comunity.htm>
2. Wikipedia The free encyclopedia:
 - a. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_theater
3. Teaching Playwriting in Schools: Teacher's Handbook
 - a. www.centerstage.com
4. Taking Action: Teaching Participatory Community-based Theater
 - a. **Linda Frye Burnham and Mark Weinberg**
 - b. ©1999-2006 **Community Arts Network**
5. Website for plays
 - a. <http://drama.eserver.org/>

L.A.P.D

Drugs in America

Lesson Goals

The main focus of the LAPD's "Agents and Assets" production is US governments illegal involvement in the Crack cocaine drug epidemic of the 1980's and 90's. The devastating effects of this crack epidemic on the black community nationwide are still being felt even today. This lesson seeks to give students a basic understanding of drugs and the drug trade in America. This lesson is given in the faith that, one, with a proper understanding of drugs, students will be able to make better informed decisions about drug usage, two, with a proper understanding of addiction recovery students will be able to take the right actions when confronted with drug addiction either personally or through a friend or relative, and three, with a proper understanding of the politics and policies surrounding drugs and the drug trade, students can form their own informed opinion on American drug policy.

Finally, high school students are one of the most at risk demographics when it comes to drug abuse in all its forms. Tragically they have the most *to* risk, as well, considering the important decisions they have to make in their lives (high school completion, higher education, entering the workforce). Therefore it is of the utmost importance that students grasp the complexity of the roles drugs play in their society. The "just say no" attitude when it comes to drug education will neither prevent, protect nor prepare them. This lesson was written under the conviction that high school students are going to make their own decisions about drug use and abuse, therefore its stance is to educate and not to coerce or convince them to do anything.

I. Definition of a Drug

- a. Legal
 1. Alcohol (wine, beer, and liquor)
 2. Over the Counter Drugs: (IB Profin, Tylenol)
 3. Prescription Drugs: (Prilosec, Allegra)
 4. Caffeine
 5. Nicotine (cigarettes)
- b. Illegal
 1. Cannabis Sativa (Marijuana, Weed)
 2. Cocaine/Crack
 3. Heroin
 4. Ecstasy or E
 5. Performance Enhancing Drugs (steroids)
- c. Stimulant: Revs up the nervous system (increased heart rate, increased adrenaline, heighten sensory nerves)
 1. Cocaine/Crack
 2. Ecstasy or E
 3. Caffeine
 4. Nicotine
 5. Performance Drugs
- d. Depressant: Depresses the nervous system, diminish functional activity, decrease heart rate, mute sensory nerves)
 1. Alcohol

II. Drug Effects

- a. Short Term Effects
 1. The High: An altered mental state usually coupled with a combination of physical relaxation, stimulation and/or feelings of immense pleasure and wellbeing. Users may also experience an increase in heart rate.
 2. Alters brain function through interaction with the central nervous system
- b. Long Term Effects
 1. Addiction (Psychological and Physical)
 - i. Almost ALL Drugs are addictive in nature, legal and illegal.
 - ii. Psychological addiction is the subjective feeling that the user needs the drug to maintain a feeling of well-being;
 - iii. Physical addiction is characterized by tolerance (the need for increasingly larger doses in order to achieve the initial effect) and withdrawal symptoms when the user is abstinent
 2. Respiratory Illness (only in smoked substances such as tobacco, marijuana and crack cocaine)
 3. Permanent Brain damage
 4. Irregular body function and appearance (loss of appetite, extreme weight loss, low immune system)

III. Drug Dangers

- a. Disease and its Spread (through the sharing of needles and unprotected sex while under the influence)
- b. Overdose: The intentional or unintentional consumption of a drug in such a large amount that it threatens the life sustaining bodily functions of the consumer. Intentional overdose is usually an attempt by the user to commit suicide, as overdoses are usually fatal. Unintentional overdose happens many times when children or people who are unfamiliar with a drug use it indiscriminately. It also occurs when a drug is being heavily abused to the point that the user is not aware or does not care how much of the substance he or she is consuming.
- c. Adulteration: When Powdered Drugs are mixed with other, harmful substances of similar look and/or effect.
- d. Negative Community Effects
 1. Illegal drug use creates addicts, who cannot fulfill their civic and familial duties.
 2. Illegal drug sellers risk going to jail with increasingly severe sentences. Inmates cannot fulfill civic or familial duties.
 3. Increased Poverty
 4. Increased Crime
 - i. Gang violence over drug selling territories and consumers
 - ii. Violence between Gangs and the Police
 - iii. Addicts robbing in order to finance their drug addictions
 - iv. Violence due to broken homes caused by the effects listed above.
 5. Children raised in broken poverty stricken and violent homes cannot received the upbringing they need to become good citizens and thus cannot fulfill their civic and familial duties

IV. Drug Rehabilitation

- a. Five Steps
 1. Stage 1: Awareness and Early Acknowledgment
 - i. The tasks involve a shifting of perspective from outright denial to a willingness to consider the possibility of addiction
 2. Stage 2: Consideration
 - i. A willingness to further explore ideas about addiction and recovery. The primary movement during this stage involves increasing knowledge about the realities of addiction and the impact it's having on the addict's own life and on the lives of others.
 3. Stage 3: Exploring Recovery and Early Activity
 - i. a clear resolution to quit the addiction. Tasks involve exploring ideas and activities of abstinence, moderation, treatment, and recovery; during this stage, people actively move towards stopping the addiction, and beginning treatment of some kind.

4. Stage 4: Early Recovery and Re-habituaton
 - i. Stage 4 marks the entry into full, but early, recovery. During this stage, people learn the skills, develop the behaviors, adopt the habits, and build the relationships needed to maintain a lifetime of freedom from addiction.
5. Stage 5: Active Recovery and Maintenance
 - i. For many this is a stage without an end, for which recovery is a lifetime process. By the time people enter Stage 5, they are actively monitoring themselves, their feelings, thoughts, behaviors, activities, and relationships.

** few people can go this route alone, without the support of family, friends, and the community of help that's easily available. For everyone though, recovery is possible.

- b. Addiction is a three fold disease
 1. Chemical recovery
 - i. Abstinence is the only way to a full recovery
 2. Emotional recovery
 - i. Many times people go to drugs as a substitute for something they lack in their lives, such as loneliness (lack of love, affection and attention), poverty (lack of money and the liberties and freedoms it provides), low self esteem (lack of confidence or a sense of self worth). Emotional recovery requires an addict to confront that empty space in their lives that they are trying to fill with their drugs.
 3. Spiritual recovery
 - i. Recovery can only be achieved through faith, faith in oneself or one's God. Therefore, a recovering addict must get in touch with themselves and their God to find the spiritual strength they need to get over their addiction.
- c. Recovery Tips
 1. Keep in contact with people who have good recovery. Even the Pope has advisors so why wouldn't you. Avoid the temptation to hang out with persons who are having a lot of difficulties staying clean.
 2. Take advantage of all proper recovery assistance that is available to you. Medicating is not usually a good idea however.
 3. Keep going to 12 step meetings on a regular basis, if you don't like the group you are at; try other groups. For fledgling 12 step members an open AA meeting is always helpful.
 4. Keep going to 12 step meetings on a regular basis, if you don't like the group you are at; try other groups. For fledgling 12 step members an open AA meeting is always helpful.

d. How Can I Help?

1. If you know some one who is addicted to drugs the best thing you can do is be truthful with that person. Let them know that they are hurting you, others and themselves with their addiction. If you do not feel comfortable confronting them on your own, get other people to do it with you.
2. If this person understands that they are addicted and that they need help, make sure you know the local rehab program in your area. You can search online or in the yellow pages. If you find a place, go with that person to the program to check it out. Not all programs will work for them, make sure you find the environment that best suites their needs and can properly accommodate them.
3. The best way to help a recovering addict is to simply be there for them through their recovery process. Recovery is HARD, and is a continual struggle, with no end. Recovery must become a way of life for a recovering addict. Let them know that you are always there for them mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

V. History of The War on Drugs

The war on Drugs started with President Richard Nixon, who declared it shortly after his presidential election in 1968. He received tremendous support from both the republican and Democratic parties. This was partly because at the time, heroine addiction was a large problem for soldiers fighting in the Vietnam War. The war on Drugs focused mainly on four key issues: treatment, law enforcement, interdiction and eradication.

Treatment focuses on the rehabilitation of drug users, with the assumption that this is a medical or mental health issue rather than a criminal one.

Law enforcement Deals with drug possession, and drug selling as criminal matters and punishes offenders through the justice system.

Eradication attempts to reduce production of the illegal substances in other countries.

Interdiction involves reducing the flow of illegal drugs into the United States by more vigilant patrolling of the nation's borders.

As the years went on, the War on Drugs grew more and more expensive rising from \$80 million at its inception to over 600 million in 1972, a 750% increase. This perpetual cost growth continues to plague The War on Drugs to this day and is one of its main areas of critique. Another area of great concern and critique is the War's increased emphasis on law enforcement, punishment. Many officials, even those within the law enforcement systems, began to seriously challenge this new approach, arguing that increased resources for law enforcement agencies and harsher sentences for drug related convictions did little to solve the problem of illegal drugs in America. Yet politicians in their effort to not appear "soft"

in the public eye on the issue of illegal drugs have continued to stress this approach, however ineffective it may be.

Because of this approach there has been a great increase in incarceration. Half of these new inmates have been incarcerated for drug charges, two thirds are minorities and half of those minorities are black. Many people believe that the War on Drugs has a racial agenda as well, considering the fact that although 50% of inmates imprisoned on drug charges are black, the vast majority (approximately 75%) of American drug addicts are white. According a recent frontline research team, one out of every three black males is involved in the criminal drug system. Their female counterparts' statistics are rising drastically as well. It is safe to say that such statistics as these are detrimental to the black community at large, yet the policies and laws of the War on Drugs are rarely changed. It is also important to know that the war on drugs still in operation to this day.

VI. The Drug Business:

- a. The illegal drug trade has turned into a \$400 billion multi-national business. Americans spend \$58 billion a year on narcotics, with most of that money coming from 5 million regular users. More money is spent buying illegal narcotics than is on the war on drugs (\$58 billion verses \$42 billion) on a yearly basis.
- b. Money Laundering: Much of the money made from the drug trade is shuttled into legal business in order to disguise its illegality. This is called money laundering. Many companies including fortune 500's take in money from the drug trade and launder it.

VII. Governmental Involvement in the Drug Trade:

- a. There have also been serious allegations made against the United States government that claim that it has itself had illegal dealings within the drug trade and made considerable amounts of illegal money. What is worse is the alleged money was made off of poor minority communities.
- b. Mercury Article: Gary Webb's 1996 SJ Mercury News Exposé (you can touch on this and provide a synopsis of the article, but more on this will be seen in the next section: journalistic practices. This can be used as a point of transition.)

Activities

I. Legal vs. Illegal Discussion Exercise (Satisfies 1.6.11)

- a. Facilitate a discussion with students about which drugs should be legal and which should be illegal and why, considering all that they have learned.
 - i. Why should a drug be legal or illegal?
 - ii. Which drugs should be legal or illegal?
 - iii. Why has our society deemed some drugs legal and others illegal?

- II. Vocabulary Review** Writing/Reading Exercise (Satisfies 1.1.11 A and E)
- a.
- III. Vocabulary Quiz** Writing Exercise (Satisfies 1.1.11 A and E)
- a. See Resource Sheet
- IV. Drugs in Hip Hop** Reading Listening Research and discussion Exercise (Satisfies 1.1.11.B, D, G, and H, 1.6.11)
- a. There is no coincidence that the emergence of hip hop in the early 80's and 90's occurred simultaneously with the crack epidemic in America. Not only has money from the drug trade allegedly funded the growing hip hop industry, but the lyrical content of some hip hop, especially "Gangsta" hip hop, has repeatedly addressed ties to the illegal drug trade and trafficking. Many artists profess involvement in the drug trade, and condone the illegal activity as a viable and respected means of accumulating wealth in America.
- b. Have students research Hip Hop Artists online and their stance on drugs.
1. Example: Young Jeezy: Atlanta based rapper nicknamed "the Snow man" put out a Snowman t-shirt, on which is printed a simply drawn snowman with a menacing face. "Snow" is a nickname given to cocaine because of its white crystalline appearance (Wikipedia).
- c. **"10 Crack Commandments"**
- i. Have students listen to "10 Crack Commandments" and follow along with the lyrics.
- ii. Is this encouraging drug selling?
- iii. If so, after all we have learned about crack's effects on the black community, how could crack selling become so glamorous and acceptable in black music?
- V. The War on Drugs Review** Writing Exercise (Satisfies 1.8.11 A, 1.5.11, 1.4.11 B, C and D)
- a. Have students write essays on The War on Drugs. The focus of the essays should be to answer these questions:
- i. Is the war on drugs having a positive or negative effect?
- ii. How could The War on Drugs be improved?
- iii. What about The War on Drugs works?
- iv. How has the war on drugs affected you and your community?
- v. Do you think The War on Drugs can be won? If so How?
- b. Of those students who are interested, have them send their essays to the ONDCP (office of national drug control policy, their address is listed below in the resource section).
- VI. Assessing Media's Influence on Drug Use** R.A.P Exercise (Satisfies 1.2.11. B, 1.4.11. B, 1.5.11. A and B, 1.8.11)
- a. Ask the students to take note of every time a drug (legal or illegal) is brought to their attention for either a day or a whole week. Have them

write down when each instance happens the details of the instance, mainly what or who it was, where it happened (in school, at home or neither), why and how it brought drug use/abuse to their attention, what drug it was, how the drug was viewed or displayed (in a positive or negative light) and when the instance happened (what time of day) etc.

- b. Stress to the students that they can record ANY instance as long as it has a direct relation to drugs and drug use/abuse. Anything from music lyrics or videos, television, movies, billboards, videogames, conversations, magazines, newspapers, books, and events. Tell them not to go out and look for drug references, but rather to just be more sensitive to them as they occur in their daily lives.
- c. Have them bring their data into class and compile it. Make sure that the data rubric is consistent so that compiling data is easier. Compile the data with students and create a graph either on the chalkboard or in graph-making software such as Excel. If using excel teach students to make graphs of their own personal data as well. In the resource section is listed a tutorial in Excel if needed. Students should be surprised at how many instances they record and it should be interesting to see when, where and through what these instances most occurred.

Conclusion:

Thus the drug trade has been woven into the American economy and politics as a whole and has thus become an incredibly complex and difficult problem. The question becomes, how, amidst all of this confusion and complexity do we solve these problems. The answer starts with being well informed...

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3. Encyclopedia.com "drug addiction and drug abuse"
4. "Recovering from Addiction: The Stages of Recovery" Phil Rich, Ed.D., MSW
5. http://www.addictionz.com/addiction_recovery.htm
6. The Architecture of Modern Political Power:
<http://www.mega.nu/ampp/webb.html>
7. ONDCP (office of national drug control policy)
 - a. Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
Phone: (800) 666-3332
Fax: (301) 519-5212
 - b. <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/index.html>
8. "Ten Crack Commandments"
 - a. Biggie Smalls, "Life after Death" Bad Boy Records

L.A.P.D

Drugs in America

Listening and Discussion Exercise

"10 Crack Commandments"

Notorious B.I.G.

(Chuck D) "One two three four five six seven eight nine"

(Biggie)

Uhh, it's the ten crack commandments

What, uhh, uhh

Nigga can't tell me nothin bout this coke, uh-huh

Can't tell me nothin bout this crack, this weed

To my hustlin niggaz

Niggaz on the corner I ain't forget you niggaz

My triple beam niggaz, word up

(Chuck D) "One two three four five six seven eight nine"

"TEN"

I been in this game for years, it made me a animal

It's rules to this shit, I wrote me a manual

A step by step booklet for you to get

your game on track, not your wig pushed back

Rule nombre uno: never let no one know

how much, dough you hold, cause you know

The cheddar breed jealousy 'specially

if that man fucked up, get your ass stuck up

Number two: never let em know your next move

Don't you know Bad Boys move in silence or violence

Take it from your highness (uh-huh)

I done squeezed mad clips at these cats for they bricks and chips

Number three: never trust no-bo-dy

Your moms'll set that ass up, properly gassed up

Hoodie to mask up, shit, for that fast buck

she be layin in the bushes to light that ass up

Number four: know you heard this before

Never get high, on your own supply

Number five: never sell no crack where you rest at

I don't care if they want a ounce, tell em bounce

Number six: that god damn credit, dead it

You think a crackhead payin you back, shit forget it

Seven: this rule is so underrated

Keep your family and business completely separated

Money and blood don't mix like two dicks and no bitch
Find yourself in serious shit
Number eight: never keep no weight on you
Them cats that squeeze your guns can hold jobs too
Number nine shoulda been number one to me
If you ain't gettin bagged stay the fuck from police (uh-huh)
If niggaz think you snitchin ain't tryin listen
They be sittin in your kitchen, waitin to start hittin
Number ten: a strong word called consignment
Strictly for live men, not for freshmen
If you ain't got the clientele say hell no
Cause they gon want they money rain sleet hail snow
Follow these rules you'll have mad bread to break up
If not, twenty-four years, on the wake up
Slug hit your temple, watch your frame shake up
Caretaker did your makeup, when you pass
Your girl fucked my man Jake up, heard in three weeks
she sniffed a whole half of cake up
Heard she suck a good dick, and can hook a steak up
Gotta go gotta go, more pies to bake up, word up, uhh

Crack king, Frank Blizzard
Uhh

(Chuck D) "One two three four five six seven eight nine"
"Ten"

Artist: Boogie Down Productions
Album: Sex And Violence
Song: Drug Dealer
Typed by: OHHLA Webmaster DJ Flash

All over the world...

Chorus:

Black drug dealer, you have to wise up
And organize your business so that we can rise up
If your gonna sell crack then don't be a fool
Organize your money and open up a school

Verse One:

Drug dealer, understand historical fact
Every race got ahead from sellin drugs except Black
We are under attack, here comes another cold fact

In the 30's and 40's a drug dealer wasn't black
They were Jewish, Italian, Irish, Polish, etc. etc.
Now in 90 their live's a lot better
They'll sell you a sweater, a pair of pants cold hearted
But first sellin drugs and killin people is how they started
Drug dealer, black and Hispanic, stop killin one another
Cause in the ghetto we're all brothers
Organized economically, understand the psychology
America is the drug monopoly
They own the block and kill your brother for
Therefore, we got the same enemy - what's more, I go on tour
But who do you think picks up the bill?
A hard workin fireman? Chill

Repeat Chorus 2X

Verse Two:

Eighty percent of American business is created illegally
This is a fact I don't ask you to believe in me
If you're really in the drug game to win it
Eventually you're gonna get shot, open a clinic
Again, if you're really in the drug game to win it
Invest in a prison, therefore you can be put in it
Everyone else did it now they chillin
Above the law, while your under the law still killin
One another, wake up my Hispanic brother, my African brother
America's not your mother
Or your father, so don't bother with right or wrong
Just check out the logic in the song
Organize, realize, become un hypnotized
To the lies that your livin for the get high
See many people have forgotten the fact
That America was never ever built for Black
So when some people are gonna run and buy crack
Take the money and put it back into Black
It's only logic, see KRS-One will rock it
With knowledge, education for the people I'll never stop it
Organize and legitimize your business
Remember, everybody else did this

Repeat Chorus 2X

L.A.P.D

Journalistic Practices

“The central purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with accurate and reliable information they need to function in a free society.”

Lesson Goals

The LAPD’s main objective in “Agents and Assets” is to report on the injustices done by the government in regard to the cocaine epidemic. The performance itself is at its core a work of journalism and thus, this lesson teaches students the practices, principles and methods used to create accurate and reliable journalism. Both journalism and the LAPD are based on the idea that an informed society is a free society. This lesson will teach students how to research and present a topic or story.

Nine Core Principles of Good Journalism (According to Project for Excellence in Journalism)

- I. Journalism's first obligation is to the truth**
 - a. Without accuracy and integrity journalism is not viable.
 - b. Journalists must be forthcoming and honest about their methods and sources.
 - c. Journalistic truth is a process that begins with assembling and verifying facts. A Journalist must then present those verified facts and give a fair and reliable account of their meaning to citizens.
- II. Journalism’s loyalty is always to the people**
 - a. This is the basis of journalism’s credibility. Advertisers, sponsors, and shareholders of news organizations all will try intentionally and unintentionally to slate, tamper or change the news. It is up to the journalists to not allow this by serve the people first, meaning every citizen of the general public. Ignoring certain citizens or certain groups of citizens has the effect of disenfranchising them.
 - b. It is the shared belief of modern journalistic organizations that credibility will foster a larger and more loyal audience and that economic success will follow. Therefore the Journalist has both a moral and economic obligation to the people
- III. Journalism is a discipline of verification**
 - a. The journalistic method is much like the scientific method, in that an attempt is made to eliminate all untruths through a consistent process of testing information, much like a scientist tests a hypothesis.
 - b. The journalist is entitled to his or her own bias and beliefs. It is the method that is objective, and not the journalist.
 - c. This discipline of verification is what separates journalism from other modes of communication, such as propaganda, fiction or entertainment.

- IV. Journalism's practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover**
- a. In order to be reliable, journalists must keep some distance between themselves and the event or people they cover. While no one can be neutral about everything, journalists must be independent of what they cover in both spirit and mind.
 - b. Journalists must suppress any temptation to have an arrogant, elitist, or nihilistic approach to what they cover, in order to maintain their credibility and accuracy.
- V. Journalism must serve as an independent monitor of power**
- a. To protect the freedom of the public and the democracy of the society as a whole journalism must be a watch dog over those individuals and collectives whose power and position have the most effect on citizens.
 - b. Journalism is a line of defense against despotism and tyranny in any and all levels of public and private life in the community.
- VI. It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise.**
- a. Public discussion must be informed by verified facts. It is journalism purpose to inform that forum of discussion. Journalism also should strive to fairly represent the varied viewpoints and interests in society, and to place them in context rather than highlight only the conflicting fringes of debate. Journalism can be a problem solving tool when it can find points of congruence and common ground in debates and conflicts.
- VII. It must strive to make the significant interesting and relevant**
- a. There is always the balancing act between entertainment and education of the general public. Considering that the news is only allotted a limited amount of time, only a limited amount of information can be chosen. Journalists then must balance their newscast with information the public wants (in order to keep an audience), with information the public needs (in order to fulfill its purpose), with information the public does not anticipate needing or wanting but may need or want. This means journalists must continually ask what information has most value to citizens and in what form.
- VIII. It must keep the news comprehensive and proportional.**
- a. Again, there is a balancing act that must occur in good journalism. One could think of news as a map of the society with which citizens can navigate their environment. In order to create a helpful map, journalists must present a diversity of information and yet, key in on the most important facts. This is best achieved by newsrooms with a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives.
- IX. Its practitioners must be allowed to exercise their personal conscience.**
- a. News organizations do well to nurture this independence by encouraging individuals to speak their minds. This stimulates the intellectual diversity necessary to understand and accurately cover an increasingly diverse society. It is this diversity of minds and voices, not just numbers that matters.

The Rights and obligations of Citizens

I. Citizens must engage in critical thinking.

- a. You as a citizen must have a desire for the truth and must actively seek it. Although ideally journalists and news organizations should uphold the above principles, many times they do not, and thus it is up to the citizen to be mindful of the great amount of misinformation being proliferated.

Journalistic Practices: The method (taken from “News Writer’s Handbook”)

I. Editing

- a. Verify the spelling of all names
- b. Verify all facts with at least two sources
- c. Write in third person and avoid using You, I, we, us or I unless in a quote. The writer should not be a part of the story.
- d. Read the story at least three times
- c. In announcing an events, identify the event and then the details in this order: Place day date time

II. Interviewing

- a. Be prepared
 - i. Define the purpose of the interview
 - ii. Have enough background knowledge in the subject so that you can engage the interviewee in a good conversation
 - iii. Schedule ahead of time a set time and place with the interviewee for the interview when possible.
 - iv. Have preliminary questions ready, but remember to allow the interview freedom to go wherever it needs to go, the key is getting information, not following a guide.
 - v. Prepared conversation starters/ice breakers
- b. Establishing Rapport: People are only forthcoming with information if they are comfortable with you
 - i. Remember Social amenities (good eye-contact, respectful tone, interested demeanor)
 - ii. If possible, always interview people in their own environment. (office, home, school)
 - ii. Listen non judgmentally. An interviewee is entitled to their own opinion; in fact that is what you want to capture in the interview so let them be themselves.
 - iii. Paraphrase their comments to make sure you understand what is being said.
 - iv. An interview is a conversation NOT an interrogation; make sure to keep the conversation open, and as casual as possible. Find the balance between guiding the discussion towards answering

your questions and allowing it to branch off towards other answers you didn't anticipate.

- c. Asking the right questions
 - i. Avoid asking questions that get you only "yes" or "no" answers.
 - ii. Answers are always more important than questions in an interview, so make sure you are listening and not thinking about the next question you need to ask.
 - iii. Make sure to get the most from each question, many times an answer will lead to many other questions. Don't just stick to your script of questions; allow yourself the freedom to explore other questions that are brought up in the interview.
- d. Follow Up
 - i. Ask your interviewee for a way to contact them in case you have further questions or need any clarification.
 - ii. Follow up any leads that they may give you.

Gary Webb: the man and the message

I. The Man

- a. Gary Webb was born in Corona California on August 31st 1955. He began his career as a journalist at the age of 15, writing editorials for his high school newspaper. Webb went on to study journalism at the University of Northern Kentucky where he again was on the staff of the student newspaper and came in first place for a specialty column from the Kentucky Intercollegiate Press Assn. He would go on to earn many other awards as an investigative journalist including the Pulitzer Prize award for general news reporting in 1990, the Journalist of the Year award from the Bay Area Society of Professional Journalists in 1996, and the Media Hero award from the 2nd Annual Media & Democracy Congress in 1997. In 1996, he published a series of investigative reports in the San Jose Mercury News entitled "Dark Alliance" These reports would become his most memorable and controversial work, and would usher in both his rise and fall in the media world.

Activities:

I. Who's Truth?

- a. Bring to class a picture you have cut from a magazine or newspaper. Make sure that whatever is depicted in the picture is ambiguous enough to allow many different interpretations. The picture will serve your purposes better if it has some kind of iconography that is tied to a major source of news or conflict.
- b. Ask the class to make guesses as to what is being depicted in the picture and what possible news story it could be related to. If students need to be prodded ask them to guess where, when, and of whom the picture was taken. Ask them what is happening.

- c. List ALL of the students responses
- d. After all of the guesses have been listed go through them with the class. Take note of any stereotyping that may occur, as well as bias that may come from being a teenager, or living in the city, or being American etc.
- e. You can reveal what the caption and story was to the picture either now or at the very end of the lesson, this is entirely to your preference.
- f. The most important part of the lesson is getting the students to realize how many different stories and “truths” can come from a singular event. Differences in stories can be due to the prejudices, biases, or different points of view of those who report them. Drive home the importance of being critical investigators, both as journalists and citizens. Also, stress that there is never one absolute truth, that there are always many different interpretations of the truth and thus as a reporter and as a citizen one must always investigate and confirm the information one receives.

II. Journalism in Hip Hop: Listening and discussion (fulfils 1.1.11. G, H

- a. Have students listen to “The Message” and follow along with the lyrics. After the song discuss what is being reported. How are the nine core principles of good journalism operating here?
- b. Have students listen to “Mathematics” and follow along with the lyrics. After listening discuss what is being reported and how it connects to Gary Webb.
- c. Have students listen to the “I’m Not A Writer I’m A Biter” Cam’ron Dis on Jay-Z.
 - i. Show how the dj has researched analyzed and performed.
 - ii. What is the Cam’ron and the dj trying to say? What is his argument?
 - iii. Explain how the DJ has used many different sources in his argument. (the third core principle of good journalism)
 - iv. Ask students what core principles are in play and what core principles are being violated.

III. Mock Interview

- a. Stage a mock interview with a student volunteer, do all of the wrong things, then prompt a discussion on what you did wrong, right, and how you should conduct an interview. (Do this before the interview lesson)
- b. Get two other student volunteers to stage an interview in front of the class.
 - i. Bring a random prop and ask one student to be a specialist on it. Tell them to imagine it is some made up product or artifact.
 - ii. Let the other student interview them about it.
 - iii. Make sure that during the exercise students remember to follow the rules of interviewing.

IV. Gary Webb Video, Reading and Writing Response: (Fulfills 1.6.11. B, and F)

- a. The Movie can be found at:
<http://www.gnn.tv/videos/video.php?id=30>
The Reading can be found at:
http://www.laweekly.com/index.php?option=com_lawcontent&task=view&id=8832&Itemid=#Continuation.
The movie is an interview with Gary Webb in which he recounts the events surrounding his 1996 three part series nicknamed “The Dark Alliance”. The reading is an in depth analysis of the unethical response to Gary Webb’s work by a few media groups (mainly LA Times, Washington Post and New York Times) and their subsequent campaigns to assassinate his character.
- b. Have students write a response to the video, reading and lesson. In the response students are to compare the Nine Core Principles of Good Journalism with how Gary Webb reported and how the government, media and his own San Jose Mercury News Editors responded. How many of the core principles were violated? How many were withheld? Who violated them and which did they violate? Who upheld them and which were upheld? How?

V. Reporting Live (Fulfills all sections of 1.8.11., 1.5.11. A, B, C, F and G, 1.6.11. A, E, 1.4.11 B,

- a. Students choose an issue, problem, story or event to do a report on. Encourage students to pursue stories that directly effect and interest them. Possible Ideas:
 - i. Report on the state of Gender relations in today’s youth (interview classmates on what they think about their gender counterparts and their relations with them)
 - ii. The story of a family member who has lived an interesting life. (interview them, their friends and other family members)
 - iii. The underground hip hop scene in the community
- b. Students must first go out and investigate by conducting interviews and researching sources. Minimum of 3 interviews and 6 additional sources (websites, books, magazines etc). Stress proper documentation (citing sources, using quotes, notating interviews). Interviewees must be authorities on the subject of their report with the appropriate credentials. Students should keep in mind the guidelines of journalism and the journalistic methods lessons.
- c. While working on the report students should work to answer these three questions:
 - i. Why is this important / interesting to the reader?
 - ii. Why should the reader believe you?
 - iii. What should the reader understand and learn from reading your article?

- d. Students should be given no less than 3 weeks for this project, provided are a few worksheets to facilitate their process of reporting a story. (See Resource Section)

VI. Class Publication (Fulfils 1.5.11. G)

- a. Compile all of the stories and create a class journal.
- b. Review “New Writer’s Handbook” Picture and Page section for the look and proper format.
(<http://www.jea.org/resources/curriculum/stylebook.pdf>)

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