

# Examples of Action-Based Student Projects

*Compiled By  
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Examples taken from seminar materials  
developed with and for high school  
teachers during a series of curriculum seminars  
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## Action-Based Student Projects

**In an "action-based" project,  
students select a problem, challenge, or task  
of particular interest to them  
related to a teacher-selected topic  
- and -  
try to "make a positive difference"  
through their own action  
and/or by enlisting the support of others.**

Students may, for instance —

- design and implement plans to reach career or other personal goals;
- create products (food, clothing, utensils, accounting system for textbooks, etc.) and donate or market them;
- develop a service (research on the Internet, video taping, etc.) and market it;
- develop plans and checklists (improving diet, earthquake/fire safety procedures, etc.) and teach others to use them;
- plan and produce events (health fair, drug prevention workshops; banquet, etc.) for a specific audience;
- present recommendations (clean up toxic waste site, better use of parking lot, etc.) and present them to the appropriate audience; and so forth.

***Action-based projects link  
what students have learned and are doing in school  
to their "real life" interests and concerns.***

## Project Examples

### At the beginning of their projects, students pose such action-focused

- improve my/our diet - or - prepare for my/our career goals?
- keep younger students out of gangs?
- keep drugs off our campus - or - convince younger students to stay away from drugs?
- reduce the serving and clean up time in the cafeteria?
- make better use of the school parking lot -or- reduce time it takes to exit after school?
- provide nutritious snacks at school?
- use technology to improve text book distribution at school?
- set up and run an accounting system to manage the academy budget?
- create a useful invention?

### Then students-

conduct opinion polls and factual surveys	create blueprints, maps, scale drawings
interpret original records (birth certificates, tax rolls, etc.)	engage in debates
analyze themes/big ideas in readings	make speeches, tell stories
analyze budgets, spreadsheets	conduct meetings and workshops
conduct controlled experiments	create spreadsheets and computer simulations

## **Action-Based Project Example for Fashion Design, Manufacturing and Merchandising**

Following is an example of **WHAT STUDENTS MIGHT BE DOING** during a project:

### **POSE AN ACTION- FOCUSED QUESTION AND SUBMIT A PROJECT PROPOSAL:**

- Pose their question: *How can we design, produce and market a line of clothing to sell at a school event (spring fair, bazaar, carnival etc.)?*
- Develop a project proposal, including research methods, sources of information, timeline, etc. to teachers and modify as needed.

### **GATHER DATA (FACTS, OPINIONS IDEAS):\*\***

- Develop questionnaire and interview potential customers, *What kinds of clothes would you be interested in buying; etc.?*
- Interview buyers in local clothing shops and department stores, *What's selling well now; how do you decide what is likely to sell; and what do you predict for this spring?*
- Interview local designers, *How did you design, price, produce and market your line?*
- Interview officials in the city planning and state tax offices, and read documents they provide to determine safety regulations, permits needed, tax procedures to follow, etc.— compare how establishing a shop/boutique differs from selling in a booth, at a bazaar, etc.
- Read and analyze newspapers and fashion magazines, *What have been the current trends in fashion over the past few years — what predictions could we make?*
- Read and compare catalogues, *What's being shown in the J.C.Penny catalogue compared with Spiegel and how do the prices compare on similar items? Why?*
- Read about the physical properties of different fabrics begin considered for the new line of clothing and interview cleaning establishment operators to compare and be able to illustrate to others the differences in caring for various fabrics.
- Observe what students are wearing and what's being shown in local shops.
- Make price comparisons between different types of clothing stores (Mervyns vs. Nordstrom, The Gap, K-Mart, etc.). How can we make ours “special” enough to compete?
- And so forth.

### **FORMULATE TENTATIVE PLAN, GENERATE SKETCHES OF PRODUCTS, AND GET FEEDBACK:**

- Develop individual reports of findings from the research above. These may include charts and graphs, summaries of opinion surveys, collages of photographs from magazines/newspapers, etc.
- Develop action-plan — what individuals will do and how they will proceed.
- Prepare proposal for type of product, outlet (booth at fair or carnival, tables in cafeteria.
- Develop first draft of copy for advertising, (include historical perspective, explaining how designs were influenced by previous fashion eras, etc.).

\*\*Projects should include all three types of research methods: Reading, Interview, and Observation.

- Develop first draft of information for labels (include fabric content and instructions for care, explaining the composition of the fabrics and whether their particular physical properties make it necessary to avoid heat and certain chemicals and why — including diagrams of what happens to the molecules when not treated as recommended, etc.).
- Get feedback from individuals previously consulted.

**REVISE PLANS, CREATE PRODUCTS, AND TAKE PERSONAL ACTION:**

- Make necessary changes in action-plan and design of products.
- Begin production, make arrangements for booth/table at the the event (spring fair, bazaar, carnival, etc.); initiate marketing program, etc.
- Develop final draft of copy for advertising and labels.
- Continuously monitor and report progress across departments.
- Sell products at identified event.
- Maintain bookkeeping procedures.
- And so forth.

**MEANWHILE, DOCUMENT PROCEDURE:**

- Each student keeps a record of activities in a log book.
- Each student uses the log to create a written report of his/her contribution to the project.
- Individuals or small groups of students design a “multi-media” strategy to present some aspect of what they did (narrated video tape of the production line, captioned photographs of setting up and running the booth, write-ups of interviews as “Biographies of Important People in Our Community,” story-boards showing results of proper and improper care of the garments, etc.).
- And so forth.

**PRESENT REPORTS, EVALUATE ENTIRE ENTERPRISE, AND DECIDE WHAT TO DO NEXT:**

- Present written and multi-media reports to critique how effectively departments operated,
- as well as looking at profit/loss --use to evaluate entire enterprise.
- Decide whether to repeat as a part of another event or to expand by, for instance, establishing a permanent student-run boutique on campus.
- Consider whether to expand the clothing line to include garments specially designed for disabled individuals.
- Select samples of work to include in individual student portfolios.

**RELATED HOME ECONOMICS CAREER STANDARDS:**

**CONSUMER HOME ECONOMICS, Comprehensive Core: Clothing and Textiles- 1, 3, 4, & 5; **FASHION DESIGN, MANUFACTURING AND MERCHANDISING: Career Path Cluster** - 1, 2, 4, 5, & 6; and **Occupational Specific** - 1b, 2b, 3a, 4a, & 4b.**

## Project Example for Food Service and Hospitality\*

Following is an example of **WHAT STUDENTS MIGHT BE DOING** during a project:

### **FORMULATE AN ACTION- FOCUSED QUESTION:**

- Pose their question: *How can we establish an ethnic, nutritional-food snack bar on campus?*
- Develop a project proposal, including research methods, sources of information, timeline, individual tasks (if working as part of a group), and so forth.
- Submit project proposal to teachers and modify as needed.

### **GATHER DATA (FACTS, OPINIONS, IDEAS):\*\***

- Develop questionnaire and survey potential customers (students, faculty, community), *What kinds of ethnic food would you be interested in buying; etc.?*
- Interview managers/owners of local ethnic restaurants, *What are your best selling menu items; how do you decide what is likely to sell; how do you determine prices, etc.?*
- Interview local restaurateurs, *How did you establish your restaurant -- decide on type (e.g., fast food, casual- or fine- dining) determine prices, hire employees, advertise, etc.?*
- Interview officials in the city planning, public health, and state tax offices, and read documents they provide to determine sanitation and safety regulations, permits needed, tax procedures to follow, etc. — compare how establishing a take-out business differs from a full service restaurant, etc.
- Read and analyze demographic data to compare ethnic population in school and community with the availability of various ethnic restaurants near campus.
- Read and analyze food service industry publications, *What have been the trends in food*

\*Example developed by Janet Kierstead and Janice DeBenedetti, Manager, Home Economics Education Unit, California Dept. of Education.

*service over the past few years (classical European vs. "lite," cuisine; ethnic v. American regional; etc.)? What predictions could we make?*

- Read and compare menus from various types of restaurants, *How do the menus differ visually, how do the prices compare on similar items, etc.? Why?*
- Read about and analyze foods from various ethnic groups and compare nutritional value, preparation time, equipment needed, etc.
- Visit various types of ethnic restaurants and compare food presentation style, atmosphere established (lighting, music, uniforms, quality of customer service, etc.), and so forth.
- During lunch breaks, visit locations near campus and count the number of customers at different restaurants and record what potential customers (students, faculty, community) are eating.
- And so forth.

**FORMULATE TENTATIVE PLAN, GENERATE SKETCHES OF PRODUCTS, AND GET FEEDBACK:**

- Develop individual reports of findings from the research above. These may include charts and graphs, summaries of opinion surveys, collages of photographs from industry publications; and evaluate findings..
- Develop procedure for continuously monitoring quality of food and service.
- Develop first draft of copy for advertising and menu, including map and brief descriptions of origins of different menu items (explained by differences in geography and climate); nutritional content (fat, protein, etc.); and so forth.
- And Get feedback from "experts" consulted earlier when gathering data.

**REVISE PLANS, CREATE PRODUCTS, AND TAKE PERSONAL ACTION:**

- Make necessary changes in action-plan and design of products.
- Begin to make arrangements for take out location; decide on menu items; design menu; initiate advertising program; etc.
- Develop final drafts of copy for advertising and menu.
- Continuously monitor and report progress across business departments.
- Open take out service.
- Maintain monitoring of service and bookkeeping procedures.
- And so forth.

**MEANWHILE, DOCUMENT PROCEDURE AND PREPARE REPORTS:**

- Each student keeps a record of activities in a log book.
- Each student uses the log to create a written report of his/her contribution to the project.
- Individuals or small groups of students design a “multi-media” strategy to present some aspect of what they did (narrated video tape of the production line, captioned photographs of setting up and running the service, write-ups of interviews as “Biographies of Important Restaurateurs in Our Community,” etc.).

**PRESENT REPORTS, EVALUATE ENTIRE ENTERPRISE, AND DECIDE WHAT TO DO NEXT:**

- Present written and multi-media reports to teachers, peers and “experts.”
- Critique how effectively business departments operated — as well as looking at success/popularity of business and profit/loss.
- Decide whether to continue the same take out service or to expand by, for instance, adding another line of ethnic foods or establishing a full service restaurant.
- Consider whether to expand any new menu to include items for special diets (vegetarian, sugar free, low fat, etc.)
- Select samples of work which exemplify academic/career standards to include in individual student portfolios.



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students select a problem, challenge, or task  
of particular interest to them  
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