Selecting a Topic to Investigate
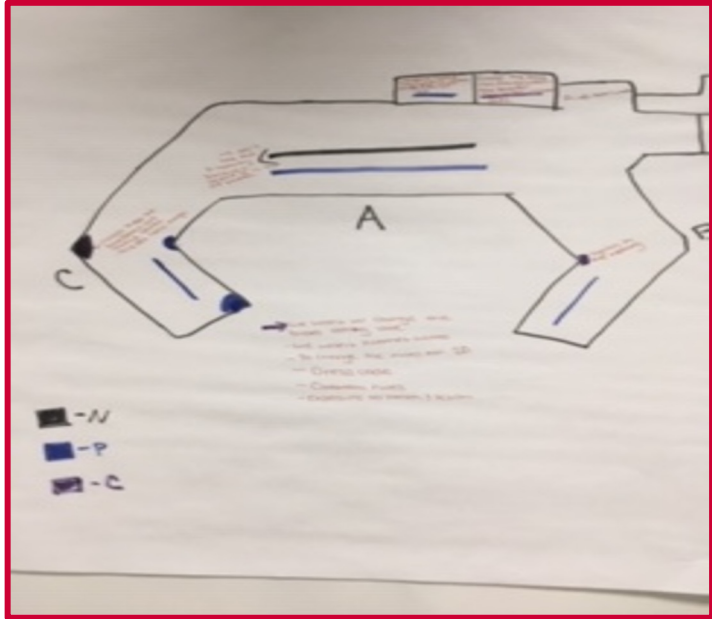
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Teacher Role: Building a YPAR Community

- Community building activities to start each meeting
- Create collective club rights and responsibilities as guidelines for meetings
- Discuss and develop decision-making protocols depending on how many topics students land on
  - Example: If there are 5 different topics students are stuck on for a 10-15 student club, you can utilize the "banking method" where students receive "$100" to allocate to different topics however they want
- Be open about enabling students as decision makers, rather than looking to the teacher as the "authority" to make decisions
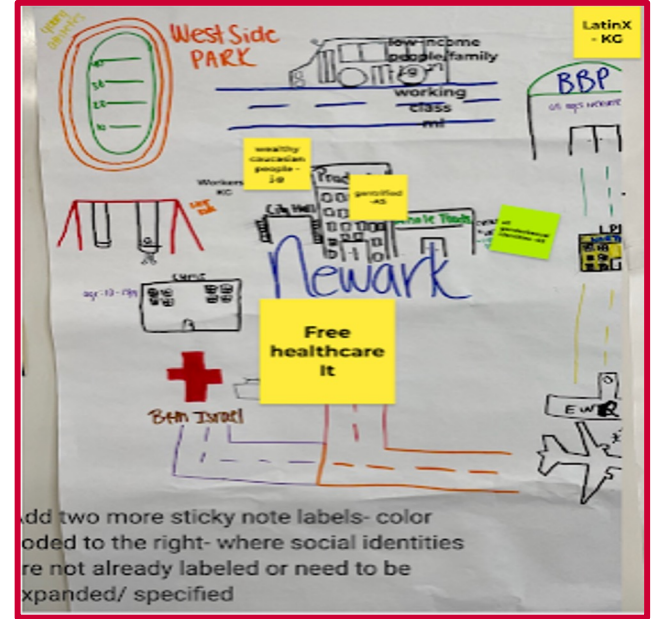
How might we combat traditional power and authority dynamics in schools in order to center student voice, choice, and leadership?
How do we address that within ourselves?

Brainstorming: Physical Mapping

Using a map of the school, community, or other physical location, consider how you feel in various locations and why. Compare answers to determine commonalities.

Brainstorming: Mind Mapping

Brainstorming!

Problems with remote learning
- Communication is slower virtually
- Monitoring students (unfair advantages for tests)
- Summative assessments
- **Breakout rooms 2**
  - **Awkwardness**
  - **silence/lack of participation**
- More than 2 graded assignments (combination of grades)
- Misunderstanding of grading
- Note taking transition
- **Motivation for School (from teachers)**
- **Consistency with summative assessments 2**

Problems within the school community
- **Lack of seriousness about COVID-19 - environment 2**
- Adjusting to teaching equitably online
  - Not waiting to "go back"
- **Lack of empathy from teachers for technical difficulties 1**
- Gap in technology
- No reactions button
- Gaps in knowledge on content
- Not enough people in Youth in Action

Problems within the Franklin community
- Ignorance about Black Lives Matter

Problems within the national/global community
- **Women's rights**
- **Prison reform and mass incarceration/criminal justice reform**
- **Lack of seriousness about COVID-19**
- **Climate and Green New Deal**
- Low income housing
- **Uighur Muslims (China)**
- White washing of history (Eurocentric curriculums)
- **ICE/Detention Camps**

Mind map various problems within specific levels of your experience. In this example:
- remote learning,
- school community,
- town community,
- national/global community

Civically Engaged Districts Project 2023-2024

Brainstorming: T-Chart Strengths and Improvements

Develop a list of school strengths. Then, students develop a list of challenges or areas of improvement.

GBCS
our school community

Strengths	things we'd like to improve or change

- nice teachers
  - make learning fun
  - Connect w/ topic
- playground
- art room
- fun /nice environment
- Computers
- friends ; friendly
- materials/supplies
- respectful
- good rules
	- Soda fountain → for more energy Sleepy Students
	- Laptops → save paper
	- more Materials
	  - field trips
	  - Books (fiction-non fiction) More Money
	  - After school
	  - experiential learning
	- Later school start time → Better test scores

Engaging in Our Own CARP Process

Step 1

Small Group Brainstorming:

Mind Map

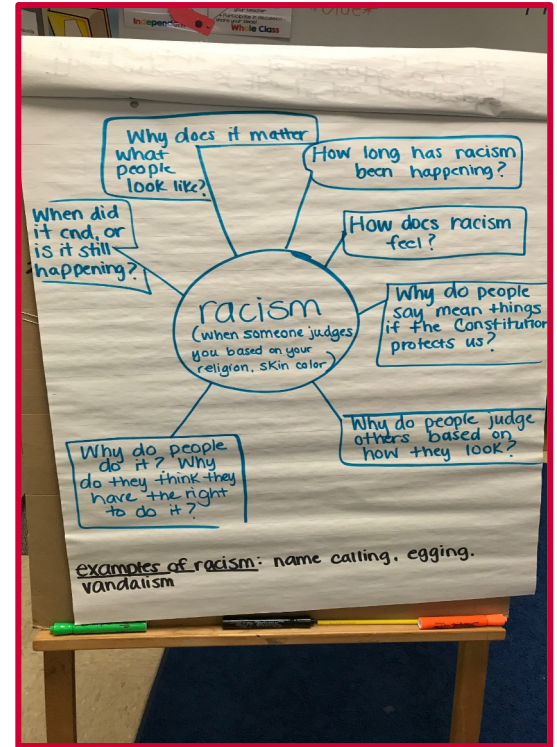*What challenges affect your community as public school educators in NJ?*

Step 2

Small Group:

Cause and Effect Concept Mapping

Choose one issue from brainstorming and complete cause and effect mapping to narrow on a specific cause/issue.

Topic Selection: Poster Activity + Mind Mapping

1.Together, you will brainstorm areas of concern for educators in school spaces today and identify our broad topic.

2. In small groups, you will narrow the broad topic down until you reach a more narrow topic of concern.

Recent Civic Action Research Topics

- Students experiences with online learning during Covid -19 pandemic
- The experiences of ELL students
- Prejudice and discrimination
- Academic stress
- Racism, sexism, and homophobia
- School scheduling
- Gun violence
- Bullying
- Recycling
- School environment
- Homelessness
- Theft and stealing
- Race, ethnicity and friendship
- Immigration experiences

Engaging in Our Own CARP Process

Step 1

Full Group Brainstorming:

Mind Map

What challenges affect your community as public school educators in NJ?
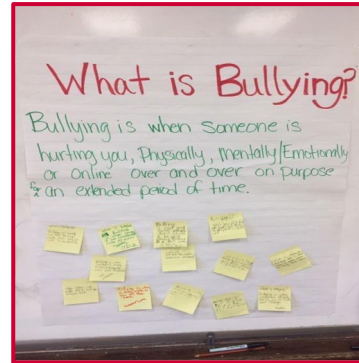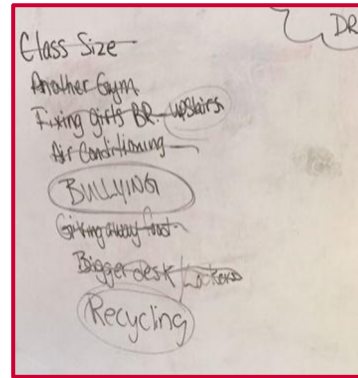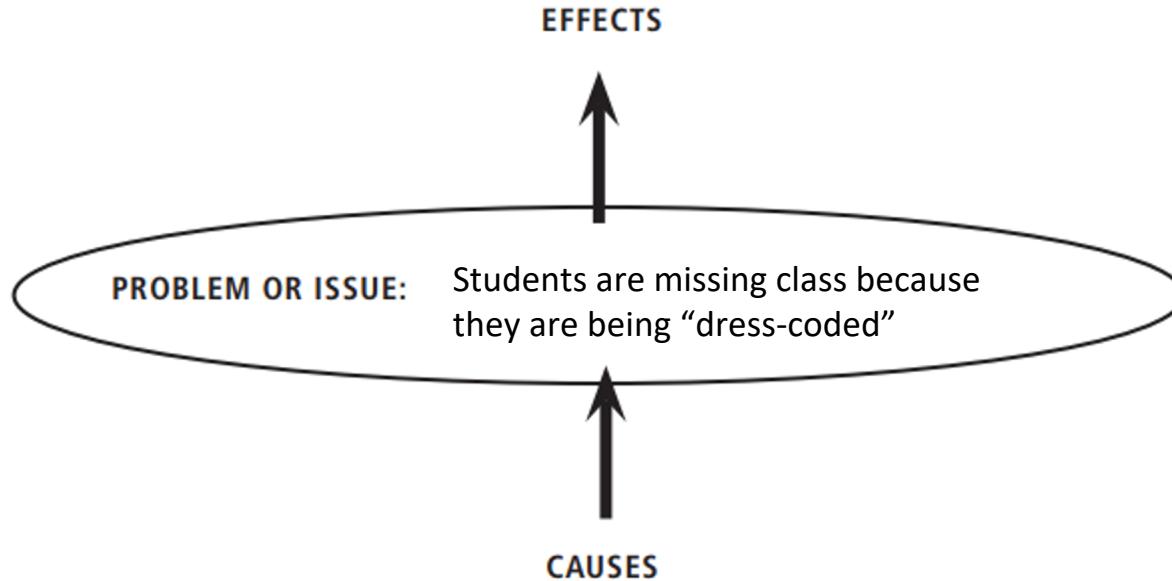
Step 2

Small Group:

Cause and Effect Concept Mapping

Choose one issue from brainstorming and complete cause and effect mapping to narrow on a specific cause/issue.

Students missing out on class time while in ISS, calling home, or receiving consequences

Disproportionately affects female and gender non-conforming students

Students shut down in class, feel embarrassed, or become disengaged

EFFECTS

PROBLEM OR ISSUE: Students are missing class because they are being "dress-coded"

CAUSES

Students don't feel the dress code policy is fair

Widespread beliefs that clothing can be "distracting"

Policies enacted that allow for punitive consequences for student dress code violations

Identifying Research Topic and Share Out

Once you have written as many causes and effects as you can think of, <u>underline</u> the effect that you would MOST want to reduce or solve, and then <u>underline</u> the cause that you would MOST want to address.

Use what you have underlined to identify your focused topic.

Closing Debrief

The teacher's role in civic action research

How might we combat traditional power and authority dynamics in schools in order to center student voice, choice, and leadership? How do we address that within ourselves?

Nurturing youth leadership within an adult-directed setting

- Supporting without dominating; scaffolding without taking over
- Being honest about power differences and roles
- Amplifying student leadership and decision-making
- Clarifying what can be controlled by the youth and what cannot
- Facilitating communication with school and district adults
- Connecting the issue to larger systems
- Asking questions to help students push beyond obvious analyses and recommendations

Lessons and Activities: Selecting a Topic

[Google Drive: Selecting a Topic](#)

Activities:

- Working as a Team. Making Decisions,
- Identify Issues and Assets, Community Webs and Maps
- Identify Issues and Assets, Identify Issues and Assets
- Identify Issues and Assets, Pick a Topic
- Identify Issues and Assets, Getting to the Root of the Problem
- Asset Mapping Through PhotoVoice
- Issue Mapping Through PhotoVoice
- How to Choose an Issue Worksheet