

MONTVILLE TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

Humanities Research Program

Students in English Language Arts and Social Studies are exploring new frontiers of learning through a pilot program designed around research practices and end-product creation. Through creativity and innovation, the Humanities Research learning model brings students to new levels of intellectual development and engagement, which will serve them well as they take their place in a global community.

In its initial year, five class sections of students in English 12 and five class sections of students in US History II (Grade 11) were able to participate in the pilot of the Humanities Research Program. Classes participating in this student-centered program develop skills to produce their own creations relevant to course content. The aims of the pilot program include:

- Promoting the process of student research and discovery;
- Respecting the discovery made by others;
- Thinking critically;
- Constructing opportunities for each student to become clear class experts by identifying his or her points of greatest interest within the curriculum
- Developing student leadership skills

What does this actually look like in the classroom?

At first glance, the courses look and feel different than traditional public education of the past century. Rows of desks are being replaced with a workshop environment, where students research information, then plan, collaborate and negotiate the process they will use to create a final product related to the curriculum of each course. Student imagination and passion drive these end-products, designed to demonstrate the students' knowledge and understanding of their course work. Enthusiastic students are limited only by relevance and appropriateness. The types of student final productions are diverse and always changing. Some end-products created during the pilot year include: computer apps, museum exhibits, electronic presentations, traditional research papers and pieces of fine and performing arts. All creations include written research.

Each course is focused on helping students realize the enduring understandings* and demonstrate high level comprehension. Work yields skill development and content fluency with practices consistent with Common Core and State Standards.

Where did this come from?

The origin of Humanities Research pilot is largely an answer to a few initial questions:

- 1) How do we develop all of our students to be the leaders of the next generation?
- 2) How can a class be structured in a way which all students can successfully learn on a high level, regardless of their starting point?
- 3) What is the basis for student economic accomplishment after graduation, and how can we transition instruction to be more in line with those needs?

- 4) How is it that many students who struggle in school demonstrate great practical success post-graduation?

Where can I find Humanities Research?

The Humanities Research learning model is exclusively run in Montville Township. While the initial year (2013-2014) of Humanities Research included 5 class sections of English 12 (Grade 12, Enriched and Grade Level) and 5 class sections of U.S. History II (Grade 11, Enriched and Grade level), the second year (2014-2015) of the program is expanding to include 20 sections of English (Grades 11 and 12, Enriched and Grade Level, all sections) and 20 sections of Social Studies (Grades 10 and 11, Enriched and Grade Level, all sections).

****Enduring understandings***

US History II (1 example), "WWI influenced and changed the United States in terms of its politics, economy, culture and social beliefs/norms."

English 12 (1 example), "Understanding the historical context of works of literature enhances analysis of individual heroes."