AP Capstone Research Syllabus
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Course Description:
AP Research, the second course in the AP Capstone experience, allows students to deeply explore an academic topic, problem, issue, or idea of individual interest. Students design, plan, and implement a yearlong investigation to address a research question. Through this inquiry, they further the skills they acquired in the AP Seminar course by learning research methodology, employing ethical research practices, and accessing, analyzing, and synthesizing information. Students reflect on their skill development, document their processes, and curate the artifacts of their scholarly work through a process and reflection portfolio. The course culminates in an academic paper of 4,000-5,000 words (accompanied by a performance, exhibit, or product where applicable) and a presentation with an oral defense.

Goals:
The goals of the AP Capstone Research are:
- To engage and challenge students through the in-depth consideration of a student-selected research question
- To encourage and empower students to join the conversation of scholars in a selected field of study
- To cultivate higher-level creative and critical thinking skills by encouraging students to make connections between and among a variety of types of sources
- To find and investigate a gap in information and to contribute to the research in the field
- To practice and improve the craft of academic writing by selecting, synthesizing, and embedding researched information with academic integrity
- To develop college-level skills for a successful college and career future
- To foster a love for learning

AP Capstone Policy on Plagiarism and Falsification or Fabrication of Information
Participating teachers shall inform students of the consequences of plagiarism and instruct students to ethically use and acknowledge the ideas and work of others throughout their coursework. The student’s individual voice should be clearly evident, and the ideas of others must be acknowledged, attributed, and/or cited.

A student who fails to acknowledge the source or author of any and all information or evidence taken from the work of someone else through citation, attribution or reference in the body of the work, or through a bibliographic entry, will receive a score of 0 in that particular component of AP Seminar and/or AP Research Performance Task. In AP Seminar, a team of students that fails to properly acknowledge sources or authors on the Team Multimedia Presentation will receive a group score of 0 for that component of the Team Project and Presentation.
A student who incorporates falsified or fabricated information (e.g. evidence, data, sources, and/or authors) will receive a score of 0 on that particular component of the AP Seminar and/or AP Research Performance Task. In AP Seminar, a team of students that incorporates falsified or fabricated information in the Team Multimedia Presentation will receive a group score of 0 for that component of the Team Project and Presentation.

From the AP Research Course and Exam Description

Course Textbooks and Instructional Resources
Owing to the fact that there are no required texts for this course, I will provide my students with access to a wide variety of resources which will include:

- AP Research Course and Exam Description
- Academic papers and scholarly articles
- Activities and exercises from the 2016 AP Research Student Workbook

Expected Student Learning Outcomes
Students are required to plan and conduct a study or investigation. In so doing, the topic of each student's research study will vary. Students will be engaged in activities and assignments which will help them to understand the principles of discipline-specific research methods (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed) in order to develop, manage, and conduct an in-depth study or investigation in an area of interest to the specific student. All students will have multiple opportunities to write a 4,000 - 5,000 academic paper and give presentations throughout the course as preparation for the end product of the course. These tasks will be assessed with the Research rubric for mastery.

The end product will include:

- PREP
- A 4,000 - 5,000 word Academic Paper (75%)
- A 15-20 minute Presentation and Oral Defense (25%)
- Students will have ongoing check-ins with their teacher in order to review their progress and obtain feedback for their documented work in their PREP Journal.

TIMELINE

UNIT 1 (4 Weeks)

The information in this unit will focus on “bridging” the AP Seminar course with the AP Research course, while highlighting the differences between the two years. “Students will revisit the core big ideas that operate as the Capstone framework and will read and discuss sample research papers in order to establish a target and/or an “end game” for their own work”. Deadlines for final products will be established, the AP rubrics will be surveyed and understood, course-specific terms will be defined, and by the end of the unit, students will give their first elevator pitch for their potential research topic.”

Materials:

- QUEST framework
- Rubrics (Seminar vs. Research)
- NCUR sample papers
- “There is a problem” initiator
- Sticky note posters
Activities:

- **Defining and locating “a gap” in the Research:** Students will study the AP Research Rubric, identify and define new or unfamiliar terms such as methods, implications, limitations, etc. In addition, they will be engaged in a close reading of an article and identify these concepts within it. Conversations on what is meant by “gap” will help with formulating a narrow research question.

- **Introduce PREP (Process and Reflection Portfolios):** Students will be provided with samples and instructions on keeping and maintaining their PREP. The PREP will prove the validity of the process of the research. In addition it will allow students to demonstrate their knowledge gained from AP Seminar (i.e., the different perspectives, synthesizing information, analyzing arguments, evaluating evidence, etc.). PREP entries will be made on a bi-weekly basis allowing for constant practice of the skills.

- **Methods discussion and examples:** Students will be provided with Methods tables, definitions, explanations, and samples.

- **Impromptu speeches:** Regular practice of presentation will be done by students in the presence of their peers. These practices will include the proper use of rhetorical and argumentative skills. Ongoing Verbal “QUESTing” will be a class focus throughout the year.

- **Students will practice writing annotated bibliographies**

Assessments:

- **Sample papers used for close reading (QUEST) exercises:** A variety of elements of the QUEST process included in research done by others will be discovered and disclosed by the students.

- **Research rubric will be used to assess sample papers**

- **Individual students will have the opportunity to select a minimum of two papers that are similar to each student’s topic of investigation, and write a summary which will compare the approach of each paper pertaining to the topic (perspective). The perspective must have a direct connect to the sources chosen and the mode of presentation the paper will entail.**

- **Assumptions activities:** Teacher will have students engaged in an intriguing story telling game which will highlight the comparison between the absolute truth and the probable truth. The aim of this exercise is to help students to recognize that assumptions will be made and are allowed in research; but it is important to recognize assumptions and effectively articulate them.

- **Evaluating, critiquing, and revising sample research questions:** While students use the “Transforming a Topic of Issue into a Problem Statement” activity which is from the AP Research training, it will begin to become clear to them how to formulate a research question. Each student will have multiple opportunities to complete several guided thought practices, which will lead them to focus on few of their own choices. Individual, small, and large group evaluations will be conducted.

- **“Elevator Pitch” Speech with poster:** Each student will prepare and present a three to five minute explanation/elevator pitch of their intended research question and process on a poster to the class.

Unit 2 (5 Weeks)

Discipline specific research methods and citation rules will be introduced in this unit. During this time, students will continue to refine their research topic and question. The real process of source mining and initial collection of literature on their specific topics will begin by the students. Contacts will be made to expert advisors, and scheduled work in progress (WIP) checks will be convened on a regular basis. The WIP checks will include one-on-one conversation with the teacher, a class discussion (seminar) where students can garner ideas and help from each other. Collection of data and/or information by the students will be underway by the end of this unit. In addition, students will have begun composing annotated bibliographies and the submission of their final topic of inquiry proposal.
Materials:
- Style guides (MLA, APA, etc.)
- Choosing a method tables 1-5
- IRB form
- Inquiry Proposal Form
- SMARTER searches and PAARC (Purpose, Authority, Accuracy, Relevance, Currency) test handouts
- Sample Annotated bibliography format

Activities:
- **Aligning inquiry and approach exercise(s):** Students will determine what method, design, or type of approach would yield the best results for such a research project. In so doing, they will use generic or pre-formulated questions. In addition, students will be expected to approach their own research question using that critical point of view in order to determine the ideal method or approach.
- **Ethical Research Practice:** A teacher led discussion will be done with a focus on the general principles of ethical research practice. A review of situations that require how to secure approval of an IRB will be the focus. A wide variety of exemplar situations will be presented to the students, and they will have a discussion on the need for IRB approval and whether or not there is use of proper attribution and citation.
- **Review sample inquiry proposals:** A review and comment on sample inquiry proposals will be done by students.
- **Annotated Bibliography:** In support of their research questions, Students will compile an annotated bibliography of at least four initial sources, which should highly focus on methods and styles of presentations needed to produce and display information. Each student is expected to prepare a brief one page reflection on how effective these methods and styles are, and how applicable they are to each student’s research question. An in class peer review will be done.
- **Library time:** Students will focus on how field of research will determine citation style. Librarians will help students make these determinations.
- **Defining “scope, sequence, and feasibility”:** Final Inquiry Proposal Forms will be received, completed, evaluated, and submitted by each student. Students are required to peer review each other’s proposal, and submit their form for a preliminary review by the teacher, who will provide actionable feedback prior to final submission of the Inquiry Proposal Form.

Assessments:
- PREP (see explanation in Unit 1)
- Annotated bibliographies (included in PREPs)
- First WIP report: These replace the “elevator pitch” speech in Unit 1. Students will have three to five minutes to share their findings, struggles, intentions, & progress with peers in an informal presentation. PREP will provide each student with a lot of the information he/she will share. Peer feedback is needed.
- Final Inquiry Proposal Form sheet is due on the due date set forth by the AP Capstone program. The Inquiry Proposal Form will be reviewed and approved/not approved, by the instructor.

**Unit 3 (5 Weeks)**

Students will have multiple opportunities to meet with their expert advisors. Students will be able to put into the practice the skills learned in Unit 1 and Unit 2. Each student will continue the research process. They will determine methods and alignment, and they will begin to select specific resources which will determine how useful these items are to their specific paper and presentation. The early stages of composition would have begun by the students. In addition, plagiarism policies and ethical guidelines in data collection will be dealt with.
Materials:
- AP Capstone Policy on Plagiarism and Falsification or Fabrication of Information
- Citation examples

Activities:
- **Library Time**: Students will have access to library resources and other available resources through the AP Digital Portfolio which will increase their options. They will also be able to seek help from media specialists.
- **Meet with expert advisors**: There will be regular meetings with students and their expert advisors. Meetings with expert advisors, Socratic Seminars/discussions, and progress will be documented in the PREP. (Prior communication would have been communicated by the AP Research teacher with the teaching staff during the early part of the year to secure names of faculty members willing to help students.)
- **Socratic Seminars**: Regardless of the fact that each student will be working solely on his or her own research paper at that particular time, it is necessary that each student continue to exercise his/her “QUEST muscles”. There is a heightened importance for weekly readings to be done by students: culturally relevant articles, op-ed pieces, watch political debates, zero in on items of importance in their fields of interest, etc. Students are expected to summarize main points, address misconceptions, formulate follow-up questions for clarification, make relevant connections with information from an additional source, determine how valid of both arguments and data are, and predict future outcomes.

Assessments:
- PREP (as above)
- WIP reports (as above)
- Peer reviews: Students will work collaboratively on the early drafts of their work.
- Socratic Seminar (as above)

Unit 4 (12 Weeks)

The focus of this unit is the final product. The core elements of this unit are:
- The composition and preparation of the research paper and
- The performance of the oral presentation and defense.

With guidance and insight from teacher, expert advisor, and peers, each student will work independently on his/her final product. A heightened focus will be placed on the effective communication of ideas and information in a clear and concise manner which has been generated and validated by the student’s research.
Materials:
- “They Say, I Say” templates (further explanation is below)
- Two-minute speech prompts
- Oral defense questions: Students will respond to one question from teacher or audience after two-minute speech.
- Useful citation tools: Focused work on bibliography, quote integration, and in-text citation rules.
- Graphic organizer for peer reviews.

Activities:
- Socratic Seminar (as above)
- PREP (as above)
- WIP reports (as above)
- Presentation exercises and practice: Students will be engaged in impromptu speeches and receive a visit from the school's theatre director.
- Revising papers and finalizing presentations: The “They Say, I Say” template is a good exercise to synthesize information and understand context and perspective. It also provides students some beneficial ways to avoid “plop” quoting their research or authors. Students will seize the opportunity to work on introductory words and phrases in order to effectively make the necessary transition throughout their papers.
- Final submission Activity: Once the students’ final papers are submitted, and there is the final presentation and oral defense, each student will give short five-minute presentations. These five-minute presentations will give a summary of the relevance of their research and provide a perceived extension for the future development of their work.

Assessments:
- Peer reviews: A guided peer review will be conducted. In so doing, each student will be paired with a classmate who will provide a review of his/her partner’s research paper before the submission of the final draft. The AP Research rubric will be used to assess and guide the peer review process.
- PREP
- Final paper due
- Final presentation and oral defense begin

Unit 5 (4 Weeks)
After the AP Research course requirements have been completed, this unit will begin. A final copy of the PREP will be delivered. Students will present their work, and discuss the AP Research course with the current AP Seminar students. Students will complete the additional Advanced Placement exam in order to qualify for the AP Capstone Diploma.

Materials:
- PREP
- Study materials for AP exams

Activities:
- PREP
- AP Research Presentations: to current Seminar students

Assessments:
- PREP Summative
- AP Research Presentations Summative