



Research Brief

Seminar Classes

Question: What is known about student seminar time or academic enrichment period?

Summary of Findings:

Student seminar time or academic enrichment period is a period during the school day that is used for special events and activities, homework, special help, assemblies, goal-setting with mentor, etc. They are used by middle schools, high schools, and colleges. For example, Nathan Hale High School in West Allis, WI, reports:

Our eight-period schedule features a midday Academic Enrichment Period where all students can seek academic assistance across the curriculum. During that same period of time, all ninth grade students are assigned to a Freshmen Academic Enrichment period, staffed by a teacher and two student mentors, where the curriculum focuses on making a positive social and academic transition to high school. Data collected indicates that both programs enhance overall academic success for students.

There is very little written about seminar and enrichment periods with a few minor exceptions. There didn't seem to be anything in the research or policy literature, nor in the ERIC database. An Internet search most often turns up the academic enrichment period schedule for a specific school. Sometimes it is scheduled daily and others only once a week. Lamberton Middle School in Carlisle, PA, even designates different enrichment periods for different purposes: afternoon AE is for extra academic help, except for the students at Band and Orchestra; morning AE is for either foreign language or special enrichment/activity classes; and on every "Day 2," the AE is devoted to sustained silent reading.

Villanova University wanted to establish a 3-hour weekly academic enrichment period, with no other classes scheduled, that would allow for special speakers or for "outside the classroom" experiences. They point out that other universities, among them the University of Virginia and Carnegie-Mellon, handle this by setting aside a block of time to hear invited speakers

Occasionally, there is mention of a specific project that students accomplished during an academic enrichment period

A service learning guide from Maryland highlights a veteran's project that students worked on: "The students worked on the veteran's project each day for two weeks during their 50-minute academic enrichment period. The play and the slide show gave students a chance to practice their language arts skills of dramatic presentation, oral communication, and written communication."

And Tyngsborough Middle School in Tyngsborough, MA, reports that students in Grade 7 worked on an interdisciplinary project based on the novel *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, by Lois Duncan:

The project was completed during the Academic Enrichment period. It involved Geography, ELA, Science, and Mathematics. Students created maps showing the setting of the book for Geography. For ELA, students decided what they felt were the most important elements of the plot and summarized those elements. For Math, students made a coordinate grid on their map and determined the coordinates of the locations they included on the map. For Science, students were asked to use the Scientific Method to solve the death of David Gregg, a character in the book.

Northside College Preparatory High School of Chicago had the most interesting type of weekly academic enrichment period. NCPHS has a regular block schedule 4 out of 5 days. On the 3rd day, they have advisory from 7:55-8:35, a Colloquium from 8:40-11:40, and teachers have common planning time from 11:40-3:12 (early release). According to their web site:

What is Colloquium? Arts and Humanities Director Mr. Hampton defines it as 'an academic forum for exploring a myriad of topics and subjects outside of the regular traditional core curriculum - inspired by the Greek teacher Socrates and taught by Northside faculty and staff.' For the rest of us, colloquium is the often-Wednesday three hour class picked every semester. It's a class that allows students to learn something no traditional high school would offer. Examples include learning how to assemble and maintain motorcycles, writing a screenplay and creating a short film, and even taking field trips to the supermarket to improve produce picking skills.



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Online Resources:

Nathan Hale High School

11601 West Lincoln Avenue, West Allis, WI 53227
Telephone 414-604-3200

Our eight-period schedule features a midday Academic Enrichment Period where all students can seek academic assistance across the curriculum. During that same period of time, all ninth grade students are assigned to a Freshmen Academic Enrichment period, staffed by a teacher and two student mentors, where the curriculum focuses on making a positive social and academic transition to high school. Data collected indicates that both programs enhance overall academic success for students.

http://www.wawm.k12.wi.us/Our%20Schools/Hale_Folder/Halepro.htm

Lamberton Middle School

777 South Hanover Street, Carlisle PA 17013
Telephone 717-240-6800 x15805

Academic Enrichment: Each cycle there are several periods called Academic Enrichment (AE). Each is described below.

Afternoon AE: Afternoon AE meets on all of the odd days of the cycle. Band and orchestra students meet during this time. The remaining students have the opportunity to complete homework, study, go to the library, or get help from a teacher. It is very important to understand that all four team teachers are present during this AE and are specifically there to give students extra help. Band and Orchestra students who need extra help may ask for a pass to come to AE or can schedule another time to meet with the teachers.

Morning AE: Morning AE meets on all of the even days of the cycle. This period is academic in nature. This AE is designed for those students who are not in a foreign language class. During this AE period the team teachers take turns leading enrichment activities that cover a variety of disciplines.

SSR: On every Day 2 of the cycle the students have an Academic Enrichment period that will be devoted to Sustained Silent Reading. Every student on the team will be expected to have an SSR book to read.

http://users.carliseschools.org/kihld/8W/main_page.htm

Maryland's Best Practices:

An Improvement Guide for School-Based Service-Learning

The students worked on the veteran's project each day for two weeks during their 50-minute academic enrichment period. The play and the slide show gave students a chance to practice their language arts skills of dramatic presentation, oral communication, and written communication.

http://www.mssa.sailorsite.net/best_practices.pdf

Northside College Preparatory High School

5501 N. Kedzie Ave., Chicago, IL 60625
Telephone 773-534-3954

<http://www.nscollegeprep.cps.k12.il.us/colloquium/>

Tyngsborough Middle School

50 Norris Road, Tyngsborough, MA 01879
Telephone 978-649-3115

Students in Grade 7 are shown below working on an interdisciplinary project based on the novel *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, by Lois Duncan. The project was completed during the Academic Enrichment period. It involved Geography, ELA, Science, and Mathematics. Students created maps showing the setting of the book for Geography. For ELA, students decided what they felt were the most important elements of the plot and summarized those elements. For Math, students made a coordinate grid on their map and determined the coordinates of the locations they included on the map. For Science, students were asked to use the Scientific Method to solve the death of David Gregg, a character in the book. Students in the school band have the option of completing the project on their own time for extra credit if they choose, since they attend band during the Academic Enrichment period.

http://www.tyngmiddleschool.org/gr7_enrichment_nov.html



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A Proposal for an Academic Enrichment time at Villanova University

MINUTES: FOURTH Meeting of the Villanova University Senate for the Academic Year 1998-99 in the East Lounge of Dougherty Hall on Friday, NOVEMBER 13, 1998 - 3:30 P.M.

ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT - Co-sponsored by Senators Tymon and Gustafson

Senator Tymon made the motion: US 9899-4-1: RESOLVED: That the university establish an "Academic Enrichment" period of three hours during the week in which no classes would be scheduled. Senator Tymon explained that the motion arose from the difficulty and frustration in trying to schedule an activity during the week. Student groups, especially those in C & F, invite top notch speakers in industry. Much more emphasis is being placed on Villanova as a learning community where lot of learning is encouraged outside the classroom such as the Villanova experience, themes through out the year, and other opportunities. Senator Tymon stressed the difficulty in having speakers come to campus and discuss issues when there is just not enough time for their presentations during the class week. Other universities, among them the University of Virginia and Carnegie-Mellon, handle this problem by setting aside a block of time to hear invited speakers

<http://www.unisenate.villanova.edu/minutes/98-11-13.htm>

Submitted Date: 1/5/06 By: Mike Muir, Maine Center for Meaningful Engaged Learning

<http://www.principalspartnership.com>

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