

Research Methods: Improving Citizen Understanding through Research

An Online Educational Module Based on
the Citizen-Driven Performance Measurement Project
Sponsored by
The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Teaching Notes: Citizen Involvement Planning Campaign: Lessons from Worcester Case

Class Use Objectives: This case explores the use of benchmarking and citizen participation to connect government goals to community development. In addition, the case demonstrates the importance of citizen participation in the planning process, community revitalization, and development of performance measures that meet community needs.

Pre-Requisites: Familiarity with benchmarking, strategic planning, community development, and performance measurement.

Discussion Questions: Here are some questions that highlight key issues in the case and are likely to foster meaningful discussion among students might include:

1. Does Newark have a strategic plan? If so, compare their plan to the Worcester plan. Which one is better? If Newark does not have a strategic plan, assign groups to develop a strategic plan for Newark.
2. Have the students compare citizen involvement in Newark to Worcester. Which city has better citizen involvement? Why? How can the city identified as needing to improve citizen participation, improve citizen involvement?
3. Have the students develop a municipal data inventory for Newark.
4. What goals would you connect to community results?
5. How would you revitalize Newark? Who would you involve in the process? How would you maximize community involvement?

Activities: These are suggested classroom activities appropriate for small groups of students.

1. Check the Internet to see if any other communities have initiatives similar to Worcester. Compare the initiatives and tell which initiatives you would adopt for Newark. In addition, have them tell how the programs were developed and implemented.
2. Provide input and advice to Worcester on how to revitalize Worcester. Have the students identify things that they would have done differently than the Worcester citizens.

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3. Divide the students into groups and have them pretend that they are conducting a public forum focused upon developing strategies for revitalizing Worcester's neighborhoods. Have one group serve as the city commission that has organized the forum.