

Civic Minds

Date: Friday, December 2, 2016

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Article Title: **Is Canadian safe drug-use site a model for saving lives here?**

Section: Main, A1

Learning Objectives

- ✓ Students will examine the problem of drug addiction in our community and will look at a possible solution.

CCSS Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1.b

Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1.d

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

Social Studies EALR 1: Civics

The student understands and applies knowledge of government, law, politics, and the nation's fundamental documents to make decisions about local, national, and international issues and to demonstrate thoughtful, participatory citizenship.

Social Studies EALR 3: Geography

Understands the cultural universals of place, time, family life, economics, communication, arts, recreation, food, clothing, shelter, transportation, government, and education.

- Analyzes and evaluates the social and political factors affecting cultural interactions.

Social Studies EALR 4: History

- Analyzes the motives and interests behind an interpretation of a recent event.

Social Studies EALR 5: SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS

- Analyzes consequences of positions on an issue or event.
- Analyzes the short-term and long-term implications of decisions affecting the global community.

Vocabulary

Look up the definition of ***epidemic***. Please write the definition and create a new sentence, using your own words.

"We need to do something. We have watched this ***epidemic*** grow year after year across this nation," Murray said. "What we're doing is not working. We need to figure out what we're going to do."

Comprehension Questions

1. Describe Insite and what the program does? What makes it unique?
2. Vancouver's Insite supervised injection center opened in 2003 and has seen nearly 3.5 million visits since then. What are 5 main statistics for the program in 2015?
3. What is the main point of the 13-year old center that offers sterile supplies and a watchful eye?
4. Murray, Dr. Jeff Duchin, who is the King County health officer, and King County Executive Dow Constantine are among those who say a safe injection site could help address what problem? How many lives were lost on overdoses in the U.S. in 2014?
5. What are the statistics for heroin overdose deaths in 2014 in King County?
6. What are the statistics on Insite and how many lives they helped save?
7. Critics, however — including supporters of the Conservative Canadian government leadership who battled for years to shut down the center — contend the effort doesn't address what issues?
8. Although Insite is paired with a drug-treatment center, called Onsite, Berner and other critics point out that completion rates are low. What were the statistics of those who started and then completed treatment last year?
9. Insite was started in 2003, originally a three-year experiment aimed at curbing what?
10. How much does it cost to run the program?
11. What is the premise of the program?
12. Under the proposal, King County would create two centers dubbed Community Health Engagement Locations, or CHEL sites. What will happen here?

Class Discussion Questions and Essay Prompts

- ***Were you surprised that drug use and overdosing is such a large problem? Why or why not?***
- ***How is our community impacted by drug abuse and addiction?***
- ***Have your friends or family ever been impacted by drugs? Were they able to get the help they needed? Why or why not?***
- ***Is a center like this the best solution to help those with drug addictions? Why or why not? Does it encourage more drug use? Why or why not?***
- ***Why do people start taking drugs? What generally happens to their life? Why is it so difficult to stop?***
- ***What would be your concerns about opening a clinic in the Seattle area?***

“This is not rocket science,” said Dr. Thomas Kerr, co-director of the Addiction and Urban Health Research Initiative at the British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, who has extensively studied Insite.

“We’re asking people to do something they do every day, but to do it in a health-care facility where we can minimize the harms.”

- Providing a safe environment, to do something illegal. Is this a practical solution to drug abuse on the streets? Is this the best option? Why or why not?
- Do you have another idea to help people addicted to drugs?

On a recent morning, just outside the center, a man in a dark hoodie slumped over unconscious next to a trash can while a woman with wild blue eyes begged a visitor for cash. Nearby, another woman slept under a cardboard cover, and a thin young man, clearly drugged, writhed and wailed against a brick wall.

The key is offering addicts a safe place to use and a nonjudgmental atmosphere in which to do so, said Alex Kral, a San Francisco epidemiologist with RTI International, who has studied supervised injection sites.

“That’s what these places do; they decrease stigma and they increase trust, and from there comes all kinds of possibilities,” he said.

The truth, he said, is that the injection center keeps people from dying, but it can’t change the illegality of drugs or other pervasive issues such as poverty or homelessness.

- Do you agree with Kral’s assessment on supervised injection sites?
- Do you believe the clinics decrease stigma and increase trust? How? In what ways?

Newspaper-related CBA activity: U.S. Policy

How the United States government interacts with the world affects people across the globe. Analyze and evaluate the causes and effects of US foreign policy on people in the United States and across the world.

- Using The Seattle Times e-edition, find an article from this week that deals with world politics or foreign policy.
- What are the main points of view from someone living in that particular country? How is that “view” similar and different than your own opinion, regarding the specific issue the article is discussing?
- Why is it important to study and learn about foreign policy? How does it help you understand the world we live in, using current issues and events?

Civic Minds in The Seattle Times is posted to the Web on Friday. Please share the NIE program with other teachers. To sign-up for the electronic edition of the newspaper please call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.

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