

Research Questions: (Mary and Madison)

Explain what specific problem or issue you are addressing. Be sure to do this work in consultation with your partners. What research questions do you have about the problem? What do you want to test? What can you feasibly act upon?

Description of the problem: Madison's Data

Crime rates in Alton, IL are significantly higher than an average US city (Crime rate in Alton, Illinois (IL)). Our project revolves around the kids and getting their input and experiences of youth violence in Alton, IL. There was an article posted in November of 2023 that shares information about a school fight occurring between two students in the lunchroom.

<https://madisonrecord.com/stories/650759800-alton-middle-school-student-sues-over-fight-in-cafeteria>. On the *Crime Data Explorer*, you can see the ages of offenders and victims of crimes in Alton, IL. There are 61 offenders for the age category of 10-19 and 46 victims of that same age group.

We will meet with 12-15 students 7 times during the semester. There our group will be creating relationships with the students by sharing stories and doing activities. With hopes to decrease the crime rate by starting with the younger generation of Alton, we will take the research from our group to present quantifiable data for the Alton community. Over the next eight weeks, we hope to learn how violence played a role in adolescent development. Our goal is to take what we know about digital storytelling and teach it to them so they can tell their stories through it, while also maintaining their safety.

What are some key questions to ask about how to solve the problem?

Crime Questions:

1. How do living, social, economic conditions contribute and/or play a role in susceptibility to mental health issues and/or crime, violence.
2. How often are the youth exposed to violence, and in this case, what are the differences between deterrents or prevention, and which are most successful?
3. What is their primary motivator to commit a crime? Was it a voluntary action? How do they feel about the crime they committed? Did it make them want to do it again?

Program Questions:

1. How can we reach the biggest audience possible with student videos?
2. How can we create a sense of belonging in the program so kids feel safe sharing their stories?
3. How can you best assess narrative change and whether it has a quantifiable impact on how people think and act?
4. What are the benefits of teaching kids' technology skills for addressing indirect drivers of the problem?
5. What are the emotional, social, and health benefits of sharing stories?

Questions Focused on The Kids:

1. What communities do they belong to? How do they feel included/excluded from those communities? (sports teams, home, school, friend groups, ethnic identity, extracurricular activities, community organizations, after school programs)
2. Internet—culturally, how do they understand crime, its value, and its purpose?

Defining why we have chosen the questions we have and whether those actions are successful?

Does participation in the program make the kids feel differently about crime, community, etc.?

How effective is narrative change as an approach to challenging perceptions of youth violence

How has sharing their stories benefited kids?

Geographic Focus and Stake Holders: (Spencer, Arri, Stephen)

In addition to being convenient for us as a group, this opportunity to help with creating a video to tell students' stories is helping to push back against common narratives that are often associated with youth violence. This also gives students creative freedom to work on a more personal project and experience with video creation. Hearing the students' underrepresented stories could also give rise to resolutions that deter them from making bad decisions in the future. It is also important to note that the age of the students is a point in their life when they are starting to experience autonomy in making their own decisions. This makes it an ideal point where there could be intervention and guidance towards making better choices. Moreover, it is also an opportunity for the students to develop deeper connections with one another and to form meaningful relationships.

This could be as specific as an after-school group in Alton or as broad as the town itself. Explain why you have chosen the focus and the key stakeholders you have. Take the time to tell us what you know about them through your early conversations and what you still need to know. Explain the role and level of involvement of each stakeholder.

Stakeholders:

- Kids themselves – Potential perpetrators of violence Have misunderstood stories. Most actions are motivated by money.
- People impacted by the violence committed
- Alton School District – Measures that may or may not have been taken to prevent or advocate for the reduction of violence within the schools
- Teachers – Witness a good portion of violence on school grounds. Interact with students the most compared to other stakeholders. They also have an obligation to push the students to the best that they can be.
- Parents- Accountable to provide financial assistance to any victims. Furthermore, take the financial burden of legal fees for their child.
- Administrators – Have much to lose if violence rates continue to rise in children and youth.

- Police – Police deal with the violent crimes committed and they are the ones responsible for keeping the community safe from violence
- Nonprofit organizations within the town of Alton – Some of these organizations investigate things such as violence within Alton. Their methods may or may not be effective in trying to reduce violence rates
- Hospitals & Medical Staff – See the impacts of violence in a more focused lens towards helping victims.

<https://narrativeinitiative.org/>

Data collection:

Focus Groups (Madison)

Method & Goals, (use OtterAI)

Madison will be creating a verbal survey for the kids to answer. This survey will take place on one of the last times we will be visiting Alton Middle School. We will split the kids into groups of four to five and have one to two of our research group members in each group. We will take notes on the surveys and use Otter AI to help transcribe interviews.

Crime Statistics (Madison)

Madison will create a 750-1,000-word annotated bibliography summarizing the stats of crime found on websites based off national crime stats and Alton crime stats. All information will come from reliable websites. The FBI official site is a good place to find a lot of statics for crime rates since it is reliable and has years of information in their database. Some search terms are Crime Stats in Alton, il, Youth Violence in Alton, IL, and Exposer to Youth Violence. Goal: to compare national crime statistics to Alton, IL.

Pre- and post-assessment of the program (Mary 2)

Mary will create a set of questions to ask the students involved in the program. They will be asked or given the survey at the beginning and end of the program. The answers provided will give more insight into the students' backgrounds and what leads them to what their lives are like now. The data collected will be analyzed and made into visual graphs.

Pre- and Post-Gallery (Arri)

Arriana will create a set of question for guest to answer before and after the gallery. The answers will provide data that will later be analyzed and made into visual graphs.

Digital Storytelling How-To's (Spencer)

Develop an outline for how to conduct digital storytelling events. Focus on what to ask, how to best gather information, how to develop meaningful and professional relationships with the students, and how to use that information to create a product (in this case, a video).

One of the most important aspects of digital storytelling that I have found is interactivity. This typically goes for websites that have multiple interactive features that keep the attention of the reader. This would work great with an article or something that is read, however, when it comes to our own research, we need to look for something a little different than this, as a video

typically wouldn't be as interactive. On the other hand, creating a video gives more freedom for what we can add. For example, at any point in a video, it is possible to add pictures, voiceovers, videos, or other helpful aids that can still capture the attention of an audience.

Something else to keep in mind is the accessibility of your product. The display on a phone is different from the display of a desktop or laptop, but what is important is to consider all different avenues that someone could view the video and to make sure that viewing the video is appealing on each device.

Story Center

Google around

ProQuest Articles

Narrative Change (What is it; How do you Assess it?) (Stephen)

Stephen will create a bibliography of various cited sources for the development of an instructional outline for students' digital storytelling. Discuss techniques for developing narrative in their videos. Define what narrative change is and its importance in storytelling. Share examples of narrative change in literature, movies, or real-life situations and discuss how the change in narrative impacts the overall story.

The implementation of narrative change assists and guides students' development of their digital storytelling videos to most effectively impact the audience. This strategy works towards initiating a shift in negative narratives towards the students allowing an increase in prevention plans, programs, outlets etc.

Running Informal Programming for Middle School Practices (Arri)

Arriana will create an annotated bibliography consisting of about ten sources that is somehow related to running informal programming for middle school practices. She will search for articles and analysis them and find how they relate to the topic.

Video Editing (Stephen)

Stephen will formulate instructional lessons on editing platforms compatible with students' issued Chromebook laptops. This will enhance students' video editing skills to most effectively relay their narrative.

Anne's Data on Youth Violence in Alton (Spencer)

