The Uncool Project
“Where’s Daryl?”
Educational Program.

Art Center College of Design
Designmatters
USA
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Promoters.
Designmatters at Art Center College of Design, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)

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Context.
Violence is one of America’s most significant public health issues. “Where’s Daryl?” is one of the outcomes of a Designmatters studio that tasked students with creating a gun prevention campaign for Los Angeles youth, in partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD).
The project.
The “Where’s Daryl?” educational toolkit features a fictional youth whose life is halted because he got involved with guns. 8 lesson plans use humor and stories to spark critical thinking and discussion. Students are asked to reflect on what Daryl did, why he did it, what he’s missing out on and how he could have prevented getting involved with guns.
The design process.
Research shows that statistics of gun violence are too abstract to be absorbed by most pre-teens and may, in fact, further romanticize guns and violence in their minds. *Where’s Daryl?* seeks instead to personalize the risks of guns by inspiring students to consider the impact on their own lives if they get involved with guns as minors.
Between 20-50% of children in the USA are touched by violence, either as victims or as witnesses. For youth in underserved communities, gang culture is presented as a glamorous option. These youth are far more likely to drop out of school, become imprisoned, and face the likelihood that they themselves will be victims of violence. The costs to society are similarly devastating: law enforcement, prosecution, and incarceration present an insupportable financial burden.
Activism and Civic Participation

In collaboration with LAUSD’s Health Education Programs and HIV/AIDS Prevention Unit which focuses currently on conveying the dangers and long-term impact of gun violence to its roughly 680,000 students, Designmatters and the ‘Where’s Daryl?’ project is aimed at serving a diverse population of at-risk youth. The campaign addresses the pessimism and hopelessness that leads teenagers to violence and other anti-social behavior.
The curricular structure for the program’s implementation in schools was inspired by direct feedback from education experts. Designed to comply with LAUSD health standards for learning outcomes, the toolkits contain engaging videos and flexible lessons for use in the classroom to encourage open discussions and empower students to foster their own actionable language, as well as to identify their trusted network of support.
Designmatters and LAUSD were able to support a pilot rollout of “Where’s Daryl?” in ten schools within the country’s largest school district, which serviced 40 teachers with the materials and reached more than 1000 middle school students. Continued implementation is planned for 2014 and beyond.
Production, Distribution and Consumption

Education experts emphasized important considerations teachers would face in deploying “Where’s Daryl?” in the classroom: limited time and resources. Teachers indicated they would be best served by materials that were packaged and ready to go “right out of the box.” Flexible, free-standing lessons allow teachers to adapt to their schedules and classroom capacities. Experts also advised implementing assessment measures to capture success and opportunities for improvement.
Art Center alumna Maria Moon and Elisa Ruffino, Designmatters Director, were tasked with refining “Where’s Daryl?” into a fully-realized educational package. Working in consultation with a curricular expert and staff from LAUSD, the “Where’s Daryl?” fully aligns with health standards. The program won an Ideas That Matter award from Sappi Fine Paper North America.
Gang culture is an affirmative threat to America’s communities. In addition to the personal threats to the lives of youths seduced by gang culture, the costs to society are similarly devastating: most homicides and other crimes on persons and property in Los Angeles are gang-related, and the costs of law enforcement, prosecution, and incarceration present a heavy burden. Ironically, tragically, the annual cost of incarcerating a young person is higher than the cost of sending him or her to a California public college for one year. Diverting youth from prisons and encouraging them to pursue higher education opens them up to more professional opportunities.
In class, students form in small groups and screen 4 short videos that give context to Daryl’s situation. Worksheets are handed out and, using facts they learned as the background, groups are asked to develop a story about whom they “think” Daryl is. Students are then prompted to discuss why Daryl might have done what he did. Central to the discussion are the types of influences that Daryl has in his life and how these could either positively or negatively affect his decision to get a gun. Examples of influences include media (TV, movies, Internet, music, magazines) and relationships with family, friends, neighbors, his girlfriend, and others.
www.designmattersatartcenter.org/proj/lausd-wheres-daryl-educational-program/

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