



IDEAS FOR INCORPORATING NEPC RESOURCES INTO YOUR INSTRUCTION



As part of his *Effecting High School Improvement* course, University of Nebraska professor **Ted Hamann** usually requires his graduate students to make multiple site visits to schools. But in the spring of 2017, the students had too many scheduling conflicts, so Hamann decided to substitute depth for breadth. Students focused on just one school—nearby Lincoln High School—but in a way that intensely explored that school’s history and process of improvement. Hamann found the NEPC’s **Schools of Opportunity** criteria to be particularly useful, so his students used the project’s rubric as a lens through which to view the school’s policies and practices. The Schools of Opportunity project recognizes high schools that have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to equity and excellence by closing opportunity gaps. At Lincoln, the graduate students interviewed teachers, administrators, and students. Then, to make the experience even more meaningful, they followed up by writing a first draft of the Schools of Opportunity **application**, and they added 20 pages of narratives, descriptions and data about the diverse, 2000-student school. Lincoln took things from there, completing the process. A few months and one site visit later, the good news arrived: **Lincoln** had been named one of **eight recipients of the 2017 recognition**.

Hamann’s project is just one example of creative ways instructors use NEPC resources in the classroom.

Others include:

- **Ruth López**, an assistant professor at the University of Houston, wrapped up her doctoral-level course in K-12 policy, politics and governance by assigning students a reading from *Closing the Opportunity Gap*, an NEPC book that describes the principles behind the selection criteria for the Schools of Opportunity project. López then asked students to select one of the ten criteria for the recognition, reflecting upon implementing equity-based policies in their own districts or schools.

- [Wagma Mommandi](#), a doctoral student instructor at the University of Colorado Boulder, assigned a paper in which participants in her undergraduate School and Society course were asked to use the Schools of Opportunity framework to reflect critically on their own high school experiences. “After using the Schools of Opportunity framework as a guide, students produced more thoughtful and critical reflections,” Mommandi said.
- [Meredith Mountford](#), an associate professor at Florida Atlantic University, asked her doctoral students to write [NEPC-style critiques of reports](#) that had not undergone peer review. In July, NEPC [published one of the critiques](#), doctoral student Dustin Pappas’ analysis of a Heritage Foundation report, *Focusing on School Safety After Parkland*. Mountford reflects [here](#) on how she organized the assignment and what her students learned.

Other ideas for using NEPC in the classroom:

- Ask students to subscribe to NEPC emails, which include press releases highlighting new publications and newsletters on timely topics. Click [here](#) to subscribe.
- Assign readings from the hundreds of freely available resources on NEPC’s website. [Here](#) is an explanation of the types of publications NEPC provides.
- Use the audio interviews, available [here](#), that NEPC Fellow Greg Smith conducts with researchers about their recent work.
- Enrich your class time by sharing videos in which NEPC Fellows discuss their work. Click [here](#) to browse the Fellows’ biographies.

How do you use NEPC resources with your students? We’d love to hear from you! Email us at nepc@colorado.edu.

NEPC Resources on Curriculum and Teaching

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