Veterans' Health & Social Support Systems 8-Step PBLP (Grades 7-12)

Objective: This project-based lesson plan explores the healthcare and social support systems available to U.S. Veterans, including medical care, mental health services, community-based reintegration, housing assistance, and Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) benefits. Learners analyze how science, policy, technology, data, and community design influence how veterans receive care, and propose improvements in the systems.

Round Table

- **Opening Discussion:**
  - What challenges do veterans face when returning to civilian life?
  - What supports (medical, emotional, financial) should society ensure for them?
  - What is COLA, and how is it relevant to veterans?
  - Why do healthcare, housing, and cost-of-living resources vary so widely across states?
- **Materials:** Reflection journal
- **Purpose:** To build awareness of the human side of service, highlighting that veterans' support systems are not charity; they are a continuation of their public service contract.

Reflection Point

- **Discussion Questions:**
  - How might delayed healthcare, underfunded housing, or low COLA adjustments affect a veteran's ability to live well?
  - How does the community's role compare to the government's role?
- **Purpose:** Students begin to see veteran support as a shared responsibility, not just a federal program.
- **Materials:** Reflection journal

Knowledge Setting	
Science (S): The Science of Veteran Health & Reintegration	❖ **Objective:** Understand physical & mental health challenges veterans face. ❖ **Activity:** Study PTSD, TBI (traumatic brain injuries), chronic pain, and stress response cycles; in order to analyze why reintegration affects wellness.
Technology (T): Digital Access to Veteran Care	❖ **Objective:** Understand digital systems used for VA healthcare access. ❖ **Activity:** Evaluate VA Telehealth, MyHealtheVet, or mental-health support apps; assess accessibility gaps.
Research (R): Investigating Veteran Support Systems	❖ **Objective:** Understand the effectiveness of veteran services across regions. ❖ **Activity:** Evaluate comparative research on veteran healthcare outcomes between states or counties. Identify disparities in access, wait times, or benefit usage (including COLA).
Engineering (E): System Design for Improved Care Delivery	❖ **Objective:** Understand systems design in veteran healthcare delivery. ❖ **Activity:** Map how a veteran moves through the VA system from

	appointment request → diagnosis → follow-up, and understand “pain points.”
Arts (A): Storytelling and Healing	❖ **Objective:** Understand how creative expression supports emotional healing and public understanding. ❖ **Activity:** Study art created by veterans. Analyze how their narrative restores identity, belonging, and voice.
Mathematics (M): Understanding COLA Through Data	❖ **Objective:** Understand how Cost-of-Living Adjustments affect veteran financial stability. ❖ **Activity:** Study graphed COLA over 10–15 years compared to inflation and housing cost index data.
Social Studies (SS): Policy, Equity, and Veteran Rights	❖ **Objective:** Understand the historical and governmental systems influencing veteran care. ❖ **Activity:** Analyze relevant policy and the role of federal vs. state vs. nonprofit support networks.

Project Examples

Progress Map for Project Delivery	❖ **Step 1: Project Proposal** Students gather foundational knowledge through a collaborative knowledge-setting session to prepare for a project-based learning process. They meet with community partners (if possible) and create a written proposal outlining the project focus and intended community benefit. ❖ **Step 2: Initial Project Proposal and Community Engagement Plan** Students submit proposals and reflect on community input, refining their plans. They outline how the project addresses real-world needs and aligns with learning objectives. ❖ **Step 3: Research Progress Update** Students conduct research and gather data by consulting with community partners to guide their project development and ensure accuracy. ❖ **Step 4: Draft of Final Project** Students compile findings into a working draft of their final project proposal. ❖ **Step 5: Final Project Refinement and Approval for Implementation** Students apply final feedback to strengthen their project and submit it for approval. Approved projects move forward to the community involvement and assessment phases outlined in the SOP.

Science (S): The Science of Veteran Health & Reintegration	❖ **Project Example:** Partner with a local VA clinic to conduct a wellness awareness project on PTSD, TBI, and chronic pain management. Design educational materials included in campaign, highlighting how physical and mental health interact during reintegration.
Technology (T): Expanding Preventative Reach Through Innovation	❖ **Project Example:** Partner with a community health organization to design a digital prevention platform that helps communities to prevent or reduce disease risk typically associated with veterans. Use local health indicators (e.g., clinic access, vaccination rates, school attendance, or food-desert mapping) to program alerts and recommendations that function like an antiderivative, reversing the spread of disease through proactive outreach and information access.
Research (R): Investigating Veteran Support Systems	❖ **Project Example:** Partner with a public policy institute to compare veteran healthcare outcomes across counties or states. Collect and interpret data on wait times, benefit use, and COLA impacts to identify fixable disparities, for a “Veteran Care Equity Report”.
Engineering (E): System Design for Improved Care Delivery	❖ **Project Example:** Collaborate with a local hospital’s facilities team or nonprofit resource center to create a blueprint for an antiderivative-engineered model to assist healthcare delivery. Design or diagram how physical and digital

	infrastructure (mobile clinics, tele-medicine hubs, solar-powered health kiosks) could distribute wellness resources efficiently to underserved areas, effectively reducing system strain.
Arts (A): Storytelling and Healing	❖ **Project Example**: Collaborate with a local art gallery or veteran arts nonprofit to create a timeline that showcases the collective oral histories, poetry, or art created by veterans.
Mathematics (M): Building the Antiderivative Health Index	❖ **Project Example**: Partner with an economics organization to analyze how COLA changes affect veteran income security. Students gather data on inflation, rent, and healthcare costs, creating graphs and models that visualize the real purchasing power of benefits. Place final details in *"COLA & Community Stability Report"* for local publishing.
Social Justice (SS): Policy, Equity, and Veteran Rights	❖ **Project Example**: Engage with a veterans' affairs committee or city council to write policy briefs recommending how social services can improve transitions between healthcare and housing support, focusing on equity and accountability in COLA-based benefits.

Community Involvement

- **Objective:** Implement veteran-centered projects through partnerships with VA centers, advocacy organizations, or city health departments.

Assessment

- **Objective:** Evaluate interdisciplinary learning through STREAMSS integration, emphasizing empathy, data interpretation, and applied solutions.
- **Methods:** Use rubric-based assessment measuring depth of research, innovation, and community impact, complemented by peer and partner evaluations.

Feedback Loop

- **Activity**: Facilitate structured reflection on how equitable systems thinking, similar to the idea of an antiderivative restoring balance, can improve healthcare and social services for veterans.
- **Journal Prompt**:
  - How can my STREAMSS discipline contribute to designing a healthcare and benefits model that anticipates and prevents imbalance?

Resume Integration

- Draft their STREAMSS-based project experience, emphasizing real-world impact, interdisciplinary research, and systems-thinking.

For more STREAMSS 8-Step Project-Based Lesson Plans, go to our website at www.steamsinitiative.org.

For all inquiries, please email **info@steamsinitiative.org**

A STEAMS Central, Inc. Program
STEAMS Central, Inc. | STEAMS Initiative
8605 Santa Monica Blvd
#123617
West Hollywood, CA
90069-4109
info@steamsinitiative.org
833-379-6892