The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind Group Project

Having read *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer, our next task is to deepen our understanding of the issues raised by the book. To do this, you will be placed in groups of 4-5, research the assigned issue, and present your findings to the class. This project is intended to accomplish two main goals. First, you will gain experience working within a group, dividing tasks, balancing schedules, and presenting your findings. Next, through researching an issue related to the book, you will become a more active global citizen.

This is an extended project and you will be given considerable time and direct instruction in class to help you prepare.

**Your group presentation must include the following components:**
- Specific examples from the book.
- Incorporation of outside research into your presentation.
- An attention-grabbing introduction.
- A clear, overarching thesis.
- Relevant, thoughtful, and effective transitions from one part of the presentation to the next.
- A well-crafted, powerful conclusion.
- Equitable division of the research and presentation of material.
- Each group must use Power Point/Keynote

**You will be graded on:**
- Speaking skills (eye contact, rate of speech, voice inflection and projection, no likes, ums, ahs, etc.)
- Ability to work effectively as a group
- Analysis of your topic
- Clarity of the presentation of information

**Topics:** The questions given below each topic are intended to get you thinking and to begin your analysis and are not the total of what you need to examine. As you research, additional issues related to the topic will become apparent and need coverage.

1. **Alternative, Renewable Energy**
   - What are some other forms of alternative energy, apart from wind power?
   - What were the most important obstacles that Kamkwamba faced in making his dream into a reality?
   - What obstacles confront alternative energy advocates in the Western world?
   - How did Kamkwamba’s motivations to produce electricity from wind differ from those of American and European entrepreneurs and environmental activists?
   - How was the author’s quest treated by his family, classmates and others in his village? What bred their skepticism, and what changed their minds?

2. **Obstacles to Development**
   - What are the wealthiest countries in Africa? What are the poorest? Where does Malawi fall on this continuum?
   - How is national wealth (or level of development) measured? What are the limitations of these measurement tools?
   - What obstacles to development are imposed by nature and geography? What obstacles are manmade?
   - Can the progress and the empowerment described in TBWHTW be reproduced on a large scale throughout Africa, or was this an isolated example made possible by one person's passion and determination?
   - How can the Western, developed world (and even individuals like you) help poor people in Africa and elsewhere?

3. **The Brain Drain**
   - What is the brain drain, and what are its consequences? Are any of those consequences positive?
   - Will the information age, and the power of the Internet to connect people, have any impact on the brain drain?
   - What policies can lessen the impact of the brain drain without infringing on the rights of individuals to work and study wherever they wish?
   - Many of you are citizens of Asian countries but will leave for America after you graduate. Are you part of the brain drain? Is this a problem?
4. Health and Nutrition
   • The Malawian famine of 2000 had an enormous impact on Kamkwamba, his family and the entire nation of Malawi. Beyond simple hunger and nutrition, what are some other social, political and economic consequences of famine?
   • Are famines natural or man-made phenomena, or both?
   • What places in Africa and elsewhere are currently experiencing famine, and what is being done to address the problem?
   • A lot of health problems in the developing world have very simple and inexpensive solutions, some of which were mentioned in the book. What are some of these problems and solutions, and how successfully have they been implemented?
   • Why is sub-Saharan Africa the epicenter of the global AIDS epidemic, and what steps are being taken to treat the disease or prevent its transmission?

5. Success stories
   • We often describe Africa as being part of the “developing world,” but is all of it actually developing? What countries are touted as the success stories, and which ones are becoming “failed states?”
   • The book mentions some specific names of other African innovators whose paths crossed Kamkwamba’s after he and his windmill became well-known. Research some of these names, see where they are from and what each achieved.
   • Research international agencies that attempt to foster and support innovation and entrepreneurship in Africa. How do they do this, and how successful have they been?
   • What is microlending, and how can it help people like William Kamkwamba to realize their ambitions?

Component Parts:
   1. Thesis statement
   2. Submit two slides to check for format and presentation of information
   3. Two timed practice runs in class

The current project is designed to have you demonstrate that you are proficient in the ESLRs listed below. By aligning this project with the ESLRs, you will be able to (and are expected to) insert this directly into your portfolio.

Insightful Learner and Effective Communicator: Students are well versed in the language and practice of information processes: communication, problem solving, learning, reflection, creativity and research.
1.3 Students use multiple communication strategies for various purposes in different disciplines, and read and produce a wide range of print and non-print text to build understanding.
1.4 Students make oral, visual, and written presentations in various disciplines to exchange information.
1.6 Students demonstrate thinking that is analytical, critical, evaluative, reflective, and creative.

Active Global Citizens: Students understand, respect and value a variety of cultures, possess a positive attitude toward the peoples of the world and seek to use world resources wisely.
3.3 Students demonstrate an understanding of the historical development of various cultures and worldviews.
3.5 Students make connections between differing cultural norms, beliefs and practices as a result of classroom study and school travel.
3.6 Students demonstrate the ability to participate in the democratic process and understand the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship.
3.7 Students exhibit respectful behavior toward the environment and the world’s resources.

Principle-centered Leaders and Team Members: Students develop effective leadership and collaborative skills.
4.2 Students participate in, analyze, and reflect on various leadership and support roles.
4.6 Students work independently and with others, respectfully, cooperatively, and collaboratively.