

SEC 434 – Seminar in Service-Learning
Curriculum Development Plan



Curriculum Plan for: Whatcom Middle School
8th-grade Core

Project Name and Brief Description: Stories: Connecting students and seniors to create a link to the past. Students will work with elders in the Whatcom County Senior Center to record stories from the past. Students will write the elder's stories and create a memory book in their honor.

1. Curriculum Planning

A. Washington Essential Learning's to Address:

The primary focus of this service-learning project will be communication and writing EALR's. Students will have to develop both their written communication as well as their verbal communication. Additionally, students will be exploring history through first hand, verbal memoirs, providing students not only a unique insight into past but also allowing students to work on there interpersonal communication skills.

B. Classroom Goals & Objectives:

Washington State EALR's are located in ()

- 1. Students will develop an appreciation for the lives of elders. To show an appreciation, students will write a positive account of the story of one elder at ___ nursing home. (Writing 2.3)**
- 2. Students will be able to ask appropriate interview questions. Students will show mastery by brainstorming and creating a list of questions. (Communication 2.1)**
- 3. Students will listen to and record answerers given to elders at ___ nursing home. (Communication 1.1)**
- 4. Students will use the answerers to their interviews questions to write a 2 page story about their elder using the 6 Traits of Effective Writing. (Writing 3.1-3.3)**
- 5. Students will compose a section of a memoir book with appropriate graphics or photos of the elders. (Communication 3.2)**

Rationale for Using Service Learning:

Service-learning is an incredible important experience for students. Not only can service learning develop a wide range of social and communication skills such as public speaking, writing and listening skills, service learning also offers students the opportunity to work in the community.

As students venture out to the community they are engaging with a wide range of people and learning essential skills for their future. This particular service-learning project fully integrates well established curriculum through the use of writing and communication EARL's by exploring the ideas of personal narratives and memoirs. When students engage with their elders, they are exposed to new ideas and learn to transcribe important oral histories.

Although service learning is a wonderful learning experience for students, it also meets a need in the community. When students bring their energy, skills and love to the community, they are learning how to be contributing members of society as well as bringing awareness to the community of just how great middle school students are.

D. Lesson or Activity Ideas

Prior to service:

1. Students will read and discuss *Tuesdays with Morrie*
2. Introduce the idea of creating a memory book for Whatcom County Senior Center, with stories of the lives of some of the seniors of the community.
3. Brainstorm a list of interesting questions students could use when asking elders about their lives.

After service:

1. Students will share their experiences with an elder in small groups.
2. Students will read and edit each others stories.
3. Students will discuss various options for creating a memory book. i.e. binding, decorations, cover.
4. Students will write a story about their won life as if they were 90 years old.

E. *REFLECTION IDEAS*** Students will answer the following questions in their writing journals and share in small groups.**

Before

1. Have you ever heard stories from your elderly relatives? What are some examples?
2. Why might elderly people in Senior Centers feel lonely, or want to share their stories?
3. How might we solve the problem of loneliness among the elderly?

During

Giving your full attention, listen carefully to the seniors tell their story. Make notes and record, making sure to write down good quotes.

After

What lesson did you learn about caring for the elderly? Did you notice any changes in the seniors when you spent time with them? How might writing their stories make them feel better?

E. Assessment Techniques

The following 3 areas will be used as assessment tools for students in this project.

1. Teacher observations on communication skills. How well do students participate in group sharing, listening, and speaking?
2. Written story about an elder's life using the 6 traits of effective writing.
3. Future life story from the perspective of their 90 year old self using the 6 traits of effective writing.

2. COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A. Locating Community Partners

Whatcom Middle School is centrally located within walking distance from many local businesses and agencies in Bellingham. For this particular service-learning project, students will only need to walk a few blocks to the Whatcom County Senior Center. This center has been willing and able to support local schools in the past and welcomes the opportunity for students to interact with their members.

B. Setting Guidelines with Partners

1. Make sure Senior Center staff helps teacher match students with an appropriate member – personality match or willingness to participate.
2. Students need to understand the rules in the center: mannerly method of addressing seniors, possible problems with seniors with-hearing etc., whom to call if a problem arises when interviewing seniors.
3. Practice asking questions before meeting with members of the Senior Center
4. Travel arrangements need to be made: walking, biking, carpool

3. LOGISTICS, LOGISTICS, LOGISTICS. . .

A. District Guidelines

1. Permission slips for all students
2. Medical release forms, stating any medical conditions or allergy
3. Letter from community agency stating agreement for students to volunteer in their facility

B. Volunteers

- Staff at the Senior Center will provide basic supervision
- Parent volunteers per every 4 students
- Parent volunteer to walk with each group of students
- Setting up an appropriate time for seniors and students to meet
- Getting the volunteer forms filled out and on file

4. CELEBRATION!!!

What culminating activities will you plan?

After finishing the memory book, a party will be held in the Senior Center for all the members, students, parents, staff, Mayor and local newspaper. There will be cookies and ice cream for all who attend as the students present their project and share the stories of the seniors they have recorded.

5. INSTITUTIONALIZATION

1. It may be a problem to use time from the school day if it is perceived to be taking students away from more “concrete” school work.
 - a. Solution: students will use their core class time to work on this project in the form of researching, drafting, writing, and publishing.
2. It may be a problem to find enough parent volunteers to stay with students at the Senior Center.
 - a. Solution: Contact the local colleges and ask for student volunteers who may need practicum or service hours.
3. It might be a problem to afford cookies and ice cream for the culminating celebration.
 - a. Solution: Make copies of the memory book and sell them to Senior Center and community members for a profit.

To promote service-learning at my school, I will suggest each teacher on a team take a small part of the large project so that no one feels service-learning is too great a burden. Teachers could meet at the beginning of the year to decide on a theme so that the project is integrated across the curricula and everyone has a voice in the decision.