

Course 3: Social Science

1) Introduction: Service-learning is tailor made for teaching Social Studies. The essence of both service-learning and social studies is helping students understand the world around them so they can be effective citizens and leaders. Service-learning brings students into direct contact with real-world community problem-solving. The experience provides a context in which to explore the impact of government, policy, and economics on our every day lives.

2) Definition of service-learning:

Service-learning is a form of teaching and learning that engages students in meaningful service activities in their schools and communities as part of the standard academic curriculum. Integrated into (but not limited to) the school day, service-learning connects young people with structured activities that address human and community issues, and that provide opportunities for increased student academic engagement, civic responsibility, personal and social development and the acquisition of critical thinking skills.

The following concepts are central to good service-learning practice. Evidence of these elements as well as their alignment with Pennsylvania state standards and the School District's promotion/graduation requirements are key to model practices.

- **Student voice in choosing, developing and implementing a project:** Service-learning works best when students are involved in something relevant and meaningful to them. Encourage student participation and sharing of responsibility in all aspects of a project.
- **Identification of genuine need:** The “community” identifying the need can be the class, the school, the neighborhood, a community partner, the city, etc. Goals for addressing problem have the support of designated community and clearly defined goals.
- **Mutual benefit for students and community partner(s):** Students acquire knowledge and skills, and in return contribute a short or long-term solution to the problem. Sensitivity to needs and/or limitations of all parties is important.
- **Sustained student involvement:** Length of project can vary but should span a minimum of 8 weeks. Projects with greater richness and complexity may last a semester or an entire school year.
- **Rigorous, multidisciplinary research:** Projects should meet content standards in at least two academic disciplines and demonstrate writing and research competence. Research can explore root causes/effects, potential solutions or public policy related to the problem.
- **Ongoing reflection:** Reflection activities should occur throughout the project. They reveal cognitive and affective learning and can incorporate speaking, writing and/or multimedia strategies.
- **Assessment of student learning and project impact:** Evaluates academic, personal and social development as well as whether stated community need has been met/addressed. Rubrics and other authentic assessment tools are preferred.

Course 3: Social Science

- **Culminating presentation:** Presentations or exhibitions of learning allow students to demonstrate what they have learned for the benefit of others, including community partners.
- **Final celebration:** Positive change and collaboration is hard work! Acknowledge and celebrate the contributions and accomplishments of all who were involved.

3) Sample Project Description

A sample project description is included for your convenience. This particular project is not required, however, it is designed to fit the core curriculum for this subject and it reflects a common issue or problem in many of Philadelphia's communities. Teachers are encouraged to transform this project and take it in new directions.

Financial Health Fair: Many families struggle to make ends meet. While there are several reasons for this (public policy, joblessness and economic conditions, etc.), there are ways that individuals can take better control of their finances to make their money work for them. As students learn about Personal Financial Literacy (Unit 2 in the Economic section), they will share that information with their community through the creation of a student-run Financial Health Fair. Students will learn about and create workshops based on various topics such as: banking basics, maintaining good credit, understanding federal benefits, managing debt, and paying for college. Students should be encouraged to survey their peers, parents, and neighbors to make the Fair as relevant as possible to the specific needs of their community. Students will be responsible for all aspects of planning the event: securing space, creating and disseminating promotional materials, creating presentations, securing additional outside speakers, creating a budget for the event, fundraising, and evaluating the final product. As this concept progresses, year-after-year, students can tackle more difficult topics such as starting a small business, taking out a loan, steering clear of predatory lending, and/or buying a home.

During the government section, a good way to prepare might be to focus on public policy (3.5.12) related to social welfare (TANF, Food Stamps, Medicare, etc.) and asset development (IDA's, EITC (6.2.12 G, J), Basic Systems Repair Grants, etc.). This will help students make the government-economics connection on both a micro- and macro-level.

4) Suggested Lessons/Activities:

Situating Students in the Problem

- Do a mock budget to help students develop a concept of how much money they need to be "successful." What is poor? What is rich? What is a minimum wage vs. a living wage? (PathWaysPA Self-Sufficiency Wage)

Research

- Create a financial map of the community – how many banks are there? Credit unions? Check-cashers? ATMs? Pawn shops?
- do a community survey to determine financial health information needs
- Research Paper topics: How does federal public policy affect asset development in low-income communities (3.5.12)? Or What is the difference between a credit

Course 3: Social Science

union and a bank? Discuss differences in product offerings, public policy, and governance.

Creating a Solution

- Divide class into teams to plan the Financial Health Fair
- Teams may focus on contacting speakers, developing presentations, creating and disseminating publicity, day-of logistics, and event evaluation

5) Sample Rubric

Rubrics can be used at all steps of the service-learning process. Each activity can have its own rubric, and you can use a cumulative rubric to assess student work at the end of the project. Here is a sample rubric that covers student presentations at the actual Health Fair. This rubric was created on Rubistar, a free web-based program which can be found at <http://rubistar.4teachers.org>.

See attached

6) Multidisciplinary Connections

Math – budgeting

Technology – using Power Point to create presentations, using desktop publishing to create publicity materials such as posters and brochures

English – The 10th grade curriculum requires that students write a resume. Students can build on this experience by offering a resume writing workshop as part of the Financial Health Fair.

7) Where to get more info?

Children’s Defense Fund: <http://www.childrendefense.org/familyincome/default.asp>

National Consumer Action: <http://www.consumer-action.org/>

ACORN: <http://www.acorn.org/>

PathWaysPA: <http://www.pathwayspa.org/>

8) Local Partners:

Your local Community Development Corporation (see <http://www.pacdc.org>)

Local ACORN Chapter (See <http://www.acorn.org>)

Neighborhood Associations

Local bank branch or credit union

This curriculum insert was developed by Hillary Aisenstein, Director of the Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND), as part of a collaborative effort between the School District of Philadelphia and several local community-based service-learning organizations, designed to integrate service-learning with the new core curriculum.