

DIVERSITY EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE ONE: In September of 2008 two teachers in Clintonville, WI were continuing the yearly tradition of reading the local newspaper weekly to their third grade students. During the first weekly reading, the teachers and students came across a letter to the editor from a local resident. In the letter, the individual questioned why the time capsule buried at city hall in 1978, had not yet been dug up, though it was intended to be unearthed after 25 years. The students calculated that this project was 5 years overdue! Students spend the year working with City Council to dig up the capsule and engage the community in preserving their town history. Before approaching the City Council the class talked about the possible multiple perspectives the students may face with members of the council. The group discussed how citizens will not always agree on what to do and for some council members it could be a matter of money and for others a matter of honoring a promise made 30 years ago. This project helped students realize that “old” people are not “grouchy.” The children also learned that citizens CAN work with local government for the common good. Teachers worked to prepare the class for the variety of persons/groups they would encounter through this project. *Clintonville, WI*

EXAMPLE TWO: Eighth grade Mahone Middle School students in Spanish 101 classes not only wrote a book, but they did it in two languages. As part of a service-learning project, students picked a topic, wrote, and illustrated a bilingual children’s book while keeping in mind the essential questions of the unit- what makes a good book? Who can benefit from translated reading materials? The project helped students master vocabulary and grammar concepts as well as technology skills as they put their books together. The books were donated to the children’s ward at local hospitals as well as the Ronald McDonald House. The service was meaningful to the students because they were challenged to think of a topic that would be both interesting to them personally and of interest to a child receiving treatment in a hospital. Through this project students became more aware of diverse audiences with multiple perspectives when they shared their books for proofreading. Students realized that the topics and content of the books needed to appeal to a wide variety of readers of different ages and interests. Several students searched for photos and art work that portrayed multicultural faces rather than ones that included singular ethnicity. The students tried to imagine their books appealing to a child of any background and cultural perspective. *Kenosha, WI*

EXAMPLE THREE: In a collaborative service-learning project between Canterbury Elementary School, in Greendale WI and Clarke Street Elementary School in Milwaukee, WI fourth grade students partnered together to develop tutoring centers for younger students struggling academically. After initial needs assessments, students were introduced to each other via letter writing at the beginning of the year and in December, met in person. During that in person meeting students reviewed needs assessments and discussed the kind of service-learning project they were interested in working on together. Students chose the tutoring center idea and started planning. Over the course of the year, they continued to work together on this project, planned a walk through to determine what the tutoring centers would look like and finally, in the spring, launched their centers at both schools. This project brought together students from different

backgrounds, Clarke Street School is a school located in the inner city where 97% of the students received free lunch. Canterbury is a suburban school where only about 5% of the students receive free lunch. The students come from completely different backgrounds, however students do not see that. They saw their pen pals as their friends and as equal to themselves. The students became lifelong friends because of this project. They break down the stereotypes that are often associated with inner city schools. The students from both schools had to work with students with different backgrounds from themselves. They had to be respectful of each their classmates points of views on different things. They students did a great job of compromising and respecting each other. This project helped students overcome the stereotypes that students in inner city schools do not have as much as suburban schools. The students in this project worked together as children / students to work towards a common goal. The students completed interest inventories and work letters back and forth to each other so that they could truly get to know each other as individuals instead of just labeling their partner as "different." *Greendale, WI and Milwaukee, WI*

EXAMPLE FOUR: Students in an afterschool program decided to work with families who wanted to learn English. They made arrangements with a local community center to offer classes in English language and to go on field trips with the English learners to help them understand how to buy groceries at supermarkets and how to use the public transportation system. When the students came to the center for the first lesson, the room was filled with parents and children from many different language and socioeconomic backgrounds. In providing English lessons to the families, the students from the afterschool program learned about the families' lives before they came to the United States. They told of their experiences in America in ways that expanded the students' ways of thinking about everyday life. While the families learned English, the students learned about other cultures and what it is like to negotiate the rules of U.S. life.

Unpacking What Works in Service-Learning:

Promising Research-Based Practices to Improve Student Outcomes

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