

LINK TO CURRICULUM 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. This project helped students learn 1) the process of citizen action, 2) the value of local history and the idea that local people have to care about their history in order to preserve it 3) written communication skills, 4) knowledge of local government structure, 5) oral communication skills, 6) budgeting skills and 7) calendar skills. Additionally this project covered standards and benchmarks in social studies, language arts, and math. Finally, teachers noted that students learned to transfer skills from one setting to another through role-playing and successful skill attainment. Before contacting community members, students participated in role play situations to prepare them for the phone and in-person contacts they would be making in order to accomplish tasks. Students also came to realize that when you communicate well, such as writing a clear and organized letter asking for information, that that form of communication is successful and can be used in the future for similar purposes. The reward of their successful communication taught them the value of their methods. They not only have an awareness of communication methods, but they also have the tried and true skills to use those methods on their own. *Clintonville, WI*

EXAMPLE TWO: 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. They worked together to set up 5 different tutoring centers for the K-3, K-4 and K-5 students. The areas of concentration included math, reading, bingo, crafts and shapes. At the end of the year the students put together an iMovie that showcased the entire year. The iMovie showed the entire project and the different video reflections. The iMovie was shown at the end of the year assembly to the entire school. This project allowed teachers at both schools to focus on skills in writing, reading, science, art, social studies, math and speaking. For example, part of the social studies curriculum is to teach the students about different communities, which is perfect because this project involved students in an urban school and suburban school. *Greendale, WI and Milwaukee, WI*

EXAMPLE THREE: 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. This project allowed the 8th grade Spanish teachers the opportunity to address learning outcomes in building vocabulary, verb usage, sentence structure, non-adjective agreement, punctuation, pronunciation, intonation and storytelling techniques. This project was an opportunity for students to choose a topic of interest and develop their skills in discussing and writing in the target language. Students also drew on their knowledge and experience with technology through the use of computer software and accessing websites. *Kenosha, WI*

EXAMPLE FOUR: In one high school, teachers began the planning for service-learning by identifying the standards across content areas that they would like to address through service-learning activities. They listed these standards on the board and reviewed them with students as they discussed the specific community needs the class would address. Students and teachers co-planned the service activity, identifying the specific standards that they would weave into the various service-learning activities. Any standards that would not be addressed in the service-learning activity were placed aside and the teacher incorporated them into other forms of instruction. Students worked with the teacher to develop an assessment to be used at the end of the service-learning activities to evaluate what the students learned. The students then engaged in the service, reflection, and demonstration activities and were later evaluated using the assessment tool.

Unpacking What Works in Service-Learning:

Promising Research-Based Practices to Improve Student Outcomes

Available from the NYLC Resource Center at www.nylc.org

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