

1st Grade Social Studies

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 6 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.

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- **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.

Reduce and Recycle

This project engages students in considering how to reduce and recycle waste in their community, as part of the fourth 6 weeks social studies curriculum: "Our Earth, Our Friend." Students will define different types of waste, identify recyclable materials, and explore and act on reducing waste in their communities.

Using their school as a community, students will act as detectives to determine where recycling bins are located, and where they may be needed. Students may also identify ways the school community can reduce their waste.

Students will share their findings with other students and teachers in the school. Students may be given the opportunity to decide how they would like to educate others in the school community about reducing and recycling. Examples include developing presentations for other classrooms, or creating posters to display around recycling bins.

Given time and interest, students might keep track of changes in recycling and reduction of waste in their school that occur based on their service. Students should be provided time to reflect on their service, and celebrate their good work!

4) Sample Lessons/Activities

- Identify materials that can be recycled, compare and contrast with non-recyclable items
- Measure and/or take inventory of the amount of trash the classroom generates each day. Again, identify materials that can be recycled and compare and contrast these items with non-recyclables.
- Discuss where our waste travels to, and how long it takes for materials to break down. Look at how the city of Philadelphia helps citizens deal with waste and recyclable materials. (5.2.3 D, 5.2.3 E)
- List ways that students can reduce the waste that they, their families, and their communities generate (5.2.3 A, 5.2.3 B, 5.2.3 G)
- Map the places where trash generated in Philadelphia travels to for final disposal (i.e. landfills). (7.1.3 B) Map proximity to basic physical characteristics such as rivers and lakes. (7.2.3 A)

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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 are two sample rubrics that assess student learning, one on developmental growth and one on task completion.

See attached

6) Multidisciplinary Connections

Science – Examining the differences between materials you can and cannot recycle, understanding how material breaks down

Math – Counting bottles and cans that have been recycled in the school, looking at how this amount has changed after students educate others

English – Written words on the poster. Using speaking skills when educating other classes about recycling and reducing waste.

Art – Creating posters to identify recycle bins in the school

7) For more information:

Environmental Kids Club: Garbage and Recycling

<http://www.epa.gov/kids/garbage.htm>

Washington State Department of Ecology Kids Page

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/kidspage/>

EarthForce

<http://www.earthforce.org/>

8) Local resources:

Philadelphia Office of Recycling

<http://recycling.phila.gov/>

Clean Water Action: Recycle Alliance of Philadelphia

<http://www.cleanwateraction.org/pa/recycling.html>

Delaware Valley Earth Force

<http://www.earthforce.org/section/offices/delval/>

Cobbs Creek Environmental Education Center

<http://www.cobbscreek.org/>

Pennypack Environmental Education Center

<http://nlreep.org/pecwin02.htm>

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Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education

<http://www.schuylkillcenter.org/>

Wissahickon Environmental Center

<http://nlreep.org/WECWin02.htm>

This curriculum insert was developed by Megan Heckert, Program Coordinator at Delaware Valley Earth Force, 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.