5th Grade: Social Studies

1) Introduction: Service-learning is an excellent way to teach Social Studies. Service-learning emphasizes a "hands-on" experiential approach as a means of connecting academic learning to real-world applications. This approach is an effective way of engaging students in social studies concepts, such as civic participation. Service-learning engages students in real-world community problem-solving activities, exploring ways in which responsible citizens take part in civic life.

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.

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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.

Storytelling and Societal Critique

Students will survey the storytelling tradition of African-American music, describing its changing delivery style and reflection of community political views. Students will develop their own community or household stories worthy of setting to music. The lesson also serves to reinforce the academic content of the Harlem Renaissance unit during the first twelve weeks of the school year.

Students should be given opportunity to work alone as well as with a team to develop stories through musical verse. Students will visit with assorted community groups to hear first hand stories translated by the community seniors as well as their parents in identifying music of previous years that conveyed the community's political or social views.

4) Suggested Lessons/Activities:

Situating Students in the Problem
Youth often bear witness to the undervaluing of the rich resources that come from their own communities. Stories and music from the African American community may fall to the background in the presence of mainstream cultural resources. Yet these means of storytelling are an essential way of capturing the political, cultural, and social views of the community.

Research
This project affords youth the opportunity to practice first-hand the skills of action research. They may talk with community elders, family members, and their peers about the stories that have been told through music. They may contrast African-American music across different time periods, and compare the stories being told with the historical experiences of the community at the time. Youth should be supported in exploring how and why storytelling is an integral part of culture, and how it has evolved.

Creating a Solution

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By researching and experiencing how music captures the voice of the African-American community through time, students will begin to understand how essential this voice is to the cultural fabric of our society. It is important for the students to take a role in sharing this understanding with others in their community. This could take the form of a performance with original song writing, creation of digital music videos, development of original narratives expressing the African American story telling, and more.

Assessment

Students can take an active role in assessing how well they are educating their community and peers about the importance of storytelling techniques. They can develop and administer surveys, conduct community interviews and focus groups, and more.

Standards

This project may address a wide variety of Civics and Government Academic standards as the students will be drawing connections between music and historical experiences. Standards that may be addressed include:

5.1.6 M. Explain the basic principles and ideals found in famous speeches and writings

5.2.6 A. Compare the rights and responsibilities of citizenship

5.2.6 C. Explain ways citizens resolve conflicts in society and government

5.2.6 G. Explain the importance of participating in government and civic life.

5.3.6 G. Describe how the government protects individual rights.

5.2.6 J. Describe the influence of the media in reporting issues

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 rubrics, one that covers students' developmental progress and one that assesses specific tasks.

See attached.

6) Multidisciplinary Connections

Math - Graph trends and statistics of African-American music sales. Survey community members regarding their memory of historical experiences and music connections; tally results

Science and Technology - Translate songs into music videos using digital video recorders. Develop power point presentations and web sites to educate the community on music storytelling.

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Language Arts -   Develop original narratives and songs to relay contemporary societal issues that students face. Create books that tell the story of community members interviewed by students.

7) Where to get more info?

Library of Congress: African American History and Culture
http://www.loc.gov/rr/mss/guide/african.html

Bay Area Video Coalition
http://www.bavc.org/
Facilitates Digital Storytelling
http://www.bavc.org/classes/dvd/brainglow.htm

Stories of Service
http://www.stories-of-service.org/

Story Arts Online (classroom materials)
http://www.storyarts.org/

National Storytelling Network
http://www.storynet.org/

Center for Digital Storytelling
http://www.storycenter.org/

8) Local Partners:

Scribe Video Center (offers youth workshops)
http://www.scribe.org/

Spiral Q Puppet Theater (civic theater and storytelling)
http://www.spiralq.org/

School   District   of   Philadelphia: African   American   Studies   Department
http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/ll/curriculumsupport/aastudies/african&american.html

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