

Beyond Walls and Screens: Service-Learning to Engage Students

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In Fall 2023, the English Department started a pilot to incorporate service learning into General Education Literature courses. In this session, each pilot member will discuss separate aspects of incorporating service learning in a course for the first time, including the benefits and challenges for students, in order to open a discussion about this important pedagogical choice and how it supports student success by connecting students to the world and community around them. Panelists will focus on service-learning: 1) in online courses; 2) as career-readiness; 3) as response to AI; and 4) as a connection between theoretical and real-world experiences.

Quick Tips for Successful Service-Learning

1. Find a community partner before planning your course.
2. Define what it means to serve the community partner (how to prepare, when to arrive, how to engage, etc.)
3. Establish hard deadlines for students' service on site.
4. Plan for flexibility (student no-shows, alternate assignments, etc.)
5. Connect the volunteering to the class materials and the class materials to the volunteering. See below for prompt ideas.

Literary Analysis Essay Prompt

Instructions

Write a constructive analysis on a work of literature discussed in class that best connects to the service-learning activity explored in class. The text you select for your literary analysis cannot be the same text you will use for your final research topic.

Guidelines

For this assignment you should write about 600 words in total. There should be 3 paragraphs:

- The first should be a very short paragraph that concisely explains what is happening in this literary passage. Assume this is a reader who has never read the selected literary work before.
- The second paragraph should interpret the passage, as we have been practicing in class. You should quote key terms and phrases as you explain the implications that arise from them. However, you don't have to cite the text or any page numbers.
- The third paragraph should specifically discuss a scene or passage in the text that directly connects to at least one of your service-learning activities completed in the class. Is there one important social, cultural or historical component found in the reading and service-

learning activity pertinent to review? As with the second paragraph, quote key terms and phrases as you explain the implications that arise from them.

Pre-Service Reflection Prompt

Drawing on our conversation about Chimamanda Adichie's "[The Danger of a Single Story](#)," address the following prompts in a seamless composition of 200-250 words.

- In your own words, what is the identified problem or need in the community?
- How is the community partner addressing that need?
- Why are you needed? How will you help?
- What is a **single story** that's been told about this community? (e.g., a stereotype or misconception)
- What are some of your perceptions or beliefs about the community you will be serving?
- What are the **sources of power** that have shaped your perceptions or beliefs?
- What do you hope to gain from your service to the community?

Post-Service Reflection Prompt

Returning to Chimamanda Adichie's "[The Danger of a Single Story](#)," reflect on your service-learning work this semester in 450-500 words. Use concrete details, specificity, and vivid sensory language to describe your experience.

- What have you learned about yourself in your service work?
- What was the most important lesson you learned?
- How have you been challenged?
- What have you contributed to the community through your service?
- How were your beliefs about the community **unflattened** by your service?
- What can others do to **dignify** this community?
- What other **stories matter** to you and why?