

Service Learning

A service learning project is a new component of PTA 110. The goal of this project is to allow students to get more exposure to a variety of persons with disabilities.

There has been an initiative among the CPOC faculty in many areas to include “service learning” in their courses. One example is the students studying to be electricians who, with their instructor, completely wire a house being constructed by Habitat for Humanity. It seemed to me that we could adapt a service learning project to get you direct experience with the kinds of persons with whom you will work one day.

You will be using this project to see persons with disabilities living their lives rather than in the restricted and sometimes artificial atmosphere of the hospitals, rehab centers, or physical therapy clinics where you will encounter them when you are PTAs. It is my hope that this will help you develop a more practical attitude toward their treatment, more empathy for them as persons, a sense of what needs exist in our communities, and a deeper appreciation for the impact you can have within the profession you have chosen.

Here are the general course requirements for completion of this project. You will be expected to volunteer a minimum of 12 hours of your time during this semester at one of a list of agencies. These hours will replace 12 of the one hour PTA 110 labs scheduled on Wednesdays. At the end of the semester, you will make a presentation to the class. The presentations will be tailored to the service project you choose to do. I will discuss the presentations with each of you individually. Where possible, we may combine those doing similar projects into a group for presentations.



The type of facility or organization to which you give your time is up to you but please recall that one of the goals of the assignment is exposure to persons likely to part of your patient population. The obvious place to get that exposure is at a hospital or clinic HOWEVER another goal of the assignment is to see these persons function in society.

Previous students have volunteered at long term care facilities, worked at Joshua's Farm and other recreational facilities for senior citizens or persons with disabilities including Special Olympics events, or volunteered with Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools notably at Metro Center. What you actually do at the site is less important than your contact with people and the service you are able to give them.



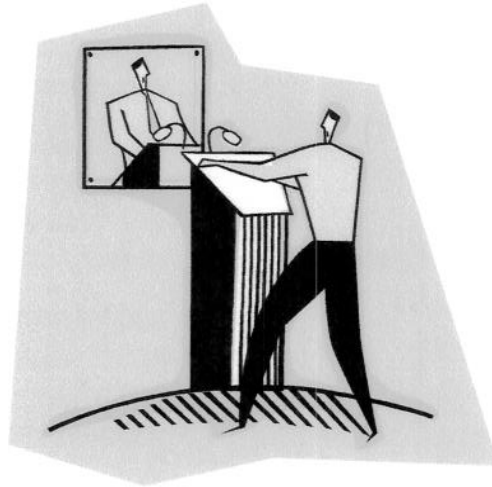
You can find a list of opportunities affiliated with CPCC Service Learning on the Service Learning website (<http://www1.cpcc.edu/service-learning/>) under information for students. You are not limited to the facilities listed there.

You MUST follow the procedures for service learning described on that site including: filling out the online placement confirmation form, completing a time sheet and agency contact log, and completing the online evaluation in addition to your PTA 110 requirements. (<http://www1.cpcc.edu/service-learning/students/start-your-service-here>).

For further information, talk to the second year students about their experiences. Be sure to clear your agency choice with me before you proceed.



REFLECTION ON YOUR SERVICE LEARNING EXPERIENCE.



Your service learning experience will provide greater personal and professional value to you if you take time to reflect on what you have seen and done. This active reflection will also provide the basis of your report to the class. Here are a few things you might choose to consider; some will not apply to your particular situation. Many other aspects of your experience will be important to you. You can use some of the suggestions recorded here combined with your own or you can be entirely original.

- How did the people you saw differ from your expectations?
- How did they react to you? How did their reaction to you make you feel?
- Did you have difficulty communicating with them?
- How did you solve your communication problems?
- What kind of interaction with caregivers & family members did you witness? How did that make you feel?
- Would you place a family member with a disability in this facility?
- Were the activities in which you participated appropriate to the people you were working with? What would you change?
- Did the persons you saw seem to enjoy the facility or activity? What evidence supports your judgment?
- What changes would improve the facility? How would they help? Why are they needed.
- The people you observed are receiving care and attention. Many others in the community are not. What could realistically be done to help the others?

This part of the assignment offers you an opportunity to be creative and state your personal feelings and perspectives. You will be asked to briefly describe the experience its value to you, and your reflections to the class at the end of the semester. There is no written component to be handed in but you are expected to be as well prepared to present this information as you were to make presentations in your speech class. The same tool used in speech class to determine your grade will be used in this case.