

Service Learning Case Studies

One

Mrs. Ahuja teaches English Language to 9th and 10th grade students. She has been searching for a service learning project that will help the students to learn about civic responsibility and serving the community. Next door to the school there is a small park and playground that had not been maintained and was full of trash and broken glass. Mrs. Ahuja decided that the students should clean up the park, helping both students in their schools and others who might wish to use the park. One day, the class took one hour to clean the park instead of having their usual English lessons. After throwing away all the trash, the students made several signs saying “Please don’t litter – this is your park too!” and post them in the park. The children of the neighborhood now have a clean place to play after lessons and families have started using the park again.

Two

Mr. Chatterji teaches Social Studies to 12th grade students. His students have been learning about illiteracy and how the inability to read and write affects not just individuals, but also the entire society. The students want to do something to help with illiteracy in their own city, so Mr. Chatterji arranges for them to volunteer with younger children who are at risk for illiteracy because they do not regularly attend school. Their city already has a Center for Children where families and children can go for information or assistance programs. The older students visit the center once a week to read books to young children and also play games that involve writing and reading. At the end of the project, the 12th grade students created a presentation to the other students at their school about the effects of illiteracy and what young people can do about the problem, using their service learning project as an example.

Three

Ms. Sood teaches Science to 11th grade students. In this unit they have been learning about the global and local effects of pollution on the environment. Ms. Sood encouraged her students to find out the biggest environmental problems in their village. The students surveyed people in the community about how pollution was affecting them the most. With the results of their survey and the guidance of Ms. Sood, the students decided that they could improve several wells and decrease water pollution. The students did more research about their project, and then asked both a local company and a nonprofit organization working in a nearby village to help them to reseal and clean three wells. The students, company, and nonprofit worked together over several months to finish the project. After its completion, the students created individual written reflections about their project and also wrote an article for the local paper together, describing what they had done and encouraging others to do the same.

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