



Maryland State Department of Education
Service-Learning Unit
**Assisting Senior Citizens
with Computers**

Primary Subject: Computer Technology/Business Ed. **Grade Level:** 8th - 12th

Additional Subject Area Connections: Language Arts

Unit Title: Assisting Senior Citizens with Computers

Type(s) of Service: Direct

Unit Description: This unit involves high school students teaching senior citizens how to use computer technology. Teaching senior citizens computer technology requires a different approach and high school students will be developing unique lesson plans to instruct their elders. Basic computer skills that match the interest of the senior citizens will be taught.

Potential Service-Learning Action Experiences:

Tutor senior citizens in computer applications such as picture sharing, flash media, and other multimedia skills.



VSC Indicators Met

School Library Media Grades 6-12:

3.0 Collect Information: Students will be able to collect information relevant to their current information need.
3.0.3. Use computer/online/digital resources efficiently effectively.

Maryland Technology Literacy Standards for Students:

Standard 1.0 – Technology Systems: Develop foundations in the understanding and uses of technology systems.

Standard 2.0 – Digital Citizenship: Demonstrate an understanding of the history of technology and its impact on society, and practice ethical, legal, and responsible use of technology to assure safety.

Standard 3.0 – Technology for Learning and Collaboration: Use a variety of technologies for learning and collaboration.

Standard 4.0 – Technology for Communication and Expression: Use technology to communicate information and express ideas using various media formats.

Standard 5.0 – Technology for Information Use and Management: Use technology to locate, evaluate, gather, and organize information.

Alignment with Maryland's Best Practices of Service-Learning: *Assisting Senior Citizens with Computers*

1. **Meet a recognized community need**

Many senior citizens need assistance in acquiring basic computer skills. High school students have the ability and knowledge to teach their elders those skills.

2. **Achieve curricular objectives through service-learning**

- Students will become proficient in the use of technology.
- Students use technology to locate, evaluate, and collect information from a variety of sources.
- Students use telecommunications to collaborate, publish, and interact with peers, experts, and other audiences.

3. **Reflect throughout the service-learning experience**

Students create a PowerPoint about the process of instruction to the senior citizens. They think about the events that took place during the service-learning experience, the steps involved, the participants of the project and the role you played in the experience. Remember to take notes of the different events and processes during your experience so you can create a completed PowerPoint.



Think about the events that took place during your service-learning experience. Now think about a menu for a restaurant and the different parts of the menu (e.g. appetizers, entrees, dessert, kids menu, vegetables). Using the events during your service-learning project and the different parts of a menu, place the events from your project into menu format. What events would you consider to be the appetizers of the project? What is the main course of the project and the dessert of the project? Example: Appetizer might be considered to be the planning. Decorate your menu, give it a name, and descriptions of the items in your menu.

Complete a daily journal/diary of your planning, presentation and instruction of your project.

4. Develop student responsibility (Students have opportunities to make decisions about the service-learning project.)

Older people learn technology differently from those people who have more or less grown up with computers. As an older population, they also have different physical issues and very different learning styles. Talk with students about characteristics of adult learners. Teaching senior citizens computer technology requires a different approach and high school students will develop a plan to instruct those seniors on how to develop basic computer skills.

5. Establish community partnerships

Possible partners include assisted living centers, community/senior centers, local branches of AARP, local church groups might have “Golden Agers, Golden Oldies, Young at Heart”, local department of aging. All counties have an office of aging; however, websites are all different. The following generic format might work for some counties but not all in the state of Maryland - www.countymd.gov/services/aging/.

6. Plan ahead for service-learning

Contact local assisted living, senior centers and senior housing areas to distribute posters to advertise the project and determine a list of participants. Organize/obtain laptop computers with a mouse for students to train/instruct their elder students.

Organize materials of instruction (lesson plans) of what the high school students will need to teach.

7. Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service

Brainstorm possible topics for students to teach (e.g. basic skill examples: Microsoft Office – Word, Excel & PowerPoint, how to toggle, familiarize menu documents, folders, “layering”, use of a mouse, organizing and sharing pictures, etc.). Explore how to create a lesson plan. Read and discuss the article “Teaching Senior Citizens about Computers” http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/281822/teaching_senior_citizens_about_computers.html

Procedures with Resources: ***Assisting Senior Citizens with Computers***

These procedures represent an example of a service-learning lesson on this specific topic, but can be changed to meet individual classroom interests or varying community needs. You are encouraged to adapt this unit to fit your unique classroom and community and to solicit student input in planning and decision making.

1. Introduce the service-learning project by discussing service-learning and citizenship with students and engaging in activities to explore those themes. A resource to support this topic can be found at www.servicelearning.org/resources/bring_learning/.
2. Brainstorm possible community partnerships to reach the senior citizens.
3. Brainstorm possible topics for students to teach.
4. Determine the audience, location of instruction, length of the instruction, and number of participants.
5. Generate a list of volunteers within the group to contact community associations and senior groups for their interested participants. Volunteers will also be needed to write lesson plans, letters of introduction and carry out phone contacts to local organizations and centers.
6. Create a lesson plan for students to follow when giving the computer instruction to the elders.
7. Senior citizens might also be able to come to the school for the computer instruction. Use volunteers to welcome and direct the “new” students were to go when they arrive.
8. Reflection possibilities are listed on page 2.
9. Reflect and evaluate the effectiveness of the project by completing the *Rubric for Assessing the Use of the Maryland’s Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning* which can be found at www.mdservice-learning.org.

Additional Interdisciplinary Connections



Language Arts – letter writing and oral communication skills

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