

## Service Learning Option for a Nine-Week Psychology Course

**Background:** One of the biggest challenges I have faced is how to implement service learning into a nine week Introductory Psychology class. Since this may be the only psychology course a student opts to take, one of my main goals is for students to understand psychology as a science while battling the views they receive from the popular media. By combining two of the ideas originating from the P3 conference, I have found a way that is not only manageable but also effective in staying true to my goals.

This was done by a single high school teacher but could easily incorporate other teachers in the building as well as from other settings. The high school in which this has been implemented is in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and currently serves around 1100 high school students grade nine to twelve. Introductory Psychology is an elective course for juniors and seniors. It is taught in a nine-week block, meeting the students 85-minutes a day. There are typically around eight sections offered each year.

**Project:** The process involves the idea of using the Psychology Trunk activity that was introduced by the Curriculum group at P3 as a final assessment for the course. However, it is the students who must make the activities and demonstrations that go into the trunk. Students must select concepts that were covered in class over the quarter and demonstrate the concept in an original way. (See copy of assessment and rubric below) Then students must select some of the demonstrations from the trunk and present them to an audience outside of the high school. Most students have selected middle school or elementary classes or nursing homes. They are not allowed to do this at home for their families.

The project is introduced to the students at about mid-point through the course with projects being due a week and a half before the finals. Then students must conduct the trunk presentation before finals. For their assigned final class period, students write an essay reflection.

**Next Steps & Outcomes:** Up to this point, I have only received feedback from my students, but I do plan to devise a formal way to receive feedback from their audiences that go beyond antidotal. Feedback has been positive and falls into three categories; sharing knowledge, going outside the classroom, and active involvement.

**Challenges & Opportunities:** Although the students do a great deal of the work, the teacher must still be very organized, because as with any service learning project the unexpected does occur. I have found it helpful to provide a list of places and contact people for their presentations. I also recommend that they use their parents' contacts for other opportunities.

I have kept a few of the better demonstrations, but certainly do not have room to keep all of them from quarter to quarter. However, I do keep a list of the projects to prevent any recycling of the same projects.

### **Trunk Project – Final Assessment**

Working alone or with one partner, you will need to design an interactive demonstration of one (or more) of the concepts we have studied this quarter. (See handout for list of topics.) This CANNOT be a repeat of something I have already done

in class! You will be to complete an assignment organizer as well as present your demonstration for the class.

DUE DATE:

After the class has presented, you will then select 3 to 5 activities to present to an audience outside of class. Your purpose is to educate the audience that psychology is a science. You will be provided with a list of possible contacts, but you are NOT limited to this list. You must complete this presentation before finals as your reflection over this experience will be part of your in-class essay.

DUE DATE:

**Criteria**

<b>Concept to be taught</b> (5 pts.) Specifically stated	Generally stated	Not stated
<b>Intended Audience</b> ( 5 pts.) Specifically stated age level & setting	Generally stated age level & setting	Not stated age level & setting
<b>Directions</b> ( 10 pts.) Clear enough for others to use; no need to clarify; no steps missed; not re- dundant	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Unclear, redun- dant; too wordy; steps left out
<b>Creativity</b> (5 pts.) Catches & holds audience's attention	Catches, but doesn't hold attention	Bland, attention is not captured
<b>Construction Quality</b> (10 pts.) Solid, withstands many demonstrations; portable; colorful; neatly done	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	Flimsy; only one demo.; requires special equipmt.; lacks color &/or neatness
<b>Level of Interaction</b> ( 10 pts.) Requires continuous audience participation	Intermittent audience participation 7 6 5 4	Little or no aud. participation 3 2 1

**Points out of 45:**