SERVICELARNING IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
From College Writing to Capstones, a Tiered Approach to the Curriculum

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NEW SERVICE-LEARNING OFFERINGS IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

College Writing I student with her young partner at the Bartlett Community Partnership School in Lowell.

COLLEGE WRITING I (fall 2013)
Taught by Dr. Matthew Hurwitz

In this first-year General Education course, students develop writing skills, learning new strategies for effectively communicating ideas to multiple audiences. A primary emphasis in this section of CWI is on connecting student writing to the world beyond the classroom through a service-learning project at the Bartlett School, where UML students are partnered with a 2nd or 3rd grade student and work with that student individually on his or her own evolving literacy skills. Students read about, write about, and discuss their own relationship to literacy and the larger forces that affect literacy: people, histories, places, biases, institutions, and aspirations. The writing that students complete about this experience -- indeed, all of their writing for the course -- allows them to develop their own literacy within the conventions of academic essay writing.

LOWELL ASSOCIATION for the BLIND
...From darkness into light!

DISABILITY IN LITERATURE (Fall 2013)
Taught by Dr. Bridget Marshall

In this 200-level General Education course, students explore how texts portray people with disabilities. For the Service-Learning module, students serve the Lowell Association for the Blind by attending an adult group services meeting and reading aloud for their radio broadcasts. Project objectives include:

• To develop writing skills through multiple steps and drafts for a writing project.
• To consciously and thoughtfully report back based on real-world field work with the community.
• To make connections between literary portrayals and real-life situations.
• To gain understanding of the varied experiences of the disabled community.
• To connect with our local community to understand needs of and services for the disabled.
• To connect our local experiences of disability with ideas about disability in the larger world.

ENGLISH COURSES WITH SERVICE-LEARNING COMPONENTS

The following is a list of English courses which have included a service-learning component (individual assignment, unit, or major focus):

First Year Seminar
College Writing I and II
Poetry
History of English Literature II
Essay Writing for Majors
Disability in Literature
Victorian Fiction
Writing About People
Writing About Place
Community Writing I and II
Selected Authors: Charles Dickens
Practicum & Directed Study

Girls Incorporated of Lowell offers after-school programs that help girls be "strong, smart and bold." UML English department service-learning students have worked with Girls Inc. for many years on literacy and humanities projects.

SERVICE-LEARNING COURSE SEQUENCE

Our Community Partners & Projects

Over the last ten years alone we have partnered with over sixty local non-profits and government entities. Here is a small sample of our service-learning partners and projects:

• Grant writing for the Merrimack Valley Food Bank and for the Visiting Nurses Association of Lowell
• Creating social media content for the development office at the American Textile History Museum
• Designing and teaching a poetry writing class at Girls Inc.
• Assisting non-profit clients of the Community Software Lab with technical writing projects
• Creating curricular materials for teacher workshops at the Tsongas Industrial History Center
• Writing publicity materials for the Lowell Humane Society
• Completing communications tasks for Lowell Handmade, a non-profit promoting the arts
• Interviewing clients and writing biographies to celebrate the achievements of shelter residents at the House of Hope
• Writing press releases and press packets for The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell
• Producing videos for Village Empowerment Project and for the New England Quilt Museum

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COMMUNITY WRITING I (junior level)

In this course our community partners bring projects to the classroom for students to complete. Through direct instruction, peer workshops, and much revision in consultation with off-campus partners, students complete usable work to meet an identified need. Each semester includes a range of genres including traditional written materials and new media. Ideal for students who are not yet ready or available for an off-campus experience.

Community Writing II (senior level)

Taught by Diana Archibald

For this course students are placed in local non-profits where they work on-site for 5 hours a week writing a range of materials, depending on their community partner's need. During class time students learn about various writing genres and conventions and receive feedback on their individual projects in peer workshops. They apply the principles of rhetoric and use the tools of research and revision to write effectively for the community. This class works well for students who are ready for off-campus service but still want classroom support.

PRACTICUM (senior level)

Students complete 120-hours of service-learning work off-campus and two reflection assignments to demonstrate mastery of academic learning objectives. Many of our students go on to work in the non-profit sector.