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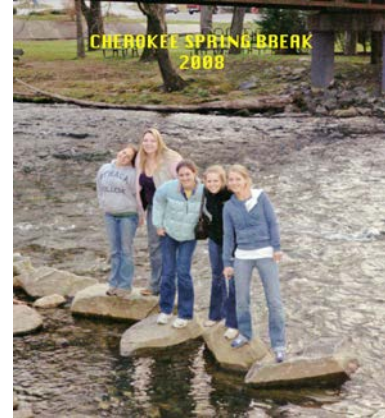
# MGJ Service-Learning Program Handbook

Appalachian State University/Reich College of Education

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# Mission and History

“IT’S ALL ABOUT VISION!”

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## Mission of the Program:

The MGJ SLP mission statement is:

The Elementary Education MGJ SL Program at Appalachian State University strives to prepare teachers to be active participants in the life of their school and community. Our program seeks to empower future teachers to work toward social justice through an ethic of caring, commitment and conscience.

This statement is reflective of the philosophical and conceptual framework of the college of education and the elementary education program. Specifically, the program seeks to augment and complement the academic work happening within our classrooms and to provide our undergraduate students with practical, hands-on experiences with the meaning and purpose of a constructivist view of the educational process.



*Eastern Band of Cherokee student at Dora Reed Head Start Center*

MGJ policies and procedures have evolved over the years, but the purpose has remained constant: as educators we believe that a teacher is a vital part of the community in which he or she lives and works. As constructivist educators, we acknowledge, value and honor the role that community--in all its variations and forms--plays on the learning process for all children. As a program we are guided by the works of John Dewey, Vito Perrone, Paulo Freire, and many others

who have taught that no child is a blank slate, and that the lived experiences of every child will surely impact our own actions in teaching that child.

The MGJSLP seeks at all levels to provide a different kind of field experience for future educators. The program seeks to allow students to interact with children, families and communities of diverse backgrounds outside of a formal, classroom setting in order to better appreciate and understand the impact of culture, socioeconomics, ethnicity, language, and other variables on the teaching and learning process.

At its heart, the MGJ program reflects our belief that teaching is fundamentally an intellectual and moral vocation. In weaving service throughout the elementary education program we endeavor to integrate cognitive discipline with affective discovery.

## History

The MGJSLP originally required students to complete forty hours of service learning/ community service activities as part of the curriculum designed to prepare future teachers. Until January 2010, the first twenty hours of service were completed by the student independent of any curricular focus. Students submitted their proposed service site/ project to the MGJ coordinator for approval and then documented their completion of the work through time sheets that were submitted to their advisor for inclusion in their RCOE file. The third ten hours were completed in Block One (CI3000) and the final ten hours were completed in Block Two (CI 3110).

In 2010 a change was made to the program that ended the community service aspect of the requirements. Undergraduate student data had shown that many students did not see the connection between the first 20 hours of required service and their program of study. With this in mind the program was changed and now all 40 required hours are service learning hours; they are directly and intimately tied to the program curriculum and, hopefully, this change has made the connection more overt for students.

## Program Sequence

Directed Elective:  
The first 20 hours of the program will be completed in a course chosen by the student from the directed electives offered by the program.



Block One:  
The second sequence of hours are completed in Block One as part of CI 3000.  
10 hours are required.



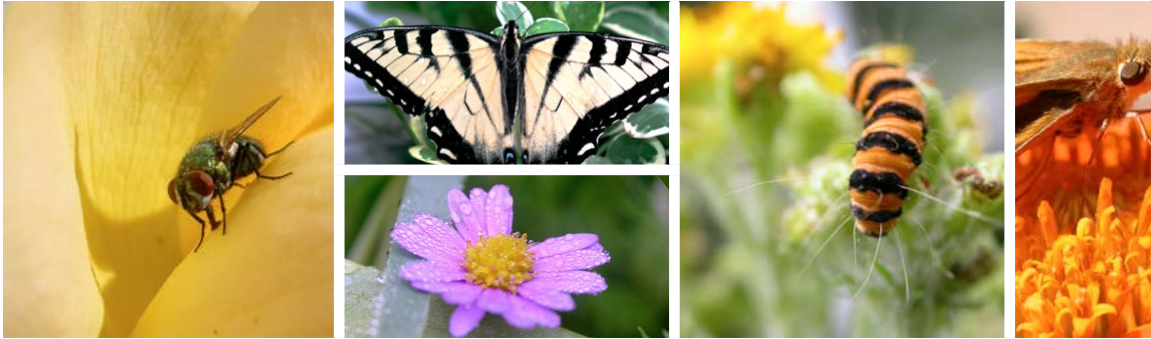
Block Two:  
The final 10 hours in the sequence are completed as part of CI 3110.

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# The Directed Elective

## Service Learning as Curricular Component

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### Overview

The first twenty hours of the MGJ program are housed in a directed elective course chosen by the student. There are a number of options for students to choose from, including an environmental literacy course, a class devoted to issues related to English Language Learners, and a course that examines the relationship between teaching, leading and ethics of citizenship. Other courses are designed and delivered by elementary education faculty as time and need permit.

Each directed elective course will include a 20-hour service project that is an integral part of the course's pedagogy, content, and assessment.

**These [service learning] experiences may be diverse and varied, depending on the framework of the course. These hours may be done as a class project under direct guidance of the instructor or may be completed individually by the student with the instructor's occasional guidance and assistance. There will be consistency across electives and instructors in the connection to the course and program curriculum and expectations. Instructors will help students reflect on their experiences and build connections to future service-learning opportunities that they will partake in over the course of their program.**

## Purpose and Intended Outcomes

As the first phase in the *MGJ* program the directed elective's SL piece is designed with several intended outcomes in mind. First, the course serves as an introduction to the place and use of service learning within an educational setting. More than community service, these 20 hours are intended to model for elementary education students the potential for service to extend and deepen the meaning of academic work. The 20 hour project should augment the coursework and be intimately connected to the coursework and curriculum.

## The Role of the Instructor

In the directed elective course the 20 hours of service are done through a project chosen, organized and supervised by the course instructor. Thus the role of the instructor in the completion of these hours is very hands-on. At this point in the *MGJ* sequence a significant part of the responsibility of the instructor is to model the possibilities inherent in service learning and the curricular connections that can be made between service and academic work. The 20 hours must be a thoroughly integrated aspect of the overall course, including its objectives and assessment. In this course students are introduced to service learning as a pedagogical tool of a constructivist approach to education.

Though many of our students take part in community service activities, it is important in the directed elective to help them see the difference between these activities and service learning. The 40 hours required in the elementary education program are not an end of themselves (as might well be the case with community service), but are designed with the specific goal of making better teachers and providing a deeper, more experiential form of preparation. Thus the directed elective instructor should take some time to explain the purpose and goals of the *MGJ* program at some point in the semester or during the completion of the service project.





## Examples of Service Projects in the Directed Elective

The following are examples of successful service projects that have been conducted in directed elective courses:

- Tutoring of English language learners in community schools
- An environmental conservation project
- An oral history project conducted among community elders by elementary education majors

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# CI 3000

## LEARNER DIVERSITY: TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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### Overview

The second phase of the *MGJ* program occurs in Block One in the CI 3000 (Learner Diversity) course. These ten hours should be completed under the students' own initiative with faculty approval. A variety of relevant, lived experiences will be brought into the college classroom for reflection and discussion under the instructors' guidance.

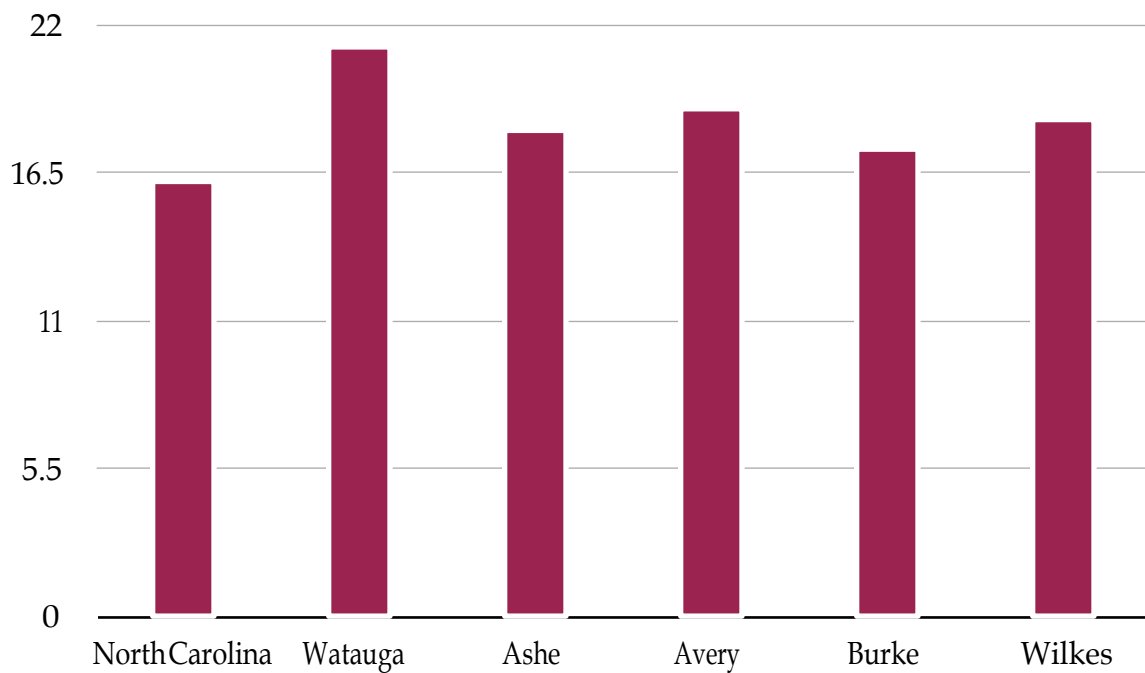
In these 10 hours students are tasked with identifying a community need that aligns with the goals and objectives associated with learner diversity. The student will then propose a service project to the instructor focusing on this need. Areas to be addressed in the project may include issues such as poverty, cultural differences, socio-economic inequality, gender roles, sexual orientation, and others.



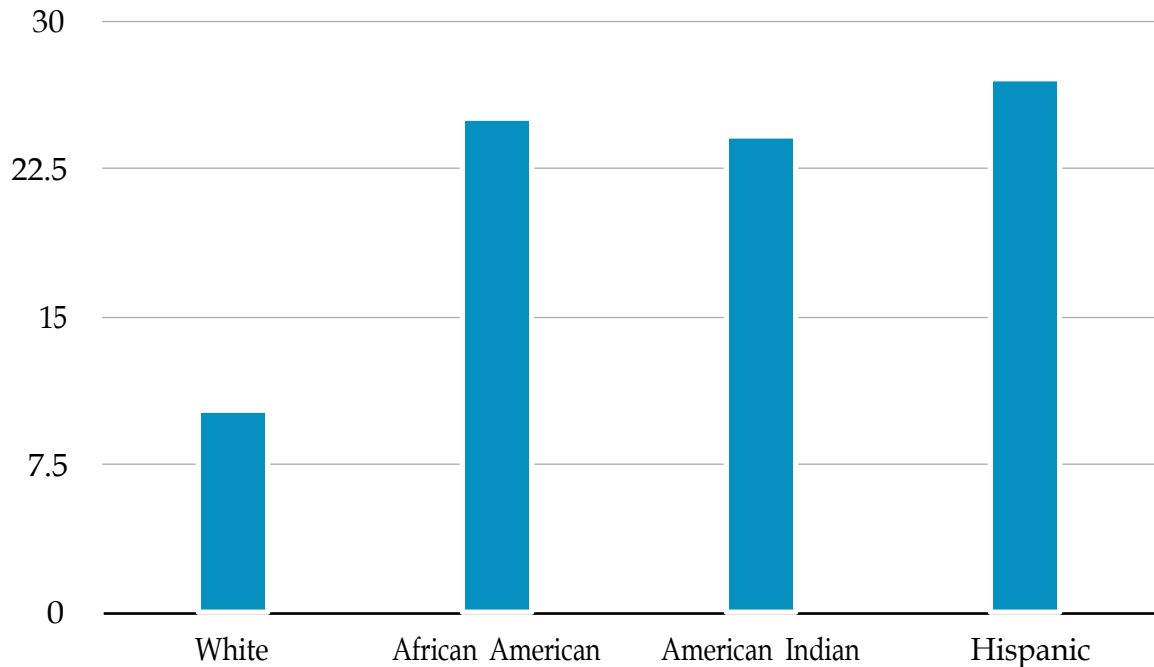
*ASU students at Soco Falls during Cherokee Spring Break 2009*

The SL focus in CI3000 on issues of socioeconomics, poverty and culture is based on evidence of need within the Appalachian State University community and its surrounding areas. Statistics from the most recently available census data show high levels of poverty within our area, and conversations with cooperating teachers, administrators and parents have told us that these issues are having direct and meaningful impacts on the education of children in our area and in the cooperating school districts with whom we work.

Percentage of Persons Living Below Poverty Level (2009)



Percentage of Persons Living Below Poverty Level by Race (2009)



It is with these sobering statistics in mind that the 10-hour service learning project in CI3000 is designed to provide students with real-life experience dealing with poverty and its related issues.

### Purpose and Intended Outcomes

Over the course of the semester, students are given the opportunity to process and reflect on the impact of their project within the community and the connections between service and the course curriculum and expectations. The 10 hours associated with CI3000 are a requirement of the elementary education program. With this in mind, some form of formal assessment is expected.

### The Role of the Instructor

A primary objective of the CI3000 service learning project is to allow students the opportunity to begin to define and refine their own sense of social justice, commitment and concern. Armed with their experiences from the directed elective and the coursework of CI3000, the students

should develop their own service project and then put this project into place and act on it. The CI3000 instructor acts as a kind of mentor to his or her students, offering encouragement and guidance as needed.

Although the service learning project in CI3000 is not as integrated as the 20 hour project in the directed elective, it should be viewed as one important element within the course. It will be the instructor's role to assist the students as needed as well as to help them continue to make the connections between service and pedagogy. Class time may be devoted to discussing the projects and the students' response to their own experiences and those of their peers. Exactly how this project is integrated into the course is left to the discretion of the instructor with the clear understanding that the 10 hours must be completed and should speak to the goals of the *MGJ* program.

### Examples of Service Projects in CI 3000

The following are examples of successful service projects and associated assessments that have been conducted in CI 3000:

- Students worked with a local soup kitchen and then wrote a 3-5 page policy paper describing three explicit policies they would like to see implemented to alleviate hunger in our area
- A student tutored a local homeless child in math and wrote a free form poem on the experience
- Over the course of seven weeks, local elementary school students and their family members (parents, grandparents and others) were partnered with ASU students. The family members shared family stories in small groups. Then the ASU students, the children and their family members gathered in the media center to write these stories down for future inclusion in a book. These books were sent home as keepsakes for the families. ASU students wrote 3 reflections on their experiences.

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# CI 3110

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES METHODS

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### Overview

The capstone experience of the *MGJSLP* occurs during Block Two in the Elementary School Social Studies Methods course. This experience is designed to integrate philosophies and best practices associated with social studies curriculum and instruction with the constructivist and service philosophies of the *MGJ* program. These ten hours are completed by the student during their five week field experience and in close consultation with their cooperating teacher and their elementary school students. Projects are monitored and overseen by the CI 3110 instructors. Each project will result in an artifact that is assessed as a common assignment within CI3110 and will be posted to TK20.



*CI 3110 students at the inaugural Timber Town in Todd, NC*

## Purpose and Intended Outcomes

The fundamental purpose of the CI 3110 project is to have preservice teachers design, implement and assess a service project within an elementary school classroom. As the culmination of the *MGJ* program, the hope is that within this project students will be able to draw from and



*A Green Valley Elementary School student takes part in the Inheritance Project*

expand upon the experiences they have had in their directed elective and CI3000 courses. The project should reflect the needs, concerns and hopes of the school and community in which the student is placed. Successful projects will be based upon input from the teachers and children of the school. Service projects should not be imposed upon the class and school by ASU students, but rather should show an understanding of and appreciation for the culture of the cooperating school.

## The Role of the Instructor

The 10-hour service project in CI 3110 is the culmination of the *MGJ* program's work and sees the student progress from novice to practitioner. In their directed elective course the student took part in a project designed and supervised by their instructor; in CI 3000 the student participated in a service project of their choice with guidance from their instructor; in CI 3110 the student will, in cooperation with a cooperating teacher and his or her students, design and implement a service project within an elementary school classroom.

The 3110 instructor should serve as a sounding board for the student and a source of support throughout the design and implementation of the project. The instructor will provide the student with quality, thoughtful feedback on the project as well as on the students' own assessment of the project.

## Examples of Service Projects in CI 3110

The following are examples of successful service projects and associated assessments that have been conducted in CI 3110:

- Students supervised a canned food drive for a local family in need
- Students supervised a letter writing campaign for troops stationed overseas, particularly those stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan
- Timbertown: Students created a living history event in the town of Todd in support of the Todd Community Preservation Organization