

Understanding Diversity In Public Schools: An Academic-Service  
Learning Project  
A Required Project For  
EDPS 322: Human Development and Learning  
4 Credit Hours

Department of Teacher Education  
Eastern Michigan University  
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## **Understanding Diversity In Public Schools: An Academic-Service Learning Project**

We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.

John Dewey

The Understanding Diversity In Public Schools Academic-Service Learning (UDPS AS-L) project has two central objectives:

1. To provide EMU students considering a career in teaching the opportunity to actively understand and apply developmental theories through service learning in their local communities.
2. To provide students an experiential opportunities for students to examine, reflect, and analyze the interplay between cultural contexts and the teaching/learning process.

### **Project Requirements:**

1. 20 to 40 hours of working with K-12 public school students in partnership with the non-profit, 826, Michigan. These hours will count towards your pre-student teacher observation hours.
2. Self as a learner paper.
3. Service learning Journal.
4. Making connections between theory and practice group discussions.
5. A group research presentation.
6. Self as a teacher paper.
7. A reflective self-evaluation and project evaluation form.
8. A three-ring binder.

You must receive a C or better on the completed project.

## Project Structure:

This project is divided into four inter-dependent sections: experience, reflection, conceptualization, and action.

### Experience:

1. In the first week of the term a representative from 826 Michigan will visit the class to make you familiar with the functioning of 826 and provide a list of available service opportunity locations and times. In the second week of the term, the representative will conduct a 1.5 hour-long training session for effectively working with students.
2. You will need to complete the volunteer registration form on the 826 website. 826 will complete a background check before they allow you to begin your service hours. You need to complete the form by the due date listed in the syllabus. You can access the volunteer registration form at:  
<https://www.826michigan.org/get-involved/volunteer/volunteer-application/>
3. You must make a commitment to the number of hours you will serve along with the place and location that best fits your schedule. This decision needs to be made thoughtfully (take into consideration your class schedule, work schedule, travel time, and transportation) as changes will be hard to accommodate and 826 will be depending on you for the semester.

### Reflection:

4. Before you begin your service learning hours, you will write a reflection paper titled, “Self as a Learner,” that explores your

relationship with learning. The paper must address the following topics:

- a. What do you think is the purpose of education? What are your thoughts on the relationship between schooling and learning?
- b. Where did you go to school? How have your school experiences shaped you as a learner? Use examples to support your answer.
- c. What would you have liked your teachers to know about you when you were in school? And now that you are at the university?
- d. Share your reasons for being at university. Does the way you engage in class and study for this course reflect your commitment to learning? If so, how? If not, why not?
- e. What place, if any, do trust and relationships have on learning?
- f. How do you identify culturally? How do you suppose your culture (socio-economic status, race, religion, nationality, gender, and language) has impacted your school and learning experience, expectations, and outcomes? Talk about the relationship your family had (s) with learning.
- g. Anything else related to learning, culture and schools you wish to reflect upon?

Since this is a reflection paper, I encourage you to write in a style that is reflective of you. Do give the paper a title and be sure to identify yourself as the author. Minimum length requirement is five double-spaced pages. Your paper must have a minimum of eight references from the class readings. The paper should include the list of references. All references should follow APA reference guidelines.

5. Once you begin working with 826 Michigan you should start keeping observation notes for each visit. Write down the time

and date of your visit and explain what happened – who was there, what did you do, how did the experience go for you, how do you think the experience went for the students. Anything in particular stand out to you? In addition, reflect on your feelings – what were you feeling before, during, and after the experience and how did your feelings impact your experience? Lastly, make note of what you would could or will change (do differently) at your next visit. You must make a minimum of 6 entries in your service learning journal.

### Conceptualization:

6. Towards the beginning of the term the class will be divided into six groups. Each week time will be set aside in class for both group and class discussions focused on making connections between your service learning experiences, interplay of cultural variables and the teaching/learning process, and course readings for the week. After each discussion you will be asked to jot down a minimum of three take aways from these discussion in the form of questions, insights, feelings, or ideas that arise from these discussions. You have a choice to submit them as hand-written or typed.
  
7. Each group will choose one of the following cultural variables to focus on: race, income, religion, gender, language, or sexual orientation. The group will research (using an academic data base) the chosen variable and create a power point/ research presentation summarizing the latest research and best practices for the variable. The presentation should have a minimum of six meaningful suggestions for education practitioners. These suggestions must be drawn from the research articles. Each of these suggestions are required to be supported by a theoretical concept covered in this course. This power point/ research presentation will be shared with 826. A minimum of eight articles needs to be used as reference. The articles must be

published in a peer-reviewed journal within the last five years. The power point and references must follow APA guidelines.

**Action:**

8. At the end of the term you will write a paper titled, “Self as a teacher.” The paper must address the following:
  - a. Where would you like to teach? Why?
  - b. What would you like to teach? Why?

Anchor your answers to the following 5 questions on your service learning experiences, class readings, reflections and discussions:

- c. What impact does a family and community socio-economic status have on students’ educational access and success? As a practicing teacher what will you do to support the wellbeing of students from low-income families?
- d. Does a student’s race have an impact on her/his educational access and success? If yes, what? If no, why not? As a practicing teacher what will you do to support the wellbeing of minority students?
- e. What is the educational experience of ESL students? As a practicing teacher what will you do to support the wellbeing of ESL students?
- f. What is the educational experience of LGBTQ students? As a practicing teacher what will you do to support LGBTQ students?
- g. Will your own and/or your students’ religious beliefs play into how and what you teach? Explain.
- h. Discuss a minimum of three principles/values/beliefs in which you will ground your teaching.

This paper has a six pages, double-spaced minimum requirement. Be sure to provide justification for your opinions. Make liberal connections with the theories and concepts discussed in class.

9. The final assignment for this project is for you to thoughtfully complete the self and project evaluation form.

On the final due date you must submit a binder that contains all the required assignments for this project in the sequence listed in the index provided to you.

### Project Points:

Timely registration as an 826 volunteer	5 points
Academic Service Learning Journal (6x10)	60 points
Self as a Learner paper	70 points
Self as a Teacher paper	70 points
Group Power Point/Research Presentation	60 points
Discussion notes (6x5)	30 points
Self and project evaluation form	10 points
20 Hours of Observation completed	35 points
Completed project	10 points
Total	350 points