**SERVICE LEARNING PROPOSAL**  
**RN to BSN and Traditional BSN Tracks**

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<tr>
<th>PROPOSAL COMPONENT</th>
<th>POINTS POSSIBLE</th>
<th>POINTS EARNED</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
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<td>Introduce assignment. Purpose of paper,</td>
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<td><strong>AGENCY DESCRIPTION</strong></td>
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<td><strong>VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIBED</strong></td>
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<td>What will you do or how will this be determined?</td>
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<td><strong>OBJECTIVES AS R/T PROGRAM</strong></td>
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<td>What do you hope to learn or how will you benefit AND how will your service benefit the community?</td>
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<td><strong>ACTIVITIES TO MEET OBJECTIVES</strong></td>
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<td>What specifically do you anticipate your activities will be?</td>
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<td><strong>EVALUATION PLAN</strong></td>
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<td>How will you evaluate your own learning and the effects of your activities on the community?</td>
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<td><strong>AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION / INSTRUCTOR APPROVAL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Include all pertinent information for contact. Name, title, phone, street address, email</td>
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**REFERENCES:**  
The following areas should be addressed and a reference included to support each:  
- Support for agency information  
- Role of service learning in professional education  
- Support for planned outcomes – is there evidence that the activities positively influence the outcomes desired?  

**TOTAL CONTENT POINTS**  
100  
100

**APA /Writing including:**  
- Title page w/ running head, Abstract, Margins, Headers, Headings, References, Sentence Structure, Grammar, Punctuation, Typos & clarity of ideas.  

**(30)**

**TOTAL POINTS TO BE DEDUCTED FOR APA ERRORS**  
-30  
-2

**TOTAL POINTS OVERALL**  
100  
98

**COMMENTS:** Excellent paper, Cheryl!! And great service choice, too! 😊 You have the potential to gain much from this experience, while giving a lot as well. You are one of a few students who included the BSN program outcomes – we will make the rubric more clear for next time! If you are willing and give your permission, I would like you to clean up the reference issues and email this back to me, so we can include it in our examples for accreditation next year. Please let me know either way… Thanks!! Dana
Ogemaw Commission on Aging Service Learning Project

Cheryl L. Howard

NURS 320 Ferris State University
Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to outline nursing student Cheryl L. Howard’s service learning project at the Ogemaw Commission on Aging (OCOA). Ferris State University’s Bachelor of Nursing Science (BSN) Program requires all BSN students to provide 20 hours of service learning as a part of a professional nursing program. The goal of this service learning project is to enhance student learning using real life experiences and also to serve the community in civic engagement (Service Learning Requirement, 2010). This service learning proposal introduces the purpose and need for this project, background on service learning, the description of the service agency and volunteer role, objectives of the project as related to BSN program, activities to meet objectives, evaluation plan, and conclusion. Agency contact information is also provided. The terms “elderly”, “older adult” and “senior” are used interchangeably in this paper. The preferred term by OCOA administration for participants is “seniors”. The OCOA definition of a senior is a resident aged 60 and older (Ogemaw Commission on Aging, 2011).

Keywords: service learning, elderly, senior, aging, nursing, student, health teaching
Ogemaw Commission on Aging Service Learning Project

In my service learning project I would like to address the health promotion needs for older adults in a community setting. In the county where I live, the Ogemaw Council on Aging has a senior center where the elderly population in the area can meet for various services and programs. Because of the large amount of aging residents in my area, there is a great need for health related services to this population. This is a prime opportunity for health teaching and self health promotion to groups of older adults. Elderly persons can have a range of sensory, physical, mental or self-care disabilities therefore they have complex learning needs. A priority health care need for older adults living in the community is health literacy and self management of chronic illness (Heinrich & Karner, 2011).

In Ogemaw County there is a large elderly population. I have observed that many retirees have settled in northern Michigan and are aging in the community setting. According to the Michigan Department of Community Health, the population of adults aged 65 and older in Ogemaw County is 24% of the county’s residents. In relation to the entire state of Michigan, Ogemaw County has almost double the rate of older adults and ranks 9th in the state out of 83 counties in the proportion of older adults (Total Population, 2010). This is not only a population trend in Michigan; the elderly population is increasing in the United States and abroad (Heinrich & Karner, 2011).

Health teaching for Ogemaw County’s elderly is an excellent opportunity for a nursing service learning project. This project at the Ogemaw Council on Aging will benefit both the community and enhance my skills as a nurse. The senior center participants will benefit by receiving registered nurse teaching and activities to promote empowerment, increase health literacy and increase health promoting behaviors. I will benefit from this activity as a nurse
because I will be able to practice group health teaching skills and gain insight into the health concerns and needs of older adults living in a community setting.

**Service Learning**

Service learning activities can enhance both the participant and the community. It is a unique way to contribute to your community and gain a deeper insight into concepts learned in the classroom. It is an opportunity to utilize classroom learning in a real life setting (What is Service, 2011). Hands on experience can be difficult to obtain and service learning can provide a vehicle for students to apply and practice what they have learned in real world situations. Nursing students can enhance their professional development by contributing service learning in a health care related field (Lehman, 2011).

Service learning is supported by higher education institutions as well as the U.S. government and has experienced a growing resurgence since the 1990’s (History of Service-Learning, 2008). The American Association of community Colleges defines service learning as the combination of “community service with classroom instruction, focusing on critical, reflective thinking as well as personal and civic responsibility” (Robinson, 2011).

A service learning project at the Ogemaw Commission on Aging fits the definition of service learning because it will benefit the elderly community as a whole as well as each individual who participates. This project will also give me deeper insight into my nursing education because I will gain real world, hands-on experience to apply to my nursing practice.

**Description of the Ogemaw Commission on Aging**

The Ogemaw Commission on Aging (OCOA) was founded in 1974. The commission is a senior service agency funded by donations, a local millage, state grants and federal grants (Ogemaw Commission on Aging, 2011). In the summer of 2011, a new modern building was
built and just officially opened in early November to serve the entire county. There are four administrative staff members and nine service workers. The OCOA offers home based as well as center based services. Home based services include respite care, personal care, homemaking and home delivered meals. Center based services include congregate meals, socialization programs, Medicare/Medicaid assistance, tax credits, support groups, and adult day services. The mission of the OCOA is “to promote the health, welfare, and independence of senior citizens in Ogemaw County” (Ogemaw Commission on Aging, 2011).

**Volunteer Role**

I plan to provide services at the OCOA as a nurse educator volunteer. Currently there are no licensed health professionals on staff to serve the educational needs of seniors who come to the center. A registered nurse volunteer will be a great asset to the seniors at the center. Although I have experience teaching patients one-on-one, I have not experienced the role of teaching in groups. As a nurse educator volunteer I will be able to conduct health teaching and self health promotion with groups of older adults.

Volunteers can fill the gap to meet crucial needs in communities and research shows that there are health benefits to volunteering. Positive feelings are fostered by helping others which improves mental health and decreases stress. Volunteers also have decreased incidence of heart disease and lower mortality rates (Grimm, Spring, & Dietz, 2007). The act of volunteering itself may be beneficial to my personal health. In this way I hope to effect a positive change in my own health as well as with the seniors involved in my service learning project.

**Objectives of Project as related to BSN Program**

Ferris’ BSN Program Outcomes focus on six areas of nursing: collaborative leadership, theoretical base for practice, generalist nursing practice, scholarship for practice, health care
environment, and professionalism (BSN Program Outcomes, 2011). This learning service project will help me practice and further develop my skills in these areas by collaborating with community leaders in the OCOA center in order to provide quality nursing teaching. I will have the opportunity to implement health promotion theories in my teaching to older adults to provide a theoretical base for my nursing practice. In order to practice as a nursing generalist, I will organize health care education and address health needs of older adults as individuals, groups and a part of my community as a whole. To address scholarship for practice and health care environments, I will be able to apply evidence based practice to health promotion while advocating for improved health of a vulnerable population in a home and community based environment. Most importantly, this service learning project will allow me to apply all the standards of professional nursing practice, ethics and behaviors in all that I do. The activities that will take place during this OCOA service learning project relate directly to all 6 of the Ferris BSN program outcomes.

**Activities to Meet Objectives**

The activities that will take place during my OCOA service learning project are centered on conducting health promotion activities at the senior center and health teaching both groups and individuals. Health teaching and health promotion is a fundamental standard of professional nursing practice (ANA, 2010). Healthy People 2020 also supports the increase of health literacy and the unique health needs of older adults (Heinrich & Karner, 2011). Community health promotion activities promote wellness by providing enhanced opportunities for information sharing and social support to reach larger populations (Pender, Murdaugh & Parsons, 2011). My health teaching activities at the OCOA by a registered nurse will address Healthy People 2020 goals, uphold nursing standards and promote community health.
I plan to have regular sessions at the center to address a wide range of topics that are high priority health needs for the older adult population. Educational topics may include but are not limited to medication safety, foot care, fall prevention, home safety, internet use for health information, exercise promotion, Parkinson’s disease support, depression, managing chronic illnesses, and communicating with health professionals. These activities will be planned and modified in an ongoing effort in order to accommodate the needs and interests of the individuals and groups as they might change over the course of this project. Evaluation activities will assist me in tailoring educational topics and activities as the project develops over time.

The method of instruction that I plan to use will be multidimensional because each participant may have different learning needs in order to reduce barriers to learning. Research shows that nurses play a vital role in health learning of elderly patients. Facilitators to understanding in the elderly population are written & verbal instruction, asking questions, discussion, repetition, taking time, using layman terms, and having social support (Heinrich & Karner, 2011). I plan to use these strategies in my teaching.

**Evaluation Plan**

My plan for evaluation of service learning activities will have two components. One component is the evaluation of seniors’ needs and effectiveness of my teaching. I will use feedback from participants in written and verbal form to focus on topics of interest and provide ongoing modification of teaching topics and methods as needed. I will also keep records of participation numbers and conduct quick, simple pre and post surveys of teaching sessions. Information from these surveys can be used to provide ongoing assessment of my teaching effectiveness. Feedback will also be sought from the OCOA staff including the director to evaluate their perspective on how this service learning project has impacted the community.
The second component I plan to use for evaluation is focused on my own learning. I will document my observations and insights throughout the delivery of my teaching sessions during the course of the OCOA service learning project. I will also observe and document experiences in my role as a service learner and a volunteer. Introspection and self evaluation will be used to direct my future nursing practice as it relates to health teaching, community nursing and working with the older adult population.

**Conclusion**

Service learning is an important part a professional nursing education. Both the community and the volunteer benefit from real life learning experiences out of the classroom setting. A service learning project at the Ogemaw Commission on Aging presents a great opportunity for me to enhance my nursing education while at the same time provides a fundamental health service to a population in need. The older population is growing and has varied and complicated health needs. Nurses will need to have the skills and education to work the elderly. I believe that this service learning project will benefit my professional practice and promote the health of seniors living in the community of Ogemaw County.

**Agency Contact Information**

Name: Ogemaw Council on Aging  
Address: 1528 South M-33, West Branch, Michigan 48661  
Director : Carol Gillman  
Phone: (989) 460-2705  
Email: ocoadirector@yahoo.com
References


Appendix A

RN to BSN Track

SERVICE LEARNING AGENCY CONTACT FORM

Agency Name: Ogemaw COA

Contact Person: Carol Gillman

Contact Phone: 989-460-2705

Contact Email: OCOAdirector@kbiw.com

Contact Address: 1589 S. M-33

West Branch, MI 48661

Description of Agency and Type of Service Learning Student will be engaged in:

etc.

Signature of Agency Representative (Agreeing to student volunteer):

Carol Gillman

Printed or typed name

Carol Gillman

Signature

Adopted 12/07
Revised 7/08
Revised 3/09
Revised 4/09
Revised 6/10