



**Educators Consortium
for Service Learning**

Service Learning Lesson Plan Poaching – A Service Experience Inspired by *The Giver*

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The Story

There's a heart-wrenching scene in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*. An elephant is killed for its tusks and dies in agony. Its partner wails by its side, devastated by the loss of its loved one. It's a terrifying moment for the main character to witness, and he loses innocence and naiveté as a result. At the end of the book, I asked my students what world issues Lowry seemed concerned about, and many responded that one of them was the treatment and value of animals. I then instructed them to look at several issues of the magazine *Time for Kids* to see what animal-related issues were present in our modern world.

Grade Level of Students Involved

6-8 (Middle School)

Duration

- One full week of class time
- Two weeks of "on-your-own" time
- 3 follow-up class days
- Class demo
- School festival demo

Service-Learning Theme

Animals

Community Need

- Animal abuse
- Poaching

Community Partners

Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and PETA

Academic Connections

Key Content Areas: English Language Arts

Skills being introduced or developed:

- Persuasive writing and speaking
- Business letter writing
- Business phone calls

- Critical thinking
- Collaboration
- Revision/editing/writing mechanics
- Vocabulary
- Research skills
- Web design
- Survey writing
- Script writing

Books, Media, Websites, and other Resources Used

<http://www.chifutisafaris.com/>
www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org

Global Connections Made

The initial inquiry was to relate the book *The Giver* to world issues today. Many animal-related issues are occurring all over the world, and this was recognized.

Five Stages of Service-Learning (Procedure)

(Investigation, Preparation and Planning, Action, Reflection, and Demonstration)

Investigation

- Students interviewed each other and discovered that a love for animals brought them together.
- What issues does Lois Lowry show concern for in *The Giver*? Lowry showed a deep appreciation for the value of animals in her book by creating an emotionless world in which animals did not exist. She also wrote a gripping scene of the death of an elephant by poachers.
- What related issues can be found in current issues of Time for Kids magazines?

Teacher Reflection

This is so exciting and everyone is motivated. Kids got together voluntarily over the weekend to put everything together. There is so much enthusiasm, that they got ahead of themselves and their work, while creative and powerful, didn't really serve a community need. Did they learn? YES!

Preparation and Planning

Students created a video and exposed their faces and names on a video to the world and put it on the internet. We had to go back to the drawing board: we took the video down that Monday and considered other ways to get their message across without revealing their identities. After all, they're 11 years old.

Students made a phone call to the Sheldrick Wildlife Organization and told them who they were and what they wanted to do. The woman on the phone was so impressed and grateful that kids their age wanted to help. She took down all their info and gave us the contact info of their educational specialist who travels the country and world teaching people about poaching and how to stop it. Students contacted this person and she wrote them an encouraging letter and all the materials she uses in her presentations. She asked the students to look over it

Teacher Reflection

Because we had run out of class time, students no longer had time in the day to convene. Other work got in the way and the energy lapsed.

Action

Create a website: www.letsstoppoaching.com

Develop a survey

Developed a petition: <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/893/401/214/-ban-ivory-in-the-united-states-stop-the-torture-of-animals-/>

Create a video

Write an article and submit it to Time for Kids reporter on campus

Teacher Reflection

We should have partnered with an organization first and not gone full speed ahead on our own. Surveys needed polishing, the video needed to be more child-safe, and the petition had no goal or point. Students decided to rewrite the survey and redo the video without their faces.

Reflection

Students participated in written reflection.

Demonstration

We have a booth at the school carnival and are figuring out a fun way to share information about poaching with kids from ages 5-18.

When I gave them another day each week to work on, they reviewed the materials from the organization and decided to hold an extended morning meeting assembly of 10 minutes to share their information with the middle school. They also decided to make a very cute recipe of Elephant Dung Pies (a chocolate-based sweet treat) to sell at the school carnival and help raise awareness of poaching.

Teacher Reflection:

Kids this age need contact with an organization immediately AND a feasible action. They need to protect their identities and find something simple and practical that can make a small but significant impact.

Technology Integration noted above

Examples of Youth Voice & Choice

Choosing poaching as a topic

Choosing the action

Breaking up tasks amongst themselves

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

I learned that kids love to run with ideas even if they're not feasible. They love the process but don't always keep the end in mind. They need to reflect a lot on what they're trying to accomplish, not just the fun they're having in the meantime.