

Course Title	:	Intergenerational Learning through Service with the Elderly
Course Code	:	CSL1004
Department	:	International Education and Lifelong Learning

Synopsis

Service learning is regarded as a method whereby students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in, and meets the needs of, communities. Service learning is integrated into this course with an aim to promote the sharing of skills, knowledge, or experience between old and young and result in intergenerational learning and interactions that are mutually beneficial. The benefits of intergenerational learning are well-known. While elders can mentor individuals from the younger generation, they can also learn from the younger generation. Intergenerational contact creates an opportunity for reciprocal learning, as well as improving the cognitive functioning and capability of older learners.

The understanding and promotion of intergenerational learning remains the focus and rationale of this course. To this end, students will first receive two lectures (6 contact hours) on concepts and pedagogies drawn from Educational Gerontology to acquire an understanding of elder learning, including the needs, motivations, learning styles and preferences, as well as the barriers to participation as experienced by the elderly in late-life learning. The theoretical part is then followed by 54 contact hours of community service in NGOs such as elderly community centres, for students to engage in teaching and learning activities or courses that involve the participation of elders. Through the coordination of SAO and the NGO professional staff as Field Instructors, our students will be arranged to teach a small group of elders on a topic or subject that they have knowledge about and is needed by the elders in the community centre. Or students may provide a course and instruction for elderly tutors/instructors to acquire the needed teaching skills and methodologies as part of a train-the-trainer programme. Examples may include teaching the elders education-related courses including teaching skills, learning strategies; and other general courses on computer usage, basic English/Putonghua communication, health-promoting physical exercise, dancing, singing, pop and youth culture, etc.

To evaluate if intergenerational learning is achieved, our students will participate in a research component that is built in towards the end of the course to evaluate what they and the elderly have learned and gained from their interactions. The evaluative research will take the form of a questionnaire and interviews with elder learners, as well as an evaluation by the younger students themselves about the experience and outcomes of learning between generations.