

2015 Ms. Rheinheimer's Honors English 10 Service Learning Project:

Asian Literature & The Importance of Storytelling

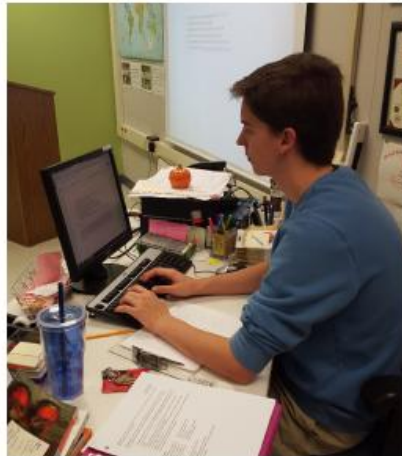
Investigation

The essential questions for our quarter-long unit on Asian literature are:

- How do our culture and our past influence our stories?
- What are the stories that we have to tell?

We decided to pose those questions to our community. Whose stories can we tell on behalf of those in Milford?

As a class, we brainstormed different organizations and reached out to multiple. Students made calls and drafted an email introducing ourselves and our purpose. We contacted a veteran's service center, a homeless shelter in Over the Rhine, and various nursing homes and assisted living facilities.



Preparation & Planning



We decided to partner with Sem Haven Health & Residential Care Center. We worked with Barb and Amy, deciding that we would come into the facility in partners to interview residents. The staff expressed that it's a service to them to ask the residents questions to stimulate their memories, and that storytelling is therapeutic for the residents.

Students chose partners and developed interview questions using the StoryCorps app. We would have loved to have recorded the interviews to archive in the Library of Congress (as we're doing for another class project), but with privacy policies, we had to plan on using pen and paper to record our information.

Ohio's New Learning Standards addressed through the project:

- SL.9-10.4-5: present information & make strategic use of digital media
- W.9-10.6-7: use technology & conduct research (oral history)

Action & Demonstration

We traveled to Sem Haven at the end of November to conduct interviews. Amy led us around the facility, giving us a tour. Then, we divided up in three groups: one group went to the assisted living section where residents cope with dementia; and two other groups went to other hallways where residents just need extra care.

Students went with their partners into different rooms. Some just interviewed one resident, others managed to speak to more!

Once students completed the interviews, we wanted to produce something for Sem Haven. We created a "Resident Spotlight" in LucidPress, for each resident. We provided Sem Haven with electronic copies and hard copies. We also wrote thank you notes to the residents.



First Name: Doris  
Place of Birth: Williamsburg, Ohio from photo here  
Age: 96  
Family: 1 sister, 2 children, 4 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren  
Job/Career: Used to be a shoe factory worker  
Likes: Watching Cincinnati basketball  
Interesting Fact: Graduated high school at the age of 16  
Why Sem Haven?  
It is close to her family and full of nice people.



## Reflection

Following our trip to Sem Haven, students completed a survey to reflect on their experiences.

**Do you think other students should have an experience like this?**

*"I think this is something other students should do because it is a great learning experience. We might not normally get a chance to hear stories like these, and the people at Sem Haven or other nursing homes might not get a chance to tell those stories."*

*"Yes, I think helping the community while also doing school work is a good way to apply what is learned to life, rather than work solely out of texts books etc. and not knowing what to do with that knowledge. It helps with social skills and teaches a little bit about things that we would never be able to experience without leaving school."*

*"I do, because I feel at times we as students get rather wrapped up in our own world and forget about the people before us. Sometimes we get too engrossed in our own problems, and this showed me that the world is a lot bigger than the one I know now and that my problems now really are no big deal."*

*"I think this was a cool experience and I think that one thing that made it neat was the fact that we got to do this with our classmates. It made volunteering a lot more meaningful I think to be able to share this with people that we know and for all of us to provide a service together. I definitely think that other students should get the chance to participate in service learning."*



**Describe something meaningful you discovered or learned during this project.**

*"I discovered the little joys in life because Marian had many and she cherished all of the small things."*

*"Our interview helped me see how much Milford has changed over the years. We were able to hear what it was like to be a woman here decades ago, and it was very interesting."*

*"I learned that everyone, no matter the age, has a worth while story to tell."*

*"I learned that everyone has a story, and that is something I hadn't fully considered before."*

*"I learned that it is important to write down stories and experiences when you are younger, otherwise they will be lost as you get older."*

*"I learned that I liked to talk to people living at Sem Haven, and that people can come together to help in inspiring ways."*

**"Because of my service learning, I am...**

*...thankful to experience a new type of community service and hearing the stories I would have never known of."*

*...able to appreciate the life that I was given and to live in the moment because time can slip out of your hands before you can truly grasp how life is supposed to be spent."*

*...more aware of the power of memories and stories, as well as the importance to get involved with the elderly so that their stories will be remembered."*

*...refreshed."*

*...thankful for the life I have, and humbled."*

*...inspired to do more for others rather than thinking about my life and my life only."*

*...more thankful for what I have and more appreciative of others in my community."*