

SCI199 A short description of the service learning project.

Our service learning project relates to what is often called “The Digital Divide”. Namely, most of us have come to accept computing as being pervasive and part of our daily routines. We now view computers as a common commodity, perhaps as common as a phone. On the other hand, there are segments of society such as seniors where many individuals do not engage in any aspect of computing. The goal of this project is to gain some experience in helping seniors adapt to a computing environment and providing them with the ability to benefit from some common applications such as email and chat, internet search, online purchasing, photo collections, online calendars. The projects are taking place at two facilities.

The first facility is the Yonge Street Mission which provides services for (amongst others) independent seniors. In this project, there is a staff person who teaches a computing class, both an introductory class as well as a more advanced class (where as a project the class will be implementing a newsletter). A student volunteer here will provide one on one help for seniors following a lesson by the instructor.

The second facility is Kensington Gardens, a seniors residence. Here a student volunteer will plan a small lesson and then follow up with one on one help.

For both projects, the student volunteer is to contact the volunteer coordinator at the facility and schedule participation. It is expected that the project will entail 4-6 contact hours. It is also expected that each volunteer will give a 5 minute presentation of their experience and submit a project paper of 3-5 pages on their service learning experience. The oral and written reports should describe the nature of the activity, what (if any) seem to be the main obstacles to having seniors utilize basic computing facilities, the perceived benefit to the clients (the facility and the seniors involved), and the personal benefit that you (the student volunteer) feel you gained from the experience.