

WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-Learning Definition and Elements

Definition

Definition - Service-Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

Goals

- Enhance social and academic learning
- Develop character and citizenship skills
- Learn about the issues
- Develop an action plan for service
- Engage in meaningful service by working on a project that will make a difference

Types of Service-Learning Activities

The following list gives a sense of the many ways students can apply instruction and practice needed skills through helping others. Full-scale projects include formal linkages with coursework, and part of the student grade is tied to the service-learning activities. Note that different types of projects have students apply different skills.

Direct Service Learning: person-to-person, face-to-face service projects in which the students' service directly impacts individuals who receive the service from the students. Examples include:

- Tutoring other students and adults
- Conducting art/music/dance lessons for younger students
- Helping other students resolve conflict
- Giving performances on violence and drug prevention
- Creating lessons and presenting them to younger students
- Creating life reviews for Hospice patients

Impact on/skills practiced by servers include the following: caring for others, personal responsibility, dependability, interpersonal skills, ability to get along with others who are different, problem-solving, beginning-to-end, big-picture learning.

Indirect Service Learning: working on broad issues, environmental projects, community development-projects that have clear benefits to the community or environment, but not necessarily to individual identified people with whom the students are working. Examples include:

- Compiling a town history
- Restoring historic structures or building low-income housing
- Removing exotic plants and restoring ecosystems, preparing preserve areas for public use

Impact on/skills practiced by servers include the following: cooperation, teamwork skills, playing different roles, organizing, prioritizing, project-specific skills.

Research-Based Service Learning: gathering and presenting information on areas of interest and need- projects that find, gather, and report on information that is needed. Examples include:

- Writing a guide on available community services and translating it into Spanish and other languages of new residents
- Conducting longitudinal studies of local bodies of water; water testing for local residents
- Gathering information and creating brochures or videos for non-profit or government agencies
- Mapping state lands and monitoring flora and fauna
- Conducting surveys, studies, evaluations, experiments, interviews, etc.

Impact on/skills practiced by servers include the following: learn how to learn/get answers/find information, make discriminating judgments, work systematically, organizational skills, learn how to assess, evaluate, and test hypotheses.

Advocacy Service Learning: educating others about topics of public interest - projects that aim to create awareness and action on some issue that is in the public interest. Examples include:

- Planning and putting on public forums on topics of interest in the community
- Conducting public information campaigns on topics of interest or local needs
- Working with elected officials to draft legislation to improve communities
- Training the community in fire safety or disaster preparation

Impact on/skills practiced by servers include the following: perseverance; understanding rules, systems, processes; engaged citizenship, working with adults.

<p>SEVEN ELEMENTS OF HIGH QUALITY SERVICE-LEARNING</p> <p><i>Developed by: Service Learning 2000 Center; 50 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto, CA 94301; 650.322.7271; Fax: 650.328.8024</i></p>	<p>Integrated Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The service-learning project has clearly articulated knowledge, skill or value goals that arise from the broader classroom and school goals. ▪ The service informs the academic learning content, and the academic learning content informs the service ▪ Life skills learned outside the classroom are integrated back into learning.
<p>High Quality Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The service responds to an actual community need that is recognized by the community. ▪ The service is age-appropriate and well organized. ▪ The service is designed to achieve significant benefits for students and the community. 	<p>Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The service-learning project is a collaboration among as many of these partners as is feasible: students, community-based organization staff, support staff, administrators, faculty, and recipients of service. ▪ All partners benefit from the project and contribute to its planning.
<p>Student Voice</p> <p>Students participate actively in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Choosing and planning the service project; ▪ Planning and implementing the reflection sessions, evaluation and celebration; ▪ Taking on roles and tasks that are appropriate to their age. 	<p>Civic Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The service-learning project promotes students' responsibility to care for others and contribute to the community. ▪ By participating in the service-learning project, students understand how they can impact their community.
<p>Reflection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflection establishes connections between students' service experiences and the academic curriculum. ▪ Reflection occurs before, during, and after the service-learning project. 	<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All the partners, especially students, are involved in evaluating the service-learning project. ▪ The evaluation seeks to measure progress toward the learning and service goals of the project.