

What is Service Learning?

“Service learning is a course-based, credit-bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on... [it] to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.”

Meredith A. Whitley and David S. Walsh, A Framework for the Design and Implementation of Service-learning Courses. The Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance, April 2014, V 85. pp. 34 from Robert Bringle and Julie Hatcher, A Service Learning Curriculum for Faculty. The Michigan Journal of Community Service –Learning, Fall 1995, pp.112-122



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Service Learning Basics

What is Quality Service Learning?

According to the Corporation for National & Community Service (March 2006), quality service learning encompasses three key elements:

- *Participating in regular community service for a least one semester;*
- *Writing or reflecting on the service activity through class;*
- *And participating in planning the service activity.*



What are the benefits of Service Learning?

Service learning is a process through which students are involved in community work that contributes significantly to:

- *Positive change in individuals, organizations, neighborhoods, and/or larger systems in a community;*
- *Students' academic understanding, civic development, personal or career growth, and/or understanding of larger social issues.*

Even with an expanded vision for the field, service learning will undoubtedly continue to play a critical role in campus-community collaboration.

Charity to Change, by Minnesota Campus Compact (2002)

Tips for Service Learning in the Classroom:

- BUILD RELATIONSHIPS (with your students, with community partners, and make sure they are building relationships in their sites.)
- Understand your students' starting points and interests.
- Let the students research what they want to learn and discuss their experience before they begin.
- Consistently speak to the students about what is happening in their work, problems, joys, and most of all what is the service doing to each of them.
- Probe gently at what students say in order to go deeper. Pull the students out gradually and support them.
- Have the students write one page about what goes on at their site and how they are processing it each week and reflect as a group.
- Incorporate their service site into course readings and a larger project somehow. Have them write a paper on how working with children in North St. Louis doing robotics relates to their computer science course. In Studio Art, do a final piece to encompass what they learned in their service site. The key is to make them think about their service and how it relates to the world.



How the Center for Community Service Can Help

- The program coordinator can help place your students. If you are looking for service sites on a specific topic, we can try to match students to the course topic.
- The first two weeks of classes, the program coordinator will meet with students and discuss their service-learning options and interests to set them up with an ongoing opportunity to meet their needs.
- The program coordinator offers once a month reflections on students' services, if you do not have class time to reflect on what they are seeing at their site. We also offer individual meetings or class time meetings.
- The program coordinator can sign off on service hours and reflections to ensure your students have completed hours.
- The program coordinator can sit down with you and explain service learning or come to your class to assist with the service-learning aspects of the course.
- The program coordinator will also try to help in any other ways you feel would be beneficial to you or your students.



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