

What is Service Learning?

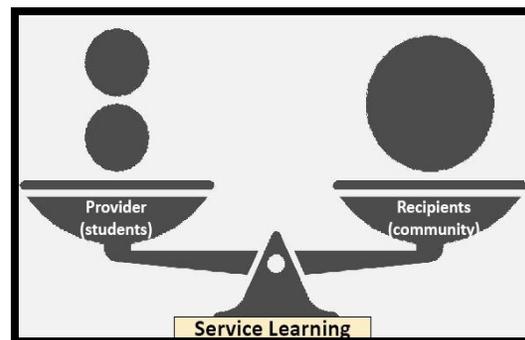
Service Learning is a teaching strategy that integrates relevant community service with coursework. Service learning combines meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. This resource guide is designed to provide a very brief introduction to a variety of service learning principles and ideas. For more in-depth information visit our [Service Learning Website](#) for more resource guides, literature resources, and website links.

Service Learning Courses have 4 Basic Components:

- the service activity that meets a real community need
- service is integrated into coursework and enhances the curriculum
- courses include meaningful reflection activities
- encourages a sense of civic responsibility in students

Service Learning Concepts:

- Service learning is not volunteerism, internships, or practicums
- is on the spectrum of experiential education, where people learn by doing
- meets a community need, which is defined by the community
- balance between the service and the learning that results from the service
- connects university resources with local community needs and knowledge



Service Learning Foundational Ideas:

- has roots in pragmatism, progressive education, organizational development, and democratic theory
- draws on ideas promoted by thinkers like John Dewey, Karl Lewin, and David Kolb
- is built on the notion that universities have responsibilities to their local community
- gives students opportunities in experiential education and to make a difference in local communities

Benefits:

Students: gain job experience, connect with community issues, better engage in coursework

Faculty: engage with community, practice innovative pedagogy, increase student participation and awareness

Community Partners: connect with university resources, build relationships to find solutions to community needs,

Service Learning Positively Impacts Students'

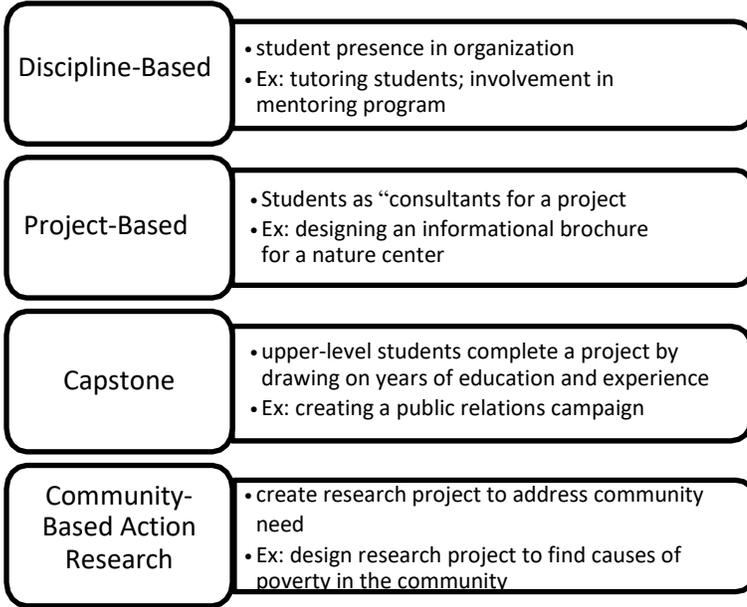
- ✓ Sense of civic responsibility
- ✓ Career choice and direction
- ✓ Critical thinking and writing skills
- ✓ Classroom discussions
- ✓ GPA

Challenges: Service learning has challenges and unique needs. All service-learning requires a significant investment of time and resources by the faculty, students, and community partners; a sustained and positive relationship between the university and the community; and mature student involvement.

Not all service learning projects succeed. Be prepared to turn failures into positive learning experiences through the use of effective reflection and your framing of students' experiences.

What Does Service Learning Look Like?

Models of Service Learning



General Process of Service Learning

- Plan:**
- ✓ Identify potential faculty or community partners; create working relationships
 - ✓ Define needs and service activities
 - ✓ Design syllabus and set course goals
- Implement:**
- ✓ think through needs, tasks, risks, and goals
 - ✓ place students; provide orientation and training
 - ✓ conduct the activity and related coursework
 - ✓ react to changes, failures, or problems in an adaptive and positive way
- Reflect:**
- ✓ conduct reflection activities throughout the semester
 - ✓ refer to the [Reflection Practices and Tips Resource Guide](#) for reflection ideas and specifics

10 Principles for Successful Service Learning:

1. Grades are assigned for classroom activities, not the service activity
2. Do not compromise academic rigor
3. Establish learning objectives
4. Establish criteria for service placements
5. Use educationally sound learning strategies
6. Prepare students for learning from the community
7. Minimize distinction between the community learning and classroom learning
8. Rethink the faculty instructional role
9. Prepare for variation in student learning outcomes
10. Maximize community responsibility of the course

Howard, Jeffrey, ed., *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning: Service-Learning Course Design Workbook*, University of Michigan: OCSL Press, Summer 2001 pp. 16–19.

Cognitive Understanding

As you think about service learning, it is important to remember how knowledge is attained, analyzed, and applied at different levels of cognitive understanding. There are many models illustrating this idea; a basic version of Bloom’s Taxonomy is provided to the right.

- ✓ Use Bloom’s Taxonomy to design curriculum, teaching tools, service activities, and reflection processes
- ✓ Contact the [Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning](#) or visit their [website](#) for more resources and information about this topic.





References and Further Reading

Zlotkowski, Edward (Ed.) (1998) Successful Service-Learning Programs. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

Post, Margaret A, Ward, Elaine, Longo, Nicholas V., & Saltmarsh, John (Ed.) (2016) Publicly Engaged Scholars: Next-Generation Engagement and the Future of Higher Education, Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC

Matto, Elizabeth C., McCartney, Alison Rios Millett, Bennion, Elizabeth A., Simpson, Dick, (2017) Teaching Civic Engagement Across the Disciplines, Washington, DC: American Political Science Association

Jacoby, Barbara (2015) Service-Learning Essentials, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Cipolle, Susan Benigni, (2010) Service-Learning and Social Justice: Engaging Students in Social Change, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, Inc.

Kaye, Cathryn Berger, ((2004) The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, & Social Action, Minneapolis, MS: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

Cress, Christine M., Collier, Peter J., Reitenauer, Vicki L., and Associates (2013) Learning through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement across Academic Disciplines and Cultural Communities, Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

These books and more can be found in the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning lending library.