



Service-Learning Tools Series

- 1. Service-Learning Sequence:**
an outline of the steps in the service-learning process
- 2. Essential Elements of Service-Learning:**
five essentials to include in your service-learning program
- 3. Planning your Service-Learning Project:**
putting it all together into a project
- 4. Suggested Reflection and Demonstration Activities:**
helping students to make the connections
- 5. Post-Service Reflection:**
grade-level appropriate writing prompts
- 6. Service-Learning Planning Rubric:**
progressing from beginning to advanced practitioner
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Service-learning is real service, real learning

Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that combines meaningful service to the community with academic study and reflective practice to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

Service-Learning Sequence

1. Identify the project

There are many ways to develop a service-learning project:

- You - the teacher - may want to develop a project to extend a particular curricular goal.
- Or, a local community-based organization - one with whom you want to collaborate - may come to you with a project in mind.
- If possible, engage your students in the process of brainstorming the project idea; it will help them to take ownership of the project, and to feel valued.
- Remember that the service needs to meet a “meaningful community need” - relevant to students, *and* important to the community.

2. Develop service and learning goals

Once the project is selected, identify both service and learning goals, and connect the project to school-based academic standards. Determine and introduce appropriate and measurable outcomes for both the service and the learning.

3. Prepare

Effective preparation for a service-learning project has two elements:

- learning about the issue that students will address through their service; and
- working through the logistical considerations.

4. Act

Now it's time to do the project!

5. Reflect

It is important for students to reflect *before*, *during* and *after* their service-learning project experience. What did we learn about the issues, ourselves and our place in the world?

6. Demonstrate and Celebrate

Engage students in showing others what they have accomplished and learned; plan to invite community partners to attend. Celebrate their learning, and service!



Essential Elements of Service-Learning

1. Community Needs Assessment & Project Planning

- ❑ Students are involved in researching and deciding types of projects (age appropriate) which fill a “real community need”
- ❑ Students are well-prepared for the tasks they perform

2. Meaningful Service connected to Learning Outcomes

- ❑ Service occurs on the school campus, at neighboring schools or in the community.
- ❑ Partners from schools and community agencies are involved in the development of the service project.
- ❑ Projects often start small.
- ❑ They are achievable within the timeframe allowed and build from a point of success.
- ❑ Projects are connected to and clearly with school-based or District-set academic curriculum and standards

3. Structured Reflection

Helps students to make connections between activity, school, and community, and should be:

- ❑ *Continuous*: before, during and after the experience
- ❑ *Connected*: links service activity to the intellectual and academic pursuits of the student
- ❑ *Challenging*: encourages students to engage issues in a more critical way
- ❑ *Contextualized*: appropriate for the setting and the context of the service-learning program

4. Celebration and Demonstration

- ❑ Adults join in applauding student successes
- ❑ Community acknowledges students as responsible participants
- ❑ Students have a voice in celebration and recognition events

5. Evaluation

- ❑ What have students learned? How will you determine accomplishments?
- ❑ Involves all stakeholders; how are the school and community different?
- ❑ “Future-directed” and “relational”, not outcome-based



Planning your Service-Learning Project*

Project Description:

Service Goals:

Learning Goals:

Standards Alignments:

Preparation

A. How will my class identify a community need/problem, and choose a project?

Consider these options:

- ◆ Teacher will present project opportunities to students
- ◆ Students will canvas school or neighborhood to identify a problem, and/or brainstorm ideas for a project
- ◆ Community partner (e.g. SOLV) will present project opportunities to teacher/students
- ◆ Students, teacher and community partner will brainstorm a community problem and plan a project together

B. What are the service goals of the project?

C. What are the learning goals of the project?

- ◆ Links to classroom-based curriculum?
- ◆ Links to Oregon content and Career-related Learning Standards?

D. How will I teach content and context?

Consider these options:

- ◆ Teacher to provide background information
- ◆ Student to engage in research and inquiry
- ◆ Community partner invited into classroom as guest resource

* adapted from *The Office of High School Programs: Service Learning Initiative of Chicago Public Schools*,
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Planning your Service-Learning Project

continued

Service / Action

A. What logistical issues need to be addressed?

Consider:

- ◆ Class coverage
- ◆ Transportation to and from the service site
- ◆ Funding for materials, other supplies
- ◆ Safety and student waivers
- ◆ Site considerations: permission, accessibility
- ◆ Parental support
- ◆ Additional chaperones for day-of-event

B. What role will each of the following play in planning and implementing the service activity?

Consider:

- ◆ Students
- ◆ Teacher
- ◆ SOLV
- ◆ Other community partners, community members
- ◆ Parents

C. What - and how - will students *learn* through their service activity?

Reflection and Demonstration

A. What formal reflective process(es) will students use - before, during and after the project?

Consider:

- ◆ How does the selected project relate to the student?
- ◆ How does the project enhance the student's relationship to the community?
- ◆ How will the student associate learning with the project?

B. How will students demonstrate, and communicate:

- ◆ How have they met service goals, and benefited the community?
- ◆ How have they met learning goals – and what have they learned?

Consider:

- ◆ “Suggested Reflection and Demonstration Activities” for further reflection questions, reflection and demonstration ideas

Evaluation

A. How will the teacher, students, and community partner assess the success of the service-learning experience?

Consider:

- ◆ *Teacher:* assessment and documentation of student learning based on learning goals
- ◆ *Community partner (SOLV):* assessment of service outcomes based on service goals
- ◆ *Students:* evaluation of all project processes and outcomes



Suggested Reflection and Demonstration Activities

Reflection is the “heart” of service-learning, and helps students to develop, understand and reinforce the connections between their service activity, their school, and their community. Students do not naturally take the time to reflect; service-learning incorporates **intentional** reflection into the experience.

Demonstration enables students to communicate both learning and service outcomes from their project. Students are recognized for their demonstrated successes, and celebrated as responsible community members.

Some Questions that Prompt Reflection . . .

- What do you want to happen?
- How could you do that?
- Why do you think this is a problem?
- Why do you think this is your responsibility?
- What did you enjoy most about what you did?
- What did you learn that you didn't know before?
- Can you talk more about that?
- Why do you think that happens?
- What new evidence do you have about . . . ?
- What does this remind you of?
- Do you see a connection here?
- How else could you approach that?

Reflection and Demonstration Ideas to Use during the Project*

Try to use a variety of different forms of reflection and demonstration, to engage varying learning styles:

Write -

personal journals, group journals; stories, poems, essays; letters to the editor, newspapers; informational brochures; music lyrics

Read -

articles about service, books related to the project; prose, poetry; journals; data; reports about the project

Tell -

class discussions, “think-pair-share” discussions, debates; presentations, skits; cheers, songs, dances; question-and-answer sessions; interviews

Create-

collages, posters, scrapbooks, photo essays; videos; service fair displays; sculptures, story boards, murals, mobiles; doodles, cartoons, puzzles; musical performances

* adapted from *Service-Learning Tip Sheet: Reflection*, www.nylc.org ©2005, National Youth Leadership Council



Post-Service Reflection^{*}

Elementary through Middle School Grades

After you have finished your project, please write a **1/2-page reflection (5-6 sentences)**.

Please be sure to describe your project, and your role in the experience.

Please Select ONE from the following to help you get started:

- 1.** What did you learn about other people?
Do you think it is important to work with other people? Why or why not?
- 2.** Did you share your service-learning experience with your family or friends?
What do you think you taught them? How did that make you feel?
- 3.** Do you think that doing a service-learning project helped you with your schoolwork? How?
Do you think other students should participate in a service-learning experience?
- 4.** Choose three words that best describe your project experience, and write a reflection using these words.
- 5.** What was the best thing that happened to you during your service-learning experience?
Was it something someone said or did, or a special feeling that you had?
- 6.** Would you like to do this project again? Why or why not?
Would you do anything differently to make the project better? What would you do differently the next time?

^{*} adapted from *Learn and Serve San Diego: A Service-Learning Handbook for Elementary Teachers*,
San Diego City Schools Partnerships in Education Program



★ Post-Service Reflection Middle through High School Grades

After your service-learning project, please complete a **1-page reflection essay**.
Please be sure to describe your project and your role in the experience.

Please Select ONE from the following to help you get started:

- 1.** Choose three words that best describe your service-learning experience, and develop an essay around these words.
- 2.** Think back to what you understood about service-learning *before* your experience. Did your experience change your understanding? How is it now different?
- 3.** Discuss the problem(s) that your project addressed. How did you address these issues during your project? Do you have more, or less, understanding for the problem that you addressed than you did before your project experience? Why?
- 4.** Did this experience have any impact on the way that you see yourself, the world around you, or how you will become involved with your community in the future?
- 5.** What was the best part of your service-learning project? What was the worst part? Were you challenged during this experience? Did you grow in any way? Would you do this project differently the next time? How would you change it?
- 6.** Did your service-learning project experience help you to think about possible careers? How? Describe what you did during your experience, what you learned, the skills you gained, and/or the discussions you had that influenced your thinking about careers.

* adapted from *The Office of High School Programs: Service Learning Initiative of Chicago Public Schools*
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Service-Learning Planning Rubric [★]

The following tool can help you identify how to progressively enhance your service-learning experience:

| Rubric Area | Beginning (B) | Developing (D) | Advanced (A) | Score (circle one) |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|-----------------------|
| Curricular Links | Indirect links to classroom curriculum and state standards where service enhances general educational goals | Clear, direct links to classroom curriculum, general education goals, and state standards | Service project is a natural outgrowth of curricular area of study; service aligns with and enhances curricular content, and meets state standards | B D A |
| Student Voice | Students have minimal role in implementation of service project that has been pre-selected by the teacher | Students have a significant leadership role in planning, implementation and reflection of service project | Students identify, plan and implement service project and have many opportunities to learn and practice leadership | B D A |
| Authentic Community Need | Service project meets a community need that has been identified by the teacher or community partner | Service project has been developed in close consultation and cooperation with a community partner, and meets a community need | Students and/or teacher have conducted a community needs assessment and have developed and implemented the project that delivers meaningful service | B D A |
| Project Leadership | Teacher provides appropriate information and is present at each stage of the project | Teacher provides guidance and helps student to draw larger meaning from service experience | Teachers and other adults facilitate opportunities for inquiry, self-discovery and leadership | B D A |
| School-Community Connection | Service project strengthens relationship with community partners | Service project creates a new relationship with community partners | Service project involves community partners in planning and implementation, and creates sustainable bond | B D A |
| Reflection | Students participate in formal reflection discussion at the conclusion of the project | Students participate in planned, formal reflection process at the conclusion of the project, involving writing, discussion, public presentation and other forms of reflection | Students have opportunities throughout the service project to participate in formal and informal reflection activities | B D A |

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Selected Service-Learning Web Resources

- ❑ National Youth Leadership Council
www.nylc.org
- ❑ National Service Learning Clearinghouse
www.servicelearning.org
- ❑ National Service-Learning Exchange
www.nslexchange.org
- ❑ Learning in Deed
www.learningindeed.org
- ❑ Learn and Serve America
www.learnandserve.org
- ❑ Points of Light Foundation
www.pointsoflight.org
- ❑ Search Institute
www.search-institute.org
- ❑ Youth Service America
www.ysa.org