

Service Learning - Additional Information

Service-learning is a form of experiential learning where students develop knowledge and critical thinking skills while addressing genuine community needs. Through direct service activities, students gain an understanding of human psychology, life skills, community needs and resources, civic responsibility, career options, and human diversity. Service-learning provides a framework for positive character development. Service-learning offers a proactive and comprehensive approach that promotes development of core values in thinking, feeling and behavior. Service-learning activities develop values of trustworthiness and responsibility to a commitment to the task itself and to those who are involved in it; collaboration and team-building; respect for the quality of work done; punctuality.

(The SCANS Report; The Character Education Partnership, Lickona, Schaps, and Lewis; "Their Best Selves" Council of Chief State School Officers; "Service-learning and Character Education" report from Wingspread, 1996.)

Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning Practice

1. Effective service-learning establishes clear educational goals that require the application of concepts, content and skills from the academic disciplines and involves students in the construction of their own knowledge.
2. In effective service-learning, students are engaged in tasks that challenge and stretch them cognitively and developmentally.
3. In effective service-learning, assessment is used as a way to enhance student learning as well as to document and evaluate how well students have met content and skills standards.
4. Students are engaged in service tasks that have clear goals, meet genuine needs in the school or community and have significant consequences for themselves and others.
5. Effective service-learning employs formative and summative evaluation in a systematic evaluation of the service effort and its outcomes.
6. Effective service-learning seeks to maximize student voice in selecting, designing, implementing, and evaluating the service project.
7. Effective service-learning values diversity through its participants, its practice and its outcomes.
8. Effective service-learning promotes communication and interaction with the community and encourages partnerships and collaboration.
9. Students are prepared for all aspects of their service work including a clear understanding of task and role, the skills and information required by the task, awareness of safety precautions, as well as knowledge about and sensitivity to the people with whom they will be working.
10. Student reflection takes place before, during and after service, uses multiple methods that encourage critical thinking, and is a central force in the design and fulfillment of curricular objectives.
11. Multiple methods are designed to acknowledge, celebrate and further validate students' service work.

(National Service Learning Cooperative, National Youth Leadership Council, April , 1998)

Service Learning Model includes four steps:

1. Preparation includes planning service activities and providing students with the knowledge needed to participate in and benefit from the service activity. Prior to service, students should:
 - a. identify the community needs they would like to address

- b. select and plan the specific service activities as they relate to specific learning expectations
 - c. help identify and enlist the assistance of service agencies
 - d. receive content area instruction and specific training they will need to conduct the service activity.
2. Action is the service itself. It must:
 - a. be meaningful
 - b. have academic integrity
 - c. be developmentally appropriate
 - d. provide student ownership
 - e. have adequate supervision
 3. Reflection is the structured opportunity for students to critically think about their service experience and apply their learning in a broader academic, social and personal context. Reflection activities also provide additional opportunities to link academic work with service activities. There are many different types of reflection activities including:
 - . discussion
 - a. writing
 - b. reading
 - c. artistic expression
 - d. class projects
 - e. presentations
 4. Celebration recognizes the students' contributions. It also provides closure to the service activity. Celebrations may include:
 - . school assemblies
 - a. special media coverage
 - b. joint celebrations with service partners
 - c. certificates
 - d. parties

Celebration is strengthened if it is related to the service (such as, a party in the park the students helped to restore).

(Pocket Guide to Service Learning, National Dropout Prevention Center, Clemson University, and "Service Learning-Making a World of Difference for Students", Georgia Department of Education, February, 1997)

ASLER Standards as developed by the Alliance for Service Learning in Education Reform :

1. Effective service learning efforts strengthen service and academic learning
2. Model service learning provides concrete opportunities for youth to learn new skills, to think critically, and to test new roles in an environment that encourages risk-taking and rewards competence.
3. Preparation and reflection are essential elements in service learning.
4. Youths' efforts are recognized by those served, including their peers, the school, and the community.
5. Effective service learning integrates systematic, formative, and summative evaluation.
6. Service learning connects the school or sponsoring organization and its community in new and positive ways.

7. Service learning is understood and supported as an integral element in the life of a school or sponsoring organization and its community.
8. Skilled adult guidance and supervision are essential to the success of service learning.
9. Preservice training, orientation, and staff development that include the philosophy and methodology of service learning best ensure that program quality and continuity are maintained.

Credentials of teachers:

Any secondary certification with employment standard (state approved training in service-learning)

Resource List

Lions-Quest Skills for Action

Quest International
1984 Coffman Road
Newark, OH 43055
800-446-2700

Character Counts

Legacy 150
Drake University
2417 University Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50311

Enriching the Curriculum Through Service Learning

Carol W. Kinsley and Kate McPherson

ASCD

1250 N. Pitt Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-1453
703-549-9110

Maryland's Best Practices: An Improvement Guide for School-based Service Learning

Maryland Student Service Alliance
Maryland Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-767-0358

Replication Guides for Adopt-A-Wetland; Kids Sew for Kids; Serving Those in Need; Themes in Literature; Stream Restoration; Cemetery Preservation; or Serving Seniors

Maryland Student Service Alliance

Maryland Department of Education

200 West Baltimore Street

Baltimore, MD 21201

410-767-0358

Critical Issues in K-12 Service Learning

Len Campbell, Nikki Elliott, Kate McPherson, Marti Haruff, Barbara Lomas, Steve Schuman

Project Service Leadership

12703 NW 20th Avenue

Vancouver, WA 98685

360-576-5070

The Mindful School: How to Integrate the Curricula

South Carolina Department of Education

906 Rutledge Building

1429 Senate Street

Columbia, SC 29201

Learning by Serving: 2,000 Ideas for Service Learning Projects

SERVE

South Eastern Regional Vision for Education

904-329-3847

Their Best Selves - Building Character Education and Service Learning Together in the Lives of Young People (1997)

Council of Chief State School Officers

1 Massachusetts Ave., NW

Washington, D.C. 20001-1431

202-408-5505