DESIGNING SERVICE-LEARNING COURSES: A FACULTY WORKBOOK

COMPiled BY THE OFFICE OF SERVICE-LEARNING AND VOLUNTEERING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE
The Big Vision of Service-Learning at USM

The Office of Service-Learning and Volunteering at USM works to support faculty in achieving excellence in their service-learning pedagogy by assisting with course design and developing community partner relations. This workbook is designed to help you assist with course and project design independently.

Service-learning is unique. It asks students to apply their life experiences and academic work to address a community-identified issue. We hope that every service-learning course will aid students in recontextualizing their previous experiences and look differently at their professional field, local community, and personal values. We know these are big goals and we know USM will rise to meet them.

The growth of service-learning pedagogy at USM is a testament to faculty like you that are committed to working with our local community. Your passion and expertise are why service-learning has grown not just here, but across the country. We look forward to working with you to expand service-learning and we hope your work is enriched by this workbook.

WORKBOOK QUESTIONS

Most pages and each section will have an opportunity for you to complete workbook prompts. Sections with prompts will have a yellow bow around around it. Please write your answers in the black space below each workbook prompt. Let's get started with our first prompt!

What are you hoping to get out of completing this workbook?
Purpose of This Guide

Service-learning is one of the most rewarding things a faculty member can involve themselves in. USM students have done amazing things like create and distribute meals at Preble Street, supported elementary students through coding, and helped Partners for World Health sort used medical supplies. Your courses can provide an opportunity for similar work.

Service-learning courses demand different pedagogical models than didactic courses. While it can seem like an insurmountable task when planning your first service-learning course. This guide is designed to support you by providing a principle overview about the basic components of service-learning and act as a workbook as you design your course.

THIS MANUAL WILL COVER

- What service-learning is and the benefits of using this pedagogy
- Formal definitions for service-learning related jargon
- Techniques and resources on designing a service-learning course including learning outcomes, reflection, partnership development, and student preparation
- An overview of what resources the Service-Learning and Volunteering Office at Southern Maine can provide

There is always more to learn about experiential learning courses. Please contact the Service-Learning & Volunteering office if you have questions or need extra support by e-mailing usm.community@maine.edu or calling at (207) 780-4284.

You will find blue boxes like these throughout the workbook. These graphics are designed to point out specific service-learning resources that The Office of Service-Learning and Volunteering can provide.
Why Service-Learning?

**Faculty Benefits**

**Teaching:** Service-learning pedagogy establishes links between theory and reality (McKay & Rozee, 2004).

**Research:** Research needs in our community can be identified (Benefits of Service Learning, 2019)

**Service:** Service-Learning and Volunteering provides letters for tenure portfolios if you teach service-learning courses, lead a community based workshops, or volunteer

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**Student Benefits**

**Reduces stereotyping and increases tolerance** (Eyler & Giles, 1999)

**Develops cognitive skills and increases likelihood of student to choose career in service after graduation** (Vogelgesang and Astin, 2002)

**Demonstrated Statistical increases in GPA, writing skills, and critical thinking skills** (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda & Yee, 2000)

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**Community Benefits**

**Expands community partner's capacity and services** (Benefits of Service Learning, 2019)

**Identify and address community research needs in** (Benefits of Service-Learning, 2019)

**Six or more hours of volunteering per week in college doubles students chances of continuing community service post-graduation** (Astin, Sax & Avalos, 1999)

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**Workbook Questions**

Why do you want to, or are working towards, teaching a service-learning course?
Service-Learning Definitions & Jargon

**Community Service:** The engagement of students in activities that primarily focus on the service being provided as well as the benefits the activities have on recipients (Campus Compact, 2003)

**Volunteerism:** The engagement of students in activities the primary emphasis is on the service being provided and the primary intended beneficiary is clearly the service recipient (Campus Compact, 2003)

**Civic Engagement:** The act of contributing to public life and participating in solving public problems (Center for Democracy and Citizenship, 2019)

**Service-Learning:** Service-learning is a credit-bearing, educational, experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995)

**Community Partner:** Members of the community in businesses, government agencies, and social service organizations that agree to work with students, individually or collectively, in order to address a community-identified issue (Cress et al, 2013)

**Learning Objectives:** Achievable and measurable goals that students should achieve by the end of your course (Howard, 2000)

**Assessment Method:** Activities and techniques used to measure learning objectives

**Reflection:** An activity that links service and coursework (Eyler, Giles, Jr., & Schmiede, 1996, p. 14)
What is Service-Learning?

Service-learning is a teaching method which combines community service with academic instruction. Service-learning pedagogy focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility. Programs with service-learning focus place students in organized community service that addresses a community-identified concern while developing their academic skills, sense of civic responsibility, and commitment to the community. Below is the Furco (1996) wingspan chart to illustrate the difference between types of experiential learning.

**Workbook Question**

How would explain the different between service-learning and an internship to students?

Service-learning shares similarities with internships, field education, practica, and voluntary service. Furco (1996) places these forms of education on a continuum. At one end of the continuum are internships and practica, with their primary focus on the students' career development. At the other end are volunteer activities, in which the emphasis is on the civic involvement and the services provided to recipients. Furco locates service-learning in the middle of the continuum, and states that it is unique in its "intention to equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service as well as to ensure equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring".
Tenants of Service-Learning

There are three main tenants of service-learning. They are:

Reflection: A process that facilitates connection between the community service performed and the content of your course. Reflection is to make meaning of the community engagement and help students find relevant connections to the course learning objectives (Eyler, Giles, Jr., & Schmiede, 1996, p. 14).

Relevant & Meaningful Community Service: There must be a service to the community performed that is both relevant and meaningful to both parties (Howard, 2001). Community partners, or organizations that students work with to provide a community need, are co-educators in service-learning pedagogy (Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement, 2015).

Enhanced Academic Service: Service-learning is deeply connected to academic coursework. Students will apply the knowledge gained from the course within the community while completing service (Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement, 2015). Service alone is not enough to create a service-learning course (Howard, 2001). It must link to predefined learning objectives.

Academic service-learning is the overlap of these three tenants.
Service-Learning Definitions
Worksheet

Please answer the written questions in the space below each question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why does your course need a service-learning component?</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How will you incorporate service into your course?</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How does your course connect to volunteerism? What about community service? Finally how does your course connect to service-learning?</th>
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Learning Goals & Assessment

Traditional courses and service-learning courses both require the creation of learning goals and objectives. Learning goals, objectives, strategies, and assessment methods are connected. The diagram below shows you how.

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**Common Interdisciplinary Service-Learning Outcomes**

- **Personal Outcomes** *(Campus Compact, 2003)*
  - Personal Efficacy
  - Personal Identity
  - Spiritual Growth
  - Moral Development

- **Social Outcomes** *(Campus Compact, 2003)*
  - Reducing stereotypes
  - Increase racial understanding
  - Increase in commitment to service

- **Civic Outcomes** *(Keen & Hall, 2009)*
  - Commitment to Activism
  - Belief that you can make a difference

- **Course Learning Outcomes** *(Campus Compact, 2003)*
  - Increased reported use of praxis
  - Increased critical thinking and cognitive development

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Do you need help creating assessment, learning goals and objectives for your course, or collaborating with your community partners? The Office of Service-Learning and Volunteering Office is happy to advise on content creation and delivery.
Learning Goals and Objectives Worksheet

Please answer the written questions in the space below each question.

Please list three of your current learning objectives for your course.

Please list three of your revised learning objectives based on the information provided in this workbook.

How do these learning goals and learning objectives overlap? What information do you still need?
Service-Learning Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are methods for achieving one or more learning objectives in a classroom. Learning strategies will likely be familiar to you since they are an implicit expectation of all courses (Howard, 2001). Strategies overlap directly with reflection activities, but can also include traditional didactic lectures and exams. Below are some sample reflection activities that could also be learning strategies.

Learning strategies include classroom activities and student assignments.

Sample Service-Learning Specific Reflection Activities (Eyler and Giles, 1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Doing</th>
<th>Telling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Students:</td>
<td>Personal Journals</td>
<td>Films &amp; Video</td>
<td>Class Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Student Companion to Community-Engaged Learning</td>
<td>Group Journals</td>
<td>Oral Histories</td>
<td>Reflective Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning Across the Disciplines</td>
<td>Portfolios</td>
<td>Workshops &amp; Simulations</td>
<td>Reading Journals Aloud</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letters To Editors -or- Elected Officials</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Group Discussions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Workbook Question

Which of your current assignments will work as a service-learning course learning strategy? Why?
Service-Learning Assessment

Assessment is a formal process that provides opportunity for students to demonstrate learning goals and objectives. Traditional assessment methods are quizzes, tests, and written papers. Service-learning courses require academic learning, and therefore, will require students to demonstrate academic learning through assessment.

Service-learning assessment differs from traditional assessment. Non-traditional forms of assessment, like daily journals and group dialogue on service experiences, blend assessment and reflection techniques. While assessment methods can overlap with learning strategies and reflection strategies, assessment is distinct because it is a formal measurement of learning objectives. This could mean structuring your reflection activities to mirror what may be included on a traditional exam, or conducting quizzes after students read service-learning specific readings.

Evaluation is different than assessment. Evaluation is designed to measure performance at a community site and in the classroom instead of learning outcomes. This form of measurement is important in service-learning, but it is not a part of academic learning. Evaluation is commonly included as attendance or participation points in a course.

Workbook Question
Which of your current course assignments would be considered assessment? Why?
Please list three of your current learning strategies.

Please list a revision of those same learning strategies with new context on service-learning.

Please list three forms of assessment in your course.

Please list a revision of the forms of assessment based on new context this workbook has provided.

How do each of these revised components connect to service-learning pedagogy?
Reflection

What Is Reflection?

Vista Campus (2019) state service-learning reflection activities are:

- Students examining what they learned from the community engagement activity
- Opportunities to work through problems encountered and obstacles overcome during a project
- A celebration of working on a community-identified issue
- Freedom for participants to create personal meaning from their community engagement experience


Reflection should occur before, during, and after service activities

The "What? So What? Now What?" framework of reflection David Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle is a helpful tool to support students while they make meaning of their service. Here are examples of types of questions you can ask at each stage of the framework. Reflection activities will ask students to read, write, do, or tell (Eyler, Giles & Schmiede, 1996).

You can incorporate this framework into the reading, writing, doing, and telling for your activities. This framework was designed by David Kolb.

What? Dialogue/Writing Prompts

- What do I expect to get out of this experience (purpose/goals/ideals)?
- What did I observe during my first visit?
- Describe the people you worked with at the community site.
- What roles did I play at the site?

So What? Dialogue/Writing Prompts

- What am I learning about others and myself?
- How were you different when you left the community site compared to when you entered?
- What did I do that was effective? Why was it effective?
- What did I do that seemed to be ineffective? How could I have done it differently?

Now What? Dialogue/Writing Prompts

- How will my efforts working with this community partner contribute to social change?
- My career? What changes would I make in this experience if it were repeated?
- How do we take what we have learned and convert it into action?
- What’s the next step in the process?
Reflection

Pre-flection

Pre-flection is the first step in the reflection process. It provides students an opportunity to examine their emotions about the course (Falk, 1995). Pre-flection is the embodiment of the 'What' principle in Kolb's theory. It primes and provides a strategy to enhance reflection later in the course. Some common dialogue or written prompts that engage students in pre-flection are:

- What does it mean to be engaged with the community?
- What are your past community engagement experiences?
- What do you think are major social issues in the community?
- What are your hopes for your experience in the community?

What Reflection Isn't (Pizga, 2010)

- Reflection isn't a didactic retelling of events at a community engagement site.
- Reflection is not an emotional outlet for feeling good about community engagement or guilt for not doing more.
- Reflection isn't a soapbox for opinions.
- Reflection isn't a tidy exercise that closes an experience neatly.
Service-Learning Reflection Worksheet

Please answer the written questions in the space below each question.

Which of your learning strategies and assessment would double as reflection?

How could you incorporate the 'What' component of Kolb's model into the first month of your course?

What activities would you be modify in your course to include the 'What, So What Now What' dialogue/writing questions?
Guiding principles dictate that students should receive two orientations in service-learning courses. This is adapted from Michigan State University’s Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement’s Community Partner Orientation Checklist:

An orientation to service-learning includes:
- Overview of what service-learning is
- Introduction to the University’s community engagement practices and expectations

An orientation to their community partner site includes:
- Organizational overview
- Overview of community the organization serves
- Reviews of the organization’s policy and practices
- Rights, responsibilities, and expectations of service-learners

If you choose to support individual student placements on your own here are some guiding principles:

- Not every placement is a good placement for service-learning. Consider transportation, hours required by partner, and student work/class schedule

- Students should develop an overview of volunteer responsibilities and approve it with you before beginning service

- Student’s may not be the first concern of community partners and should know this before they begin their service hours
Creating Service-Learning Syllabi

A key component of orienting students to service-learning is putting service-learning components into your syllabus and setting expectations on the key tenants. Below are four guiding principles of what to include in a service-learning syllabus from Howard's *Service-Learning Course Design Workbook* (2001) and Jacoby's *Service-Learning Essentials: Questions, Answers, and Lessons Learned* (2015, p. 12).

1. **Define and provide rationale for service-learning.**
   
   Students can and will confuse volunteer work and service-learning. Set the tone in the syllabus that you will be bringing community experience into the classroom and vice versa. Differentiate internships from community service.

2. **Tell students how community engagement and reflection will be graded.**
   
   Projects, assignments, readings, or discussions related to community engagement should be listed in the syllabus. Take the time to explore how the community engagement components of your course will be connected to your assignments.

3. **Explain what reflection and the role it plays in your course.**
   
   Students frequently mistake reflection as an exercise to ONLY share their feelings. Reflection may include these items, but it must also connect service to course materials.

4. **The nature of community engagement experience, responsibilities, and logistics.**
   
   You can find a bulleted list of items below.
   - Is service mandatory or elective?
   - Will students serve as individuals or in groups?
   - How many hours should students serve - or - what outcomes must be demonstrated to complete service requirements?
   - How will service engagement activities be selected?

**Workbook Question**

Why is it important to define what service-learning is for students in your course?
Preparing Students for Service Worksheet

Please answer the written questions in the space below each question.

What questions and concerns do you anticipate the students in your course will have? How can you acknowledge and address those concerns preemptively?

What components of student preparation for service do you already have in your course? What do you need to add? How will you do that?
Developing Community Partnerships

12 Best Practices to Developing Partnerships (CCPH Board of Directors, 2013)

1) Partnerships form to serve a specific purpose. New purposes and goals may emerge over time.

2) Partners agree on mission, values, goals, measurable outcomes, and processes for accountability.

3) The relationship between partners is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment.

4) The partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, but also to increase the capacity of both partners.

5) The partnership balances power among partners and enables resources among partners to be shared.

6) Partners make clear and open community a priority. They strive to understand each other’s needs, self-interests, and develop common language.

7) Principles and processes for the partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners. Specifically, both parties should focus on decision-making and conflict resolution.

8) There is feedback among all stakeholders in the partnership, with the goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes.

9) Partners share the benefits of the partnership’s accomplishments.

10) Partnerships can dissolve, and when they do, both parties need to plan a process for closure.

11) Partnerships consider the nature of the environment within which they exist as a principle of their design, evaluation, and sustainability.

12) The partnership values multiple kinds of knowledge and life experience.

The Service-Learning and Volunteering Office can help you establish these principles with community partners by creating and working through a Memorandum of Understanding and partnerships development sheets.
Community Partners

Developing community partnerships take time, effort, humility, and long-term commitment. The Office of Service-Learning and Volunteering spends much of its time and energy ensuring community partners and USM are working together in solidarity.

The most time consuming part of creating a service-learning course is finding a relevant and meaningful partner for your course is . We recommend giving yourself two years or more to create a sustainable service-learning course. Courses can come together more quickly, but we recommend a slow and steady approach to build trust between you and the community.

Establishing Community Relationships Guiding Principles

- Establish best methods to maintain communication
- Develop a timeline and track progress
- Remain flexible in making adjustments and changes along the way
- Establish a strategy for documenting progress
- Conduct progress checks about the partnership, asking open questions to gather information
- Make adaptations to course based on regular check-ins

The Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer has an internal database of community organizations and community identified issues. We can help facilitate connections between faculty and community partners by request.

Workbook Question

How will the design of your course impact the type of relationship you will have with a community partner?
Community Partner Development Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to give you a chance to condense and articulate information about your course's community partner. Please fill out the information under each category to give an overview of your community partner.

Please list the name of the community partners you would like to incorporate into, or already are a part of, your course.

Do you have a contact at that community partner? If yes, who? If no, how will you create a relationship?

What is the organization's mission, programs operated, target population, and additional relevant information? How is this relevant and meaningful to your course?

How can you ensure that open and honest feedback is given between you, students, and the community partner?
Final Thoughts

Service-learning is constantly evolving. This workbook is a brief overview about the intricacies of service-learning pedagogy. It has enough to get you started on your own. The Office of Service-Learning and Volunteering is here to work with you by request if you need us. We can provide you access to our established community partnerships, facilitate orientation and reflection in your classroom among other things.

usm.community@maine.edu

www.facebook.com/usmvolunteering/

www.instagram.com/usmvolunteering/
References


Pizga, J. (2010). *Developing your ability to foster student learning and development through reflection*. In B. Jacoby & P. Mutascio (Eds.), *Looking in, reaching out: A reflective guide for community service-learning professionals* (pp. 73-86). Boston, MA: Campus Compact.

