

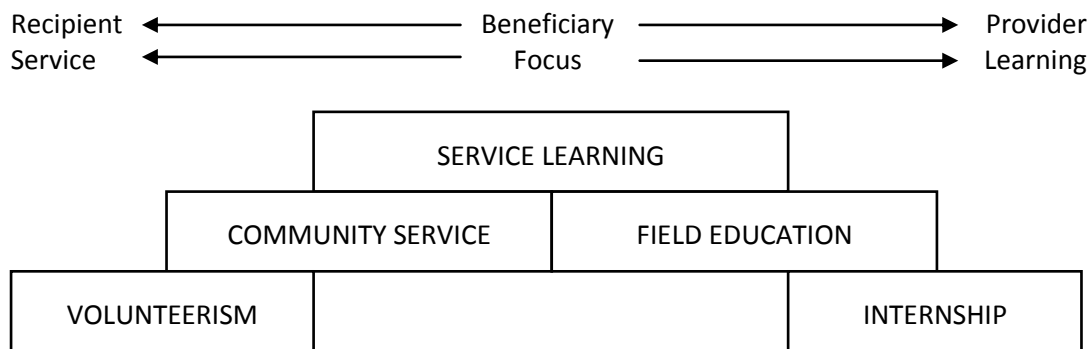
What Is Service Learning?

Definition

Service learning is a teaching method which combines community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility. Service-learning programs involve students in organized community service that addresses local needs, while developing their academic skills, sense of civic responsibility, and commitment to the community.

-Campus Compact National Center for Community Colleges

Distinctions among service programs



As a form of experiential education, 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" (1996, p. 5).

Furco, A. (1996). Service-learning: A balanced approach to experiential education. In Corporation for National Service (Ed.), *Expanding Boundaries: Serving and Learning* (pp. 2-6). Columbia, MD: Cooperative Education Association.

Principles of Good Practice in Combining Service and Learning

An effective and sustainable program:

- Engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good.
- Provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their service experience.
- Articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved.
- Allows for those with needs to define those needs.

- Clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved.
- Matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances.
- Expects genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment.
- Includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals.
- Insures that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interest of all involved.
- Is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations.

Honnet, E. P., & Poulson, S. J. (1989).
Principles of good practice for combining service and learning.
(Wingspread Special Report). Racine, WI: The Johnson Foundation.

Principles of Good Practice in Community Service-Learning Pedagogy

- Academic credit is for learning, not for service.
- Do not compromise academic rigor.
- Set learning goals for students.
- Establish criteria for the selection of community service placements.
- Provide educationally sound mechanisms to harvest the community learning.
- Minimize the distinction between the student's community learning role and the classroom learning role.
- Re-think the faculty instructional role.
- Be prepared for uncertainty and variation in student learning outcomes.
- Maximize the community responsibility orientation of the course.

Howard, J. (Ed.). (1993). Praxis I: A faculty casebook on community service learning.
Ann Arbor, MI: Office of Community Service Learning Press, University of Michigan