



Learn and Serve America's  
National Service-Learning Clearinghouse



# What is Service-Learning?

Learn and Serve America's  
National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

[www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org)



# National Commission on Service-Learning

“...a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.”



# Corporation for National and Community Service

- Promotes learning through active participation
- Provides structured time for students to reflect
- Provides an opportunity to use skills and knowledge in real-life situations
- Extends learning beyond the classroom
- Fosters a sense of caring for others



# What's in a name?

- Volunteerism
- Service-Learning
- Youth Service
- Community Service
- Peer Helping
- Experiential Education
- Community-Based Learning



# Community service example

If students remove trash from a streambed:  
they are providing a service to the community  
as volunteers



# Service-learning example

- When students remove trash from a streambed,
- analyze what they found,
- share the results and offer suggestions for the neighborhood to reduce pollution,
- and then reflect on their experience

**THAT is service-learning!**



## **Not just academic**

Service-learning can also be organized and offered by **community organizations** with learning objectives or structured reflection activities for their participants



# Many roads to service-learning

Different

- **Interpretations**
- **Objectives**
- **Contexts**

All seek

- **Combination of service objectives with intentional learning objectives**
- **Changes in both the recipient and the provider of the service**





# **Service-learning is not:**

- An episodic volunteer program
- An add-on to an existing school or college curriculum
- Completing minimum service hours in order to graduate
- Service assigned as a form of punishment
- Only for high school or college students
- One-sided: benefiting only students or only the community



# Common characteristics of authentic service-learning

- positive, meaningful and real to the participants
- cooperative rather than competitive experiences; promotes teamwork and citizenship
- addresses complex problems in complex settings rather than simplified problems in isolation
- engages problem-solving in the specific context of service activities and community challenges, rather than generalized or abstract concepts from a textbook



# Common characteristics of authentic service-learning

- students are able to identify the most important issues within a real-world situation through critical thinking
- promotes deeper learning; there are no "right answers" in the back of the book
- generates emotional consequences, which challenge values and ideas
- supports social, emotional and cognitive learning and development



# Added benefits of service-learning

National studies suggest that students in effective service-learning programs:

- improve academic grades
- increase attendance in school
- develop personal and social responsibility



# Learn more about service-learning

## [www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org)

- K-12
- Higher Ed
- Community-based
- Tribal nations





# **NSLC resources**

**[www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org)**

## Website

- Site-wide search to find resources on your topic**
- Hot Topics, Fact Sheets & Quick Guides**
- Service-Learning Lesson Plans, Syllabi & Curricula**
- 1600+ service-learning examples from LSA grantees**
- Service-learning links to related Web sites**
- Publications offered for purchase**



# **NSLC resources**

**[www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org)**

## Library

- **Books, journals, videos for LSA grantees**
- **Online library catalog available to anyone for identifying service-learning publications**
- **Research & reference service**
- **Downloadable documents & bibliographies**



# Feedback

Share your ideas with us!

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