

1-1-1998

# Service-Learning and Literacy: A Brief Introduction for America Reads Programs

Amy Cohen

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceslgen>

---

## Recommended Citation

Cohen, Amy, "Service-Learning and Literacy: A Brief Introduction for America Reads Programs" (1998). *Service Learning, General*. 190.

<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceslgen/190>

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Service Learning at DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Service Learning, General by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact [unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu](mailto:unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu).





# Service-Learning and Literacy: A Brief Introduction for America Reads Programs

by Amy Cohen

*As a regular feature of The TUTOR, we will be exploring service-learning principles and practices as they apply to America Reads programs. The following is a brief introduction to service-learning.*

The Corporation for National Service has published a small, powerful, purple pamphlet, ***Principles and Key Components of High Quality America Reads National Service Program Initiatives***. This 8-page "purple pamphlet" packs an extraordinary amount of valuable program guidance into a small space. Two of the pamphlet's seven *Principles* describe service-learning and its centrality to effective literacy programs:

## **Service Learning Principles of Quality America Reads Programs:**

- Participants learn and develop through active participation in well organized service that is conducted in and addresses challenges facing a community.
- Program recognizes the assets, strengths, and valuable experiences that service recipients and providers bring to a service relationship.
- Program helps foster civic responsibility.
- Program is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, and/or community service program, *and* with the community.
- Program enhances the academic curriculum of student participants, or the educational components of a community service program.
- Program provides structured time for the students and other participants to reflect on the service activity, both to enrich the experience for them and to improve the quality of service in the future.

## **Quality America Reads programs recognize that:**

- tutors generally have much to learn, particularly from their tutees;
- there are a wide variety of effective learning styles;
- non-academic knowledge and experience can contribute to learning reading;
- tutoring is a collaboration between the tutor and tutee, not a "pouring" of knowledge or skill from one

person to another;

- tutees' experience with (and view of) school authorities may be very different from that of the tutors;
- an effective learning relationship should take account of cultural differences, including concepts of self, community, and authority."<sup>1</sup>

These service-learning principles and concepts can and should be used in all America Reads programs with all tutors regardless of age, experience, and background. Service-learning ensures that literacy tutoring is a reciprocal, mutually-beneficial experience for both tutor and tutee. Tutors grow when they are well trained; when they learn by doing; when they use their existing skills, knowledge, and abilities; and when they reflect on their tutoring experiences in order to improve them. Tutees grow when they are well tutored; when they learn by doing; and when they have the opportunity to teach and help others, including their tutors, their peers, and their community.

## **Future Editions of The TUTOR**

Look forward to future editions of *The TUTOR* for further discussions of service-learning and literacy—ideas for implementing service-learning; examples of programs that work; tools for service-learning; and much more.

### **Resources:**

1) *Principles and Key Components of High Quality America Reads National Service Program Initiatives* (the purple pamphlet). Call 1-800-860-2684 for a copy.

### **Contacts:**

- 1) National Service Resource Center, 1-800-860-2684.
- 2) The Corporation for National Service, Learn and Serve America website: [www.cns.gov/learn/index.html](http://www.cns.gov/learn/index.html).
- 3) Learn and Serve America National Clearinghouse on Service-Learning, 1-800-808-7378.

<sup>1</sup>America Reads: Principles and Key Components for High Quality America Reads National Service Program Initiatives, p. 3.

*Amy Cohen is Associate Director for Project Management for Learn and Serve America.*

**Thanks to all programs and program staff who made this issue possible:**

Janette Hernandez, Everett Middle School, San Francisco, CA.  
Karrin Calhoun, Edison Elementary School in Eugene, OR.  
Kimberly Jordan, Seniors for Schools in Kansas City, MO.  
Earl Williams, Attucks Elementary School, Kansas City, MO.  
Margot Patzer, Byrd Academy in Chicago, IL.  
Juergen Meyer, Hands on Atlanta in Atlanta, GA.

Joy Banish, her staff and volunteers, Seniors for Schools, Cleveland, OH.  
Sharon Bernstein, Partners in School Innovation, San Francisco, CA.  
Betty Hanes, Partners/Mentoring, Knox County, TN.  
Karen McGee, Homework Hotline, Fort Payne, AL.  
Clarissa Wilder, Bank Street College, New York City, NY.