

1-1-2002

Service-Learning for Senior Corps

Corporation for National and Community Service
Corporation for National & Community Service

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

Recommended Citation

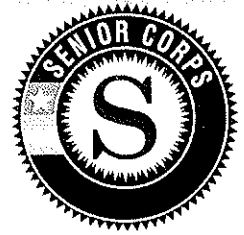
and Community Service, Corporation for National, "Service-Learning for Senior Corps" (2002). *Service Learning, General*. 331.
<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceslgen/331>

This Article 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.



SERVICE-LEARNING FOR SENIOR CORPS

Corporation for
NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE



SERVICE-LEARNING

Defined as a method:

- ▲ under which participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs that are coordinated in collaboration with the community;
- ▲ that is integrated with specific learning objectives and provides structured time for participants to think, talk, or write about what they did and saw during the actual service activity;
- ▲ that provides participants with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; and
- ▲ that enhances what is done in a program by extending participant learning beyond the organization and into the community, and helps foster a sense of caring for others.



WHY COMBINE SENIOR SERVICE & SERVICE-LEARNING?

- ▲ Service experience becomes a learning experience;
- ▲ Seniors are provided the opportunity to be engaged in learning—without going back to the classroom;
- ▲ Empowers senior volunteers;
- ▲ Encourages volunteers to use their talents, knowledge, wisdom, and experience to solve community problems;
- ▲ Encourages volunteers to explore their interests and implement new ideas.

WHAT CAN SENIOR VOLUNTEERS GAIN FROM A SERVICE-LEARNING EXPERIENCE?

- ▲ **Instrumental Learning:**
New skills for those who have to or want to return to the work world.
- ▲ **Social/Expressive Learning:**
Teaching and learning mutual respect, trust, compassion, openness, and communication between senior volunteers and the community being served.
- ▲ **Critical Reflection:**
Inward reflection of one's politics and values.

EXAMPLES OF SENIOR VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED IN SERVICE-LEARNING

- ▲ The 175,000 residents of Worcester Massachusetts come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. Senior volunteers identified the need for the community to develop an appreciation and acceptance of the diverse groups living within their city. Teams of RSVP volunteers meet for 8 week sessions at the computer lab in the Worcester Senior Center. Using the internet and the help of a local "cultural advisor" the team researches the customs and culture of the different countries represented in their community. Power Point presentations are created and the teams celebrate the rich diversity of their city by sharing what they have learned at various locations throughout the community.
- ▲ Foster Grandparents in Sherman, Texas are meeting the literacy needs of incarcerated youth and preschoolers through their Voices Across the Ages project. After training in effective mentoring and tutoring strategies, volunteers work with youth at the State School for Boys to improve their reading skills. When the boys are able to read children's books with fluency and inflection they are tape recorded by their senior volunteer. The books and tapes are then sent to the local Head Start Program where other Foster Grand Parents facilitate "Read Along" stations for children in the three year old class.

Elements of Service-Learning Include:

▲ PARTICIPANT VOICE

Participants should play an active role in the selection, design, implementation, and evaluation of the service-learning project.

▲ GENUINE NEED — MEANINGFUL SERVICE

It is important that the service-learning project meet a need that is genuine, significant, and recognized as essential by both the participants and the community they serve.

▲ CONNECTION TO LEARNING

Effective service-learning establishes clear learning outcomes that require the application of concepts, content and skills and involves participants in the construction of their own knowledge.

▲ REFLECTION

Processing or reconstructing the service experience helps to make the connection to learning. It occurs throughout the service-learning process and can take many different forms. Participants can reflect by writing, doing, telling, and reading.

▲ PREPARATION

This includes everything done to help the participants develop necessary skills and knowledge for the project. It should be performed prior to and throughout the service experience.

▲ PARTNERSHIPS

Promoting communication and interaction with the community encourages partnerships and collaboration. Partnerships can include businesses, community organizations, historical societies, colleges/universities, public or private schools, social service agencies, and National Service Programs.

▲ CELEBRATION

It is important that we celebrate to acknowledge that participants and communities have completed the project and have done a great job. It should include everyone involved in the service, as well as public officials, site personnel, family members and the media

ASSESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

If you are attempting to find service opportunities that will be interesting and challenging to volunteers, here are a few ways to find community needs or problems to address through service.

- ▲ Assets/Needs List – Have participants create a list of all of the

ASSETS: positive things in the community, as well as all of the
NEEDS: things that need to be improved, need to change, need to be made better.

- ▲ Media Search – Scan newspapers, listen to radio or TV reports for information about the community.
- ▲ Survey – Create, conduct, and share the results of a variety of surveys that will help participants gain a better understanding of the community.
- ▲ Interview – Interview various members of the community to determine their ideas for service projects as well as the role they

Reflection activities can include:

- ✓ Discussions
- ✓ Journaling
- ✓ Presentations to others
- ✓ Scrapbooks
- ✓ Evaluations

REFLECTION

WHAT IS IT?

- ▲ Structured, objective, critical thinking, sharing and learning.

WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE?

- ▲ Throughout the entire service experience—before, during, and after.

WHERE SHOULD IT BE DONE?

- ▲ Anywhere—on site, at meetings, trainings, and celebrations.

WHO SHOULD DO IT?

- ▲ Everyone—volunteers, staff, partners, and the service recipients.

WHY SHOULD IT BE DONE?

- ▲ It connects and crystallizes the real-world service and lifelong learning experience.

HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE?

- ▲ Using a variety of activities for individuals, partners, and groups.

.....

Compiled by the
Institute for Global Education & Service Learning
serving as the Atlantic Regional Center
for the National Service-Learning Exchange, a project
of the National Youth Leadership Council © 2002

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
www.servicelearning.org
or
www.seniorcorps.org