ESTABLISHING CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS: POINTS OF ENTRY

1. IDENTIFY AN EXISTING PROGRAM OR SERVICE TO TRANSFORM INTO AUTHENTIC SERVICE-LEARNING.
   - Select an activity or project already existing on campus.
   - Examine it for cross-curricular learning opportunities that meet or enhance academic standards.
   - Consult with course developers and liaise with teachers, students, and community partners.

Example: Canned Food Drive: Before students began trash cans of food, classroom activities included studying nutrition, visiting the receiving agency to identify needy foods, and writing related letters. Students held peer discussion of social issues, replacing stereotypes with an understanding of their changes in their community. Graphs of students asked and articles on impact and continued need were printed in school and community newspapers.

2. BEGIN WITH STANDARD CURRICULUM, CONTENT, AND SKILLS, AND FIND THE NATURAL EXTENSION INTO SERVICE.
   - Identify the specific content and skill areas to be addressed.
   - Select an area of emphasis that supports or adds to classroom learning and address learning standards.
   - Examine the additional learning opportunities in other subject areas.

Example, Learning History through Discussion with Elder Partners: To be better informed about current events and improve listening and communication skills, students met weekly with elders at a senior center. Shared experiences included studying new events, learning about aging, volunteering in local homes, and discussing current and public history.

3. FROM A THEME OR UNIT OF STUDY, IDENTIFY CONTENT AND SKILL CONNECTIONS.
   - Begin with a broad theme or topic, often with obvious service implications.
   - Identify specific content and skill areas.
   - Select a service application.

Example, The Individual’s Role in Society: While learning about the individual’s role in society, teachers encouraged students to consider the impact of efforts to improve the lives of others. Curriculum included raising awareness of issues facing adults and young people contributing to their communities, researching local agency needs, providing regular assistance to an agency, and publishing an informative pamphlet on the agency for young people.

4. START WITH A STUDENT-IDENTIFIED NEED.
   - Identify students’ needs.
   - Students define a problem, a need, and solutions.
   - Students lead implementation as teacher facilitators, adding learning opportunities.

Example, Turn an Empty Lot into a Community Garden: A student-initiated idea related to starting a community garden in an area of need beyond the school. With teacher guidance, academic standards were met as students communicated with a government agency reporting properly used, conducted internet research to find funding sources, partnered with special needs youth to plant garden, and donated the broccoli to a local shelter.

5. START WITH A COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED NEED.
   - Community requests assistance, perhaps through an agency that has worked with the school before.
   - Teachers, and community partners identify learning opportunities.

Example, Tutoring/Literacy: Responding to a request for service, a wide variety of books collected to benefit local youth, teachers in several grades offered to work on age-appropriate projects, older students helped younger children with and illustrated books on mutually agreed upon theme. Books were donated by youth clubs, hospitals, and drug-free facilities. Student representatives served on a city committee to plan future offerings.

6. TAKING ACTION IN OUR COMMUNITY

TAKING ACTION IN OUR COMMUNITY

STEP 1: THINK ABOUT THE NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY. MAKE A LIST.

Who
What Do What
By Who

Resources/Need

STEP 2: IDENTIFY WHAT YOU KNOW.

- Select one community need.
- What is the need?
- What is the cause?
- Who is helping?
- What are some ways we can help?

STEP 3: FOCUS ON WHAT YOU LEARN.

- What do we need to know about this community need and who is helping?
- How can we find out?

STEP 4: PLAN FOR ACTION.

- To help our community, we will:
- To make this happen, we will take on these responsibilities.

SERVICE-LEARNING IN ACTION is designed for teachers who are integrating service-learning into their classrooms to strengthen and enhance academic development. This resource may also be helpful for the application of service-learning in less formal educational environments such as after-school programs and youth groups. In these settings, staff find meaningful opportunities to experience the influence of helping in the community with an acknowledgment of what is also being learned.

Simply put, service-learning connects the academic curriculum with the inherent caring and concern young people have for their world—whether in their school campus, at a local food bank, or in distant countries. Results are memorable learning lessons for students that foster a stronger society for us all. When this becomes part of a student’s educational experience, it affords a range of choices: affording a range of experiences and opportunities, students gain the intrinsic motivation to participate in community. With service-learning, students become emerging leaders, as teachers engage and involve them in developing plans and ideas that they transform into action.

Carries meet academic standards through service-learning. Absolutely. Academics become relevant as students develop and practice skills through research, social analysis, reading fiction and nonfiction, interviewing, discussion, writing, and ultimately applying content knowledge in a real context. Along with the academic skills, teachers focusing on helping to children, assembling food packages for hurricane evacuees, restoring a wetland environment, and helping students change. They collaborate with others, experience persistence, learn responsibility, and participate in civic life. This occurs when helping is a service, a service, and the teacher is the model of this process.

When service-learning is applied with a structured system that connects classroom content, literature, and skills to community needs, students:
- apply academic, social, and personal skills to improve the community
- make decisions that have real, cost, and potential financial results
- grow in self-confidence, gain respect for peers, and increase civic participation
- develop an appreciation of school and the value of an education
- experience success no matter what their academic ability

*This guide to the basics of service-learning is a 10-page handout on course design and the American service-learning Partnership.

The Complete Guide to Service-Learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, & Social Action


For more information, contact Learn and Serve America’s National Service-Learning Clearinghouse www.servicelarning.org

RESOURCES:
- Free Spirit’s full-service-learning is a 10-pagehandout on course design and the American service-learning Partnership. 
- Life, Across America, service-learning is helping students perform better in school and improve their communities through service. By connecting classroom experience with community service projects, service-learning empowers students to design learning in their communities. www.servicelearning.org
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The four stages of service-learning: knowing the terms

**Preparation**

- Volunteer for one who contributes time without pay.
- Community service: helping the community by choice or through court requirement; may or may not be associated with academic, curricular, or reflection.
- Service-learning: a teaching method that:
  - enables students to learn and apply academic, social, and personal skills to improve the community, continue individual growth, and develop a lifelong ethic of service.
  - focuses on both the service and the learning.
  - is appropriate for all students and all curricular areas.
  - encourages cross-curricular integration.
  - helps foster civic responsibility.
  - provides students with structured time to reflect on the service experience.

**Action**

- Through direct service, indirect service, research, or advocacy, students take action that:
  - has value, purpose, and meaning.
  - uses previously learned and newly acquired academic skills and knowledge.
  - offers a safe environment to learn, to make mistakes, and to succeed.

**Reflection**

- During systematic reflection, the teacher or students guide the process using various modalities, such as role play, discussion, and journal writing. Participating students:
  - describe what happened.
  - examine the difference it made.
  - discuss thoughts and feelings.
  - place experience in a larger context.
  - consider project improvements.
  - generate ideas.
  - identify questions.
  - receive feedback.

**Demonstration**

- Students demonstrate skills, insights, and outcomes to an outside group. Methods used might include:
  - reporting to peers, faculty, parents, and/or community members.
  - writing articles or letters to local newspapers regarding issues of public concern.
  - creating a publication or Web site that helps others to learn from the students’ experiences.
  - presenting, performances and presentations.
  - creating visual art forms, such as models.

**Melting genuine needs**

- Students identify and learn about a recognized community need. Student actions are valued by the community and have real consequences while offering opportunities to apply newly acquired academic skills and knowledge.

**Voice and choice**

- Students experience significant age-appropriate challenges involving risk that require initiative, innovation, and problem solving as they demonstrate responsibility and decision making as an environment safe enough to allow them to make mistakes and to succeed.

**Collaborative efforts**

- Students participate in the development of partnerships and share responsibility with community members, parents, organizations, and other students. These relationships afford opportunities to interact with people of diverse backgrounds and experiences, understand in multiple realities, understand in multiple realities, and appreciate.

**Reciprocity**

- Students benefit from through mutual teaching and learning, action, or influence between all participants in the learning and service experience; this reciprocity extends to relationships between institutions as well as relationships between people.

**Civic responsibility**

- When young people have a role in improving society, working for social justice, and caring for the environment, they truly understand the concept of democracy. Students recognize that participation and the ability to respond to authentic needs improves the quality of life in the community, which may lead to a lifelong ethic of service and civic engagement.

Who benefits from service-learning?

- Students, teachers, the school population as a whole, and the community benefit from well-designed service-learning programs.

Benefits vary depending on program implementation and on what occurs through preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration.

These have been completed by school and community stakeholders based on the service-learning experiences.

**Through service-learning programs**

**Students may**:
- Increase motivation and desire to learn.
- Build critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills.
- Improve academic knowledge and performance, including writing and communication skills.
- Acquire responsibility and self-perception.
- Develop ability to work well with others.
- Increase empathy and appreciation for others.
- Increase self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-worth.
- Develop confidence in working in an environment.
- Become more knowledgeable about community resources available for them and their families.
- Experience civic responsibility.
- Begin to develop a lifelong commitment to public service and learning.

**Teachers may**:
- Increase student enthusiasm for learning.
- Improve communication and understanding among students.
- Improve the relevance of education for the student.
- Develop curriculum through collaboration with other teachers and community partners.
- Learn about many different community organizations and how they serve the population.
- Identify resources to enhance educational opportunities for students.
- Bring the classroom and community together.
- Build respect for a multicultural and personal and professional.
- Participate in professional development and become mentors for other teachers.

**Schools can**:
- Strengthen school development with civic and social responsibility.
- Strengthen career outreach programs.
- Develop community partnerships.
- Publicize educational opportunities available for students.
- Encourage parents and community leaders to serve as mentors.
- Give students a sense of the practical importance of what they are learning.
- Develop a sense of community, cooperation, and social responsibility.
- Help students to become active community members.
- Increase confidence in the school system.
- Improve public relations.

**Communities can**:
- Increase resources to address problems and concerns.
- Increase knowledge about and respond to community needs.
- Become more knowledgeable about school programs and needs.
- Collaborate in planning service-learning projects.
- Participate in student learning.
- Publicly acknowledge the contributions of young people.

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SERVICE-LEARNING: KNOWING THE TERMS

Service to others takes many forms and has many names and connotations. In a school context, earning different types of service helps to clarify and define service-learning as a teaching method.

- **Volunteer work** that contributes time without pay.
- **Community service** helping the community by choice or through court requirement; may or may not be associated with academic, curricular, or reflection.
- **Service-learning**: A teaching method that:
  - enables students to learn and apply academic, social, and personal skills to improve the community, continue individual growth, and develop a lifelong ethic of service.
  - focuses on both the service and the learning.
  - is appropriate for all students and all curricular areas.
  - encourages cross-curricular integration.
  - helps foster civic responsibility.
- **Provides students with structured time to reflect on the service experience.**

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF SERVICE-LEARNING

INTEGRATED LEARNING

Students learn skills and content through varied modalities; the service informs the content, and the content informs the service.

MELTING GENUINE NEEDS

Students identify and learn about a recognized community need. Student actions are valued by the community and have real consequences while offering opportunities to apply newly acquired academic skills and knowledge.

YOUTH VOICE AND CHOICE

Students experience significant age-appropriate challenges involving tasks that require thinking, initiative, and problem solving as they demonstrate responsibility and decision making as an environment safe enough to allow them to make mistakes and to succeed.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Students participate in the development of partnerships and share responsibilities and authority with community members, parents, organizations, and other students. These relationships afford opportunities to interact with diverse backgrounds and experiences, understand, respect, and appreciate.

RECIPIROCY

Students benefit through mutual teaching and learning, action, or influence between all participants in the learning and service experience; this reciprocity extends to relationships between institutions as well as relationships between people.

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

When young people have a role in improving society, working for social justice, and caring for the environment, they fully understand the concept of democracy. Students recognize participation and the ability to respond to authentic needs improves the quality of life in the community, which may lead to a lifelong ethic of service and civic engagement.

WHO BENEFITS FROM SERVICE-LEARNING?

- **Students, teachers, the school population as a whole, and the community benefit from well-designed service-learning programs.** Benefits vary depending on program implementation and on who scars through preparation, participation, reflection, and decision making. They have been completed by school and community stakeholders based on their service-learning experiences.

THROUGH SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAMS:

- **Students may:**
  - Increase motivation and desire to learn.
  - Better critically, make decisions, and solve problems.
  - Improve academic knowledge and performance, including writing and communication skills.
  - Develop ownership and self-perception.
  - Develop ability to work well with others.
  - Develop experience reciprocity.
  - Develop empathy and understanding of others.
  - Develop awareness of the impact of service learning on communities.
  - Develop an understanding of the value of service learning to society.

- **Teachers may:**
  - Observe students’ enthusiasm for learning.
  - Improve communication and understanding among students.
  - Increase the relevance of education for the students.
  - Develop curriculum through collaboration with other teachers and community partners.
  - Learn about many different community organizations and how they serve the population.
  - Identify and utilize educational opportunities for students.
  - Bring the classroom and community together.
  - Help students professionally and personally.
  - Begin to develop a lifelong commitment to public service and learning.

- **Schools may:**
  - Demonstrate development with civic and social responsibility.
  - Strengthen career outreach programs.
  - Develop community partnerships.
  - Publicize educational opportunities available for students.
  - Increase parental involvement.
  - Help students develop personal and career plans.
  - Increase opportunities for students to create and take action.
  - Help students to become active community members.
  - Increase confidence in the school system.
  - Improve public relations.

- **Communities may:**
  - Increase resources to address problems and concerns.
  - Increase the community’s leadership base.
  - Become more knowledgeable about school programs and needs.
  - Collaborate in planning service-learning projects.
  - Participate in student learning.
  - Publicly acknowledge the contributions of young people.

PREPARATION

- **With guidance from their teacher, students:**
  - Identify a need.
  - Draw upon previously acquired skills and knowledge.
  - Acquire new information through a variety of means and methods.
  - Analyze the underlying problem.
  - Collaborate with community partners.
  - Develop a plan that encourages responsibility.
  - Recognize the integration of service and learning.
  - Become ready to provide evidence of service.

- **Define realistic parameters for implementation.**

ACTION

- **Through direct service, indirect service, research, or advocacy, students take action that:**
  - Have value, purpose, and meaning.
  - Are previously learned and newly acquired academic skills and knowledge.
  - Offers a safe environment to learn, to make mistakes, and to succeed.
  - Has value, purpose, and meaning.
  - Provides students with structured time to reflect on the service experience.

REFLECTION

- **During systematic reflection, the teacher or students guide the process using various modalities, such as role play, discussion, and journal writing:**
  - Describe what happened.
  - Reflect on the difference it made.
  - Discuss thoughts and feelings.
  - Place experience in a larger context.
  - Consider project improvements.
  - Generate ideas.
  - Identify questions.
  - Receive feedback.

DEMONSTRATION

- **Demonstrate the skills, insights, and outcomes to an outside group. Methods used might include:**
  - Reporting to peers, faculty, parents, and other community members.
  - Writing articles or letters to local newspapers regarding issues of public concern.
  - Creating a publication or Web site that helps others to learn from the students’ experiences.
  - Realizing presentations and performances.
  - Creating visual art forms, such as murals.

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The four STageS of Service-learning

Service-learning: knowing the terms

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focus on both the service and the learning.
appropriately for all students and all curricular areas.
encourages cross-curricular integration.
hand tools civic responsibility.

provides students with structured time to reflect on the service experience.

INTEGRATED LEARNING
Students learn skills and content through varied modalities; the service informs the content, and the content informs the service.

MELTING GENUINE NEEDS
Students identify and learn about a recognized community need. Student actions are valued by the community and have real consequences while offering opportunities to apply newly acquired academic skills and knowledge.

YOUTH VOICE AND CHOICE
Students experience significant age-appropriate challenges (involving tasks that require thinking, initiative, and problem solving) as they demonstrate responsibility and decision making as an environment safe enough to allow them to make mistakes and to succeed.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS
Students participate in the development of partnerships and share responsibility with community members, parents, organizations, and other students. These relationships afford opportunities to interact with people of diverse backgrounds and experience, understand one another, and strengthen mutual respect.

RECIPIROCITY
Students benefit socially through mutual teaching and learning, action, or influence between all participants in the learning and service experience; this reciprocity extends to relationships between institutions as well as relationships between people.

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY
When young people have a role in improving society, working for social justice, and caring for the environment, they fully understand the concept of democracy. Students recognize participation and the ability to respond to authentic needs improves the quality of life in the community, which may lead to a lifelong ethic of service and civic engagement.

Who benefits from service-learning?
Students, teachers, the school population as a whole, and the community benefit from well-designed service-learning programs. Benefits vary depending on program implementation and on who occurs through preparation, participation, reflection, and demonstration. These benefits have been compiled by school and community stakeholders based on their service-learning experiences.

THROUGH SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAMS:

STUDENTS MAY:
• Increase motivation and desire to learn.
• Build critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills.
• Improve academic knowledge and performance, including writing and communication skills.
• Develop a balanced self-concept.
• Develop ability to work well with others.
• Experience empathy.
• Replace stereotypes with respect for others.
• Understand that adults who have different roles in society.
• Be exposed to careers options including public service.
• Become more knowledgeable about community re-resources available for them and their families.
• Experience civic responsibility.
• Begin to develop a lifelong commitment to public service and learning.

TEACHERS MAY:
• Advance students’ enthusiasm for learning.
• Improve communication and understanding among students.
• Increase the relevancy of education for the students.
• Develop curriculum through collaboration with other teachers and community partners.
• Learn about many different community organizations and how they serve the population.
• Identify resources to enhance educational opportunities for students.
• Bring the classroom and community together.
• Deepen commitment professionally and personally.
• Participate in professional development and become mentors for other teachers.

SCHOOLS CAN:
• Strengthen academic development with civic and social responsibility.
• Strengthen career outreach programs.
• Develop community partnerships.
• Publicize educational opportunities available for students.
• Enhance student-parent communication.
• Give students a sense of the practical importance of what they are learning.
• Develop more inclusive, cooperative school climate and culture.
• Help students to become active community members.
• Increase confidence in the school system.
• Improve public relations.

COMMUNITIES CAN:
• Increase resources to address problems and concerns.
• Build expertise in a particular issue area.
• Become more knowledgeable about school programs and needs.
• Collaborate in planning service-learning projects.
• Participate in student learning.
• Publicly acknowledge the contributions of young people.

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PREPARATION
With guidance from their teacher, students:
• identify a need.
• choose previously acquired skills and knowledge.
• locate new information through sources of methods.
• analyze the underlying problem.
• collaborate with community partners.
• develop a plan that encourages responsibility.
• recognize the integration of service and learning.
• become ready to provide service.
• define realistic parameters for implementation.

ACTION
Through skilled service, indirect service, advocacy, or outreach, students take action that:
• has value, purpose, and meaning.
• has previously learned and newly acquired academic skills and knowledge.
• offers unique learning experiences.
• has real consequences.
• offers a safe environment to learn, to make mistakes, and to succeed.

REFLECTION
During systematic reflection, the teacher or students guide the process using various modalities, such as role
• describe what happened.
• examine the difference it made.
• discuss thoughts and feelings.
• place experience in a larger context.
• consider project improvements.
• generate ideas.
• identify questions.
• receive feedback.

DÉMONSTRATION
Students demonstrate skills, insights, and outcomes to an outside group. Methods used might include:
• writing stories or letters to local newspapers regarding issues of public concern.
• creating a publication or Web site that helps others to learn from the students’ experiences.
• creating visual art forms, such as murals.
• observing students’ performance.
• observing new information through varied modalities and methods.
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• observing new information through varied modalities and methods.

ESTABLISHING CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS: POINTS OF ENTRY

1. IDENTIFY AN EXISTING PROGRAM OR TRANSLATE INTO AUTHENTIC SERVICE-LEARNING.
   - Select an activity or project already existing on campus.
   - Examine it for cross-curricular instructional opportunities that enhance academic standards.
   - Coordinate resources and issues with teachers, students, and community partners.

Example: Canned Food Drive: Before students bring in cans of food, classroom activities included studying nutrition, visiting the receiving agency to identify needed foods, and writing related literature. Students held peer discussion of social issues, exploring stereotypes with an understanding of the social problems they influence community rankings.

2. BEGIN WITH STANDARD CURRICULUM, CONTENT, AND SKILLS, AND FIND THE NATURAL EXTENSION TO SERVICE.
   - Identify the specific content and skill areas to be addressed.
   - Select an area of emphasis that supports or adds to classroom learning and addresses learning standards.
   - Identify potential learning opportunities or learning experiences.

Example: Learning History Through Discussion with Elder Partners:

- Begin with a broad theme or topic, often with obvious service implications.
- Identify specific content and skill areas.
- Select a service application.

Example, The Individual’s Role in Society: While learning about the individual’s role in society, teachers encouraged students to consider opportunities for service. Curriculum included reading fiction stories of adults and young people contributing to their communities, researching local agency needs, providing regular visits to an agency, and publishing in informative pamphlets on the agency for young people.

3. FROM A THEME OR UNIT OF STUDY, IDENTIFY CONTENT AND SKILL CONNECTIONS.
   - From the theme or unit of study, identify content and skill connections.
   - The relationship of these content and skill connections to the service-learning opportunity.

Example: Learning Basic Nutrition with Children’s Country Cookbook:

- To identify the specific content and skill areas to be addressed.

SELECT A SERVICE-IDENTIFIED NEED.

- Identify a student-related need.
- Identify a social need.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY WHAT YOU KNOW.

- Select one community need.
- What is the need?
- Who is helping?
- What are some ways we can help?

STEP 3: FIND OUT MORE.

- What do we need to know about this community need and who is helping?
- How can we find out?

STEP 4: PLAN FOR ACTION.

- To help our community; we will...
- To make this happen, we will...

TAKING ACTION IN OUR COMMUNITY

This guide to the basics of service-learning for K-12 practitioners is a companion piece to the Learn and Serve America video, Bring Learning to Life: Service-Learning in Action. Service-learning is the act of engaging in a service activity while learning and reflecting on the experience to enrich the academic, social, and personal lives of students. Service-learning can be employed in K-12 classrooms. These important and documented academic and social results have helped validate service learning as valuable, respected, and widely employed in K-12 classrooms. Service learning is defined as a teaching method whereby students in service activities learn, grow, develop, and demonstrate academic and social skills while working to improve their communities. Service-learning programs are part of a growing national and international movement to use volunteerism and service to enrich the academic, social, and personal lives of students and improve communities. This movement is known as service-learning. The goal of service-learning is to improve the quality of students’ educational experiences by linking academic instruction, service, and reflection. Service-learning opportunities should be designed to allow students to share the intellectual, personal, and social benefits of service-learning.

RESOURCES:
- The Corporation for National and Community Service helps people learn through service. Service-learning promotes learning and achievement by connecting classroom learning to community needs. A recent study by the Corporation for National and Community Service, Inspiring Change: Service-Learning and Civic Engagement in America’s Schools, found that service-learning has the power to engage students and help them develop critical skills for success in school and in life. The study found that service-learning helps students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, leadership skills, teamwork, and personal and social responsibility. The study also found that service-learning helps students develop a sense of civic responsibility and a commitment to service. The study concluded that service-learning is an effective tool for promoting student achievement and civic engagement.

For more information, contact Learn and Serve America’s National Service-Learning Clearinghouse at www.servicelearning.org

1-800-444-4808

BRINGING LIFE TO LEARNING: SERVICE-LEARNING IN ACTION is designed for teachers who are integrating service-learning into their classrooms to strengthen and enhance academic development. This resource may also be helpful for the application of service-learning in less formal educational environments such as after-school programs and youth groups. In these settings, staff members find many opportunities to promote the experience of helping in the community with an acknowledgment of what is also being learned.

Simply put, service-learning connects the academic curriculum with the inherent caring and concern young people have for their world—whether on their school campus, at a local food bank, or in a distant community. Results are memorable learning lessons for students that foster a stronger sense for us all. When this becomes a part of our social fabric, it represents a way of change, an approach to affordable a range of experiences and opportunities, students gain the intrinsic motivation to participate in community. With service-learning, students become emerging leaders, as teachers engage and involve them in developing plans and ideas that they transform into action.

Carries meet academic standards through service-learning. Absolutely. Academics become relevant as students develop and gain skills through research, social analysis, research, fiction and nonfiction, internships, discussions, and analysis while applying content knowledge in a real-life context. Along with the exterior, students will help after children, assembling food packages for hurricane evacuees, restocking a landfill, students change. They collaborate with others, experience perseverance, learn responsibility, and participate in civic life. This occurs through service, social service, and the teacher’s role in the model of this process.

When service-learning is introduced with an appropriate tool that connects classroom contexts, literature, and skills to community needs, students:
- apply academic, social, and personal skills to improve the community
- make decisions that have real, not hypothetical, results
- grow as individuals, gain respect for power, and increase civic participation
- develop an appreciation of school and the value of education
- experience success no matter what their academic ability level
- gain a deeper understanding of themselves, their community, and society
- develop as leaders who take initiative, solve problems, work as a team, and demonstrate their abilities while helping others

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The content of this brochure was adapted from the Complete Guide to Service-Learning: Power Point (© 2003) by Chantell M. Olini (Co-Editor), Academic Curriculum, Social Activity. This guide to the basics of service-learning for K-12 practitioners is a companion piece to the Learn and Serve America video, Bring Learning to Life: Service-Learning in Action. Service-learning is the act of engaging in a service activity while learning and reflecting on the experience to enrich the academic, social, and personal lives of students. Service-learning can be employed in K-12 classrooms. These important and documented academic and social results have helped validate service learning as valuable, respected, and widely employed in K-12 classrooms. Service learning is defined as a teaching method whereby students in service activities learn, grow, develop, and demonstrate academic and social skills while working to improve their communities. Service-learning programs are part of a growing national and international movement to use volunteerism and service to enrich the academic, social, and personal lives of students and improve communities. This movement is known as service-learning. The goal of service-learning is to improve the quality of students’ educational experiences by linking academic instruction, service, and reflection. Service-learning opportunities should be designed to allow students to share the intellectual, personal, and social benefits of service-learning.
ESTABLISHING CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS: POINTS OF ENTRY

1. IDENTIFY AN EXISTING PROGRAM OR TRANSFORM INTO ACTIVE AUTHENTIC SERVICE-LEARNING.
   - Select an activity or project already existing on campus.
   - Examine if it is cross-curricular or other content that elevates academic standards.
   - Explore the potential for civic participation. Curriculum included reading nonfiction stories of adults and young people contributing to their communities, researching local agency needs, providing regular assistance to an agency, and publishing in a newsletter or at the agency for young people.

2. BEGIN WITH STANDARD CURRICULUM, CONTENT, AND SKILLS, AND FIND THE NATURAL EXTENSION INTO SERVICE.
   - Identify the specific context and skill areas to be addressed.
   - Select an area of emphasis that supports or adds to classroom learning and addresses learning standards.
   - Examine how additional learning opportunities are found in subject areas.

   Example, Learning History Through Discussion with Elder Partners: To be better informed about current events and improve listening and communication skills, students met weekly with elders at a senior center. Shared experiences included studying new events, learning about aging, interviewing, and asking questions and answering essays, and displaying final projects through community conferences.

3. FROM A THEME OR UNIT OF STUDY, IDENTITY CONTENT AND SKILL CONNECTIONS.
   - Begin with a broad theme or topic, often with obvious service implications.
   - Identify specific context and skill areas.
   - Select a service application.

   Example, The Individual’s Role in Society: While learning about the individual’s role in society, teachers encouraged students to consider options for community service. Curriculum included reading fiction stories of adults and young people contributing to their communities, researching local agency needs, providing regular assistance to an agency, and publishing in a newsletter or at the agency for young people.

4. START WITH A STUDENT-IDENTIFIED NEED.
   - Identify student needs.
   - Students define a problem, a need, and solutions.
   - Students lead implementation as teacher facilitates, adding learning opportunities.

   Example, Transform an Empty Lot into a Community Garden: A student initiated an idea about starting a community garden in an empty lot near school. With teacher guidance, academic standards were met as students communicated with a government agency regarding property use, conducted internet research to find funding sources, partnered with special needs youth to garden, and donated the formal to a local shelter.

5. START WITH A COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED NEED.
   - Community requests assistance, perhaps through an agency that has worked with the school before.
   - Teachers, students, and community partners identify learning opportunities.

   Example, Tutoring/Literacy: Responding to a service opportunity in a city-wide book club dedicated to benefit local youth, teachers in several grades both primary and middle school age projects, older students helped younger children with and illustrated the books on mutually agreed upon themes. Books were donated by youth clubs, hospitals, and book-camp facilities. Students volunteered to serve on a city-wide plan to foster literacy in grades K-12.


TAKING ACTION IN OUR COMMUNITY

STEP 1: THINK ABOUT THE NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY. MAKE A LIST.

Outstanding programs in service-learning have leadership within the classroom, staff, or principal. This provides organizational structure and support.

When service-learning is applied with structured content that connects classroom context, literature, and skills to community needs, students:
- apply academic, social, and personal skills to improve the community
- make decisions that have real, non-hypothetical results
- grow in individuals, gain respect for peer, and increase civic participation
- develop an appreciation for school and the value of an education
- experience success no matter what their ability level

While learning about the individual’s role in society, teachers encouraged students to consider options for community service. Curriculum included reading fiction stories of adults and young people contributing to their communities, researching local agency needs, providing regular assistance to an agency, and publishing in a newsletter or at the agency for young people.

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BRING LEARNING TO LIFE: SERVICE-LEARNING

SERVICE-LEARNING IN ACTION is designed for teachers who are integrating service-learning into their classrooms to strengthen and enhance academic development. This resource may also be helpful for the application of service-learning in less formal educational environments such as after-school programs, vocational and youth groups. In these settings, staff find meaningful opportunities to influence the experience of helping in the community with an acknowledgment of what is also being learned.

Simply put, service-learning connects the academic curriculum with the inherent caring and concern young people have for their world—whether on their school campus, at a local food bank, or in a distant location. Results are memorable learning lessons for students that foster a stronger society for all. When this becomes part of the daily school routine in a variety of classes, it affords a range of experiences and opportunities, students gain the intrinsic motivation to participate in community. With service-learning, students become emerging leaders, as teachers engage and involve them in developing plans and ideas that they transform into action.

Carriers meet academic standards through service-learning. Absolutely. Academic becomes relevant as students develop and practice skills through research, social analysis, reading fiction and nonfiction, interviewing, discussing, analyzing, and applying content knowledge in a natural context. Along with the extended classroom setting and reaching out to children, forming local partnerships, and working with citizenship, students not only reinforce teacher’s standards, but they increasingly develop a range of skills and are positively impacted. Research in these settings, staff find meaningful opportunities to influence the experience of helping in the community with an acknowledgment of what is also being learned.

The following page contains an introduction to the basics of service-learning for K-12 practitioners.