



Service-Learning Toolbox

Work Pages and Checklists to Help You Get Started and Keep You Going

Each project is unique to the needs of its community. These work pages can help you clarify your goals and keep track of project details. You will need to figure out specifics on your own. You may or may not need to use each section of these work pages. You possibly will want to add to the sections to make them meaningful for your context, because these are not comprehensive. These work pages are divided into four key areas:

1. Preparation (Project Identification and Planning)
2. Action
3. Formal Evaluation
4. Online Resources

Success in developing something new takes time and practice. Reflecting, and keeping good notes as the project proceeds, will help with evaluating the process and its outcomes.

Preparation

Preparation for a service-learning project consists of two parts: project identification and planning.

Project Identification

Consider this first step as a needs assessment to determine what kinds of service will benefit the community and what skills your students can learn in this context.

Brainstorming a Project: Community Needs

Finding a meaningful and useful project may require some investigation. Are there community groups that could use a helping hand? What are some niches in your community that need development? Brainstorm with your students about possibilities. They could be aware of additional resources! The following people may have needs or ideas about possible projects. They also could have resources available, including assistance, sponsorship or expertise.

- Business people
- Personal contacts
- Community groups
- Public agencies (forest service, library)

Establishing Expectations

Who is your community partner? Your school? Another organization? To what extent will the partner work with you? Establish these mutual expectations early in the process.



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List your ideas for projects here. This is a great opportunity for you and your students to discuss the possibilities and weigh the merits of each. Projects that are not selected may be explored at another time, either as spin-offs or parts to an ongoing series of service-learning projects.

Planning

The following checklist provides an overview of the main considerations for planning your project. Your project may or may not require all of these. Description, in further detail, for each consideration follows in alphabetical order.

- | Done | Considerations |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Budget Requirements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Liability Issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Media Coverage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Scheduling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Goals and Objectives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Curriculum and Assessment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Supervision |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Participant Roles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Timeline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Celebration and Demonstration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reflection |





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Budget

Service learning does not need to be costly; however, sometimes funds are required for materials or transportation. What parts of the project require funds?

Funding Need	Estimated Cost
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$

Sources of funding include:

- Community partner sponsorships
- Grants
- Business sponsorships
- Fundraising

Liability

Talk with your school administrator about all liability requirements, which may include these:

- Permission slips, releases for all minor participants
- Drivers insurance for those providing transportation
- Site/agency insurance for community partners
- Emergency binder to take with you to community sites (with student home contact information)

Media

Will you involve the local newspaper or television station in recording the project at all? Here are ideas to consider:

- Coverage during and after the project is in action
- Letters to the editor describing your students' accomplishments

Scheduling

How much time will you need for each component of the project? Do you need blocks of time? If you teach high school, you may need to combine efforts with other teachers/classes (see Structure section). Plan each session carefully to make sure the time of your students and your community partner is well spent. Align your needs with your timeline (see Timeline section).

Goals and Objectives

Tying project goals to specific outcomes is one of the most important planning steps. Whether you start with a service idea and seek learning objectives to match, or vice versa, it is useful to clearly develop goals for both. *Again, it is paramount to involve students in this process to give them ownership of the project.*

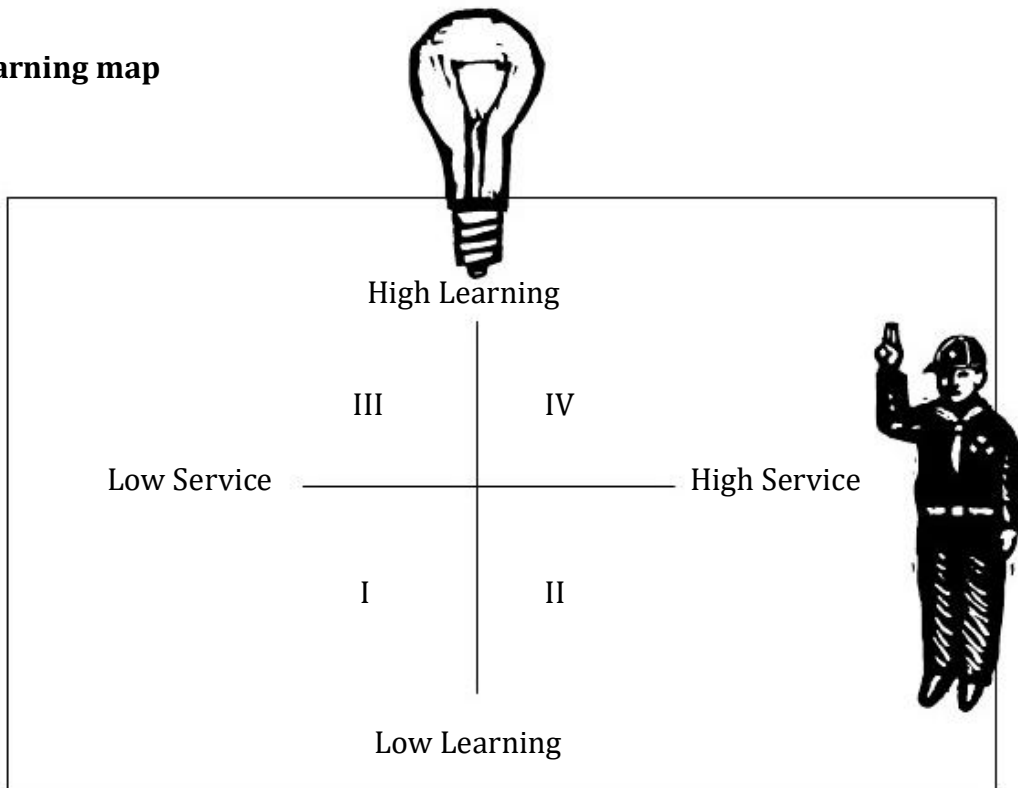


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First, define where the project falls on the service learning map below. Consider the levels of both service and learning outcomes of the project. Some projects may have high levels at one end of the continuum and lower levels at the other end. For example, students may be studying a local watershed (high learning), but they do not assist in its restoration (low service); such a project falls into quadrant III. Likewise, some projects may have high levels of service but do not consider an academic component (quadrant II).

Aim for the top right quadrant, IV, which will provide participants with a good balance of learning and service.

Service learning map



Service Goals

Benefits to students:

Benefits to the school or community partner:

Learning Goals

(Knowledge, skills and abilities)

Students will know:

Students will understand:

Students will be able to:



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Service Goals

Benefits to students:

Learning Goals

(Knowledge, skills and abilities)

Students will know:

Learning Needs Assessment

What do your students need to learn, and how can it be linked to the project? Organize this by breaking down the learning goals into specific objectives that are clearly linked to your students' curricular objectives and outcomes. The U.S. Department of Labor (1991) SCANS Report offers a framework that integrates well with the principles of service learning. It includes five competencies and a three-part foundation that span both service and learning. (Note that your project may or may not lend itself to these competencies. You may also have fewer than three objectives for each one.)

Five Competencies

1. Resources: Identifies, organizes, plans and allocates
2. Interpersonal: Works with others
3. Information: Acquires and uses information
4. Systems: Understands complex interrelationships
5. Technology: Works with a variety of technologies

Three-Part Foundation

1. Basic Skills: Reads, writes, performs math, listens and speaks
2. Thinking Skills: Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn and reason
3. Personal Qualities: Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity and honesty.

Use the tables on the following pages to establish student learning objectives and their connections to curriculum and/or state/local standards. Post these on large sheets for your students to reflect on and evaluate the project as it progresses. Students appreciate knowing exactly how they will be assessed.

Why write out the objectives?

1. It can assist you with your learning needs assessment.
2. Clear objectives guide the evaluation of project outcomes (see Formal Evaluation section).
3. Tracking the objectives is very useful if you are using grant funds for the project; it facilitates the reporting process and increases the likelihood that you will be refunded.

Finally, look at what students know already, and what they'll need to know:

1. Define students' prior knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs), and determine what other KSAs they will need beforehand to be successful in carrying out the project; and
2. Determine the KSAs that students will gain while completing the project. Will they gain these "on the job" or in class? How do these match curriculum/standards?

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Your overall goals can be outlined as follows:

Competency	Objective	Corresponding Curriculum
Resources	1.1: _____ 1.2: _____ 1.3: _____	
Interpersonal	2.1: _____ 2.2: _____ 2.3: _____	
Information	3.1: _____ 3.2: _____ 3.3: _____	
Systems	4.1: _____ 4.2: _____ 4.3: _____	
Technology	5.1: _____ 5.2: _____ 5.3: _____	
Basic Skills	6.1: _____ 6.2: _____ 6.3: _____	
Thinking Skills	7.1: _____ 7.2: _____ 7.3: _____	
Personal Qualities	8.1: _____ 8.2: _____ 8.3: _____	





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Curriculum for the Project

Service learning will provide an alternative context for your existing curriculum. There is no recipe, as each project is unique. However, including the following as you develop the learning opportunities should provide a rich learning experience:

- Design activities that stimulate acquisition and application of course concepts and skills.
- Promote high levels of thinking and the construction of knowledge.
- Communicate information and ideas, both directed and random.
- Use assessments that are integrated with instruction.

Develop multiple methods for students to demonstrate their successes. Assignments that students complete for course credit may include these products:

- Journals kept for the entire service-learning process
- Oral presentations and/or demonstrations
- Essays
- Products developed for the project, or photos of them
- Diagrams that map out solutions to the defined problem
- Research papers on relevant background information
- Student self-evaluations (see Formal Evaluation section)

Include several of these items in a portfolio for students to use during the reflection process.

Developing your project curriculum in line with your goals and objectives (see the next section) increases your chances for success. It is paramount to involve students in this process to give them ownership of the project.

Supervision

The ideal number of students for each adult varies with the age range of the students, project complexity and difficulty, and the service site. What is the student-to-teacher ratio? Is this sufficient to carry out the project goals?

Participant Roles

Roles of participants may differ from those in a traditional classroom setting. These multiple roles include but aren't limited to the following:

Participant	Multiple Roles
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planners • Risk takers • Collaborators • Independent workers • Valuable contributors
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator • Community resource expert





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Participant	Multiple Roles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public relations director • Architect of safety • Leader • Mentor
Community Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher • Leader • Supervisor • Information source
Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator • Extra support • Information source • Mentor

See the Training section for more on exploring and making the most of these roles.

Timeline

Map out the timeline for the project. Include start and end dates, on-site activities, and any classroom instruction or reflections related to the project. Projects that involve frequent site visits and/or are relatively intensive may be more difficult to pinpoint.

Training

Preservice training is a good idea for all participants. It gives participants a better understanding of expectations and procedures, and may alert you to other needs.

Participant	General Training Needs
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication • Problem solving • Base knowledge required • Cooperation and collaboration • Appreciation for community and diversity • Safety and workplace rules • Understanding expectations of community members • Philosophy and methodology • Base skills/knowledge (see Goals section)
Community Partner and Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation for student learning (include SCANS info) • Expectations for student service • Evaluation strategies • Where to go for help with challenges with students • Philosophy and methodology • Mentorship



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Tailor the general training needs to your project. Training can take place in the classroom, on-site or in smaller meeting spaces, if appropriate. It can be formal or informal.

A preliminary meeting for all participants prior to starting the project is also advised; students may prepare questions or concerns in advance.

Transportation

Does the service project take place outside of the school? If yes, how will you get there? Options: school bus, public transportation, walking (if close by), volunteers (see Liability section).

Celebration/Demonstration of Learning

Celebrating the accomplishments of your project is important, as it allows students to step back and see what they've achieved. Considerations:

- What will you demonstrate or exhibit?
 - Presentation of concepts learned during the project and how they relate to the service
 - Demonstration of the service or "product"
 - Possibilities for further service learning
- Who will be invited to the celebration? Any outside guests?
 - Parents
 - Community partner(s)
 - Students and teachers from other classes
 - Local news media
 - District-level staff
 - Chamber of Commerce or business leaders

Reflection

What are strong points in the service learning project? _____

What needs more development? What are some possible solutions? _____





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Action

Go for it! Review your plans for each session to keep on track with goals, reflect on progress and problems, and continue striving for solutions. Here are general questions to consider during the action phase:

- Is the timeline realistic?
- Have unseen needs arisen? Involve students in finding solutions. (Such reflection can assist in modifying the project, as in the case of "Fish to Goats," in the appendix).
- How are students feeling about the process?
- How are community partners feeling about the process?
- How can you maintain/strengthen the connection between service and learning?

Reflection and Evaluation During the Project

Reflection can be written, oral or large-group dialogue. It can be a self-evaluation done by students or project evaluation by the group. Here are suggested questions for reflection:

- What kinds of things are we doing? How do our actions match our goals and objectives, both as a group and as individuals (refer to posted goals and objectives)?
- Do our actions match our expectations? If not, should we revise expectations? Or revise the project?
- Are leaders emerging? Who are they?
- What is the most difficult part? The most rewarding?
- What is your main contribution?
- Did we miss something in our planning? What?
- What kind of skills and/or knowledge do we need to make this project a success?
- What have you learned?
- How have we helped solve the problem that is the basis of the service component of this project?
- Are there any other needs arising that might be a good second project?

More questions are available at

http://sites.stfx.ca/service_learning/sites/sites.stfx.ca.service_learning/files/Reflection_%20Getting%20Learning%20Out%20of%20Serving.pdf, Reflection: Getting Learning Out of Serving.



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Formal Evaluation

The formal evaluation process can be broken down into three major areas: student learning, student service and student experience. Evaluation is crucial to understanding the success of the project and giving feedback for improvement in future projects.

1. Assessing Your Students' Learning

Linking your assessment of the service and learning components to your earlier goals and objectives will give you the best picture for both summative and formative (for future projects) evaluations. It also eliminates surprises for students, if you have included them in the entire development process (see Goals and Objectives section).

There are several ways to evaluate the success of the program. Using rubrics helps you to clearly link outcomes to objectives. Students, teachers and community partners can use these to evaluate the process as a whole, the project outcomes, or individual performance (e.g., self-evaluation or teachers evaluating students). Students may also want to evaluate the community partner on willingness to work with them in positive ways.

An example of using rubrics for each participant is given below. Scoring occurs on a high-to-low scale. Scales can measure performance, satisfaction, learning and similar indicators. Scales should be clearly stated at the top of each rubric.

If you use rubrics, be sure to include a section for written comments so that students and the community partner have a chance to express additional thoughts or refer to a tangible outcome (e.g., an assignment for the project; see Curriculum section).

Check one for each objective.

4=Outstanding; 3=Very well; 2=Satisfactory; 1=Needs improvement

Objective	4	3	2	1	Comments
1.1					
1.2					
1.2					

Assignments or portfolios that are submitted for course credit can be evaluated in accordance with your normal procedures.





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2. Assessing Your Students' Service

Design an instrument to collect information from your community partner. You may want to ask about these areas:

- Perceptions of students' willingness to participate
- The extent to which students met expectations

Share and discuss the information you receive with your students.

3. Assessing the Experience for Students

Design an instrument to collect information on your students' attitudes about the project. You may ask them questions such as these:

- What do you think you learned?
- What do you think you contributed to the community?
- What are your attitudes about service learning? Have they changed?
- Do you have any other ideas for projects?
- What is your perception of the community partner and its involvement?



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Updated Online Resources

Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement

<https://servicelearning.msu.edu/>

Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement advances community engaged learning at Michigan State University and prepares students for lifelong civic and social responsibility in an increasingly diverse and complex global society.

Center for the Study of Social Policy

<http://www.policyforresults.org/youth/promote-youth-civic-engagement>

Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) aims to influence policy so that there is a clear focus on results to improve key aspects of child, family and community well-being.

Character.org

<http://character.org/key-topics/service-learning/>

Character.org is an organization of passionate people advocating for integrity, honesty, respect, and other core ethical values to be fused into education for the betterment of our nation. Below is a list of the people who are helping to achieve our goals.

Circle: The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement

<http://civicyouth.org/>

CIRCLE focuses on young people in the United States, especially those who are marginalized or disadvantaged in political life. CIRCLE's scholarly research informs policy and practice for healthier youth development and a better democracy.

Corporation for National & Community Service

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/>

The Corporation for National & Community Service is a federal agency that works with state governments and community organizations to provide opportunities for Americans of all ages to serve through Americorps, Senior Corps, and the Social Innovation Fund. Visitors can search for projects by state.

Edutopia

<https://www.edutopia.org/blogs/tag/service-learning>

In service learning, students learn educational standards through tackling real-life problems in their community. Learn how to design projects that boost civic engagement in students and help them take initiative to strengthen their community.

GenerationOn

<http://generationon.org/>

GenerationOn's mission is to provide programs and resources that support the development of caring, compassionate and capable kids and teens through service, empowering them to become changemakers in their communities and the world.





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The Generator School Network

<https://gsn.nylc.org>

The Generator School Network is an online community of youth and adult members who have discovered how they can change the world through service learning. It offers fast and easy sharing, professional development and networking.

Innovation Center for Community & Youth Development

<http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/>

The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development unleashes the potential of youth, adults, organizations, and communities to engage together in creating a just and equitable society.

Institute for Humane Education: Solutionary Program

<https://humaneeducation.org/solutionary-program/>

The Solutionary Program provides educators with the tools, strategies, and resources to teach their students to examine complex interconnected issues through a systems-thinking lens. It provides a framework and process for students to make a meaningful difference in their schools, communities, and the world in ways that are just, humane, and sustainable.

National Youth Leadership Council

www.nylc.org

The National Youth Leadership Council's mission is to create a more just, sustainable and peaceful world with young people, their schools and their communities through service learning. It provides resources and services to support young people and educators.

Youth.gov

<http://youth.gov/youth-topics/civic-engagement-and-volunteering>

Youth.gov is the U.S. government website that helps you create, maintain, and strengthen effective youth programs. Included are youth facts, funding information, and tools to help you assess community assets, generate maps of local and federal resources, search for evidence-based youth programs, and keep up-to-date on the latest, youth-related news.

Youth Service America

www.ysa.org

YSA is a coalition of local, state, national and global organizations supporting a culture of engaged youth committed to a lifetime of service, learning and leadership by advocating for the power of youth as problem-solvers and by engaging youth as volunteers, academic achievers and leaders. YSA organizes campaigns such as Global Youth Service Day (GYSD), provides funding and recognition, and offers resources and training.



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Appendix: Fish to Goats

A team of Solutions students began working on a project to help increase the numbers of Yellowstone Cutthroat trout in local streams. Through a combination of research and trial and error, the students developed some very successful in-stream incubation techniques. As they worked on the project, they realized that there were many factors contributing to the declining numbers of trout. They realized that hatching lots of eggs wouldn't help unless they dealt with some of the other factors contributing to the problem.

Student research found that one contributing factor was weed infestation. Noxious weeds were crowding out the native grasses. When it rained, the weeds were not able to hold the topsoil as well as the native grasses and the streams filled with sediment. So, what began as a fish hatching project developed into a noxious weed elimination project. Further research indicated that weeds could be eradicated using a type of Cashmere goat. At that point the weed project developed into a goat project. Students began experimenting to see if goats would eat the weeds. The goats were so good at eradicating the weeds that students began further research to discover what could be done with goat by-products such as the meat, fleece, and hides. Then the goat project developed into a spinning and weaving project involving natural fibers. Currently, students are learning how to spin and weave, and have made scarves out of the Cashmere.

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