

Overview of Service-Learning

Service learning is the formal integration of student service into learning or academic instruction. It is a method by which youth learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that

- are integrated into academic curricula or have meaningful learning components;
- meet actual community needs;
- youth help design and coordinate;
- are coordinated in collaboration with the school and community;
- provide structured time for youth to demonstrate or think, talk, and write about their service experience;
- provide opportunities to use newly acquired academic skills in “real-life” situations; and
- help foster the development of a sense of civic responsibility and caring for others.

Service learning projects includes preparation, action, reflection, demonstration, recognition, youth leadership, and reciprocity—all participants both serving and being served.

Service-learning examples

- **Elementary school students** tutor peers, teachers, and their parents on the use of computers and the Internet.
- **Middle school students** create a multi-media history of their town, interviewing residents, filming sites, and building scale models of the town representing periods in its history.
- **High school students work** as stewards of land purchased by the state. They prepare the land for public recreation use through mapping, creating trails, surveying flora and fauna, testing water and soil, writing brochures, and building outdoor classrooms.
- **Service-learning projects** also include tutoring, productions about drug and violence prevention, working with the elderly, and other practical applications of learning.