



## Service-Learning Basics

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### Definitions

#### *What is Service-Learning?*

Service-learning is a form of experiential learning where students and faculty collaborate with communities to address problems and issues, simultaneously gaining knowledge and skills and advancing personal development. There is an equal emphasis on helping communities and providing valid learning experience to students.

Service-learning requires that faculty members be actively engaged as teacher/mentors with students. Students learn new knowledge and skills that contribute to their education. Students have the opportunity to reflect critically upon their experiences. The service provided meets a need identified by the community to be served. Those receiving the service have significant involvement and control over the activities engaged in by students and faculty.

[Adapted from Ruth Marcous Bounous, ed., *New Directions: Teaching and Research* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, Working Papers Series on Service-Learning, v. 1, 1997), p.5.]

#### *Pedagogy*

National studies validate the claims that service-learning improves academic achievement across a wide variety of disciplines. Service connected to specific courses can enhance the learning of the course content. [1] Service-Learning has impact on students' personal, social and cognitive outcomes. [2] Participation in a service-learning program can improve the interaction between faculty members and students, which itself has a positive impact on learning. Furthermore, service-learning enhances students' beliefs in their personal efficacy, and can be a predictor in their further professional development. [3]

#### *Service and Citizenship*

The very idea of service suggests that not all the benefits of service-learning are reaped by faculty and students. Community service addresses a vast variety of social problems. Community service creates and strengthens connections between people, and serves the needs of the community as a whole. Service-learning can be an important part of a student's civic education, influencing such characteristics as political action skills, communication skills, critical thinking skills and tolerance.[3]

[1] Markus, Howard and King (1993). "Integrating community service and classroom instruction enhances learning: Results from an experiment" Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis 15, 410-419.

[2] Giles and Eyler (1994). "The impact of a college community service laboratory on students' personal, social and cognitive outcomes." Journal of Adolescence 17, 327-339.

[3] Eyler, Giles and Braxton (1997). "The Impact of Service-Learning on College Students," Mich. J. Community Service-Learning 4, 5-15.

## **Getting Started**

The following are sites that will assist faculty and administrators implementing service-learning programs.

### **Service-Learning (Colorado) The Home of Service Learning on the World Wide Web**

URL: <http://csf.Colorado.EDU/sl/>

Hosted by Communications for a Sustainable Future (CSF) at the University of Colorado, Boulder. The first service-learning site on the Internet and web. Includes searchable higher education service-learning listserv discussions; a comprehensive guide to university programs, courses and syllabi; organizations, publications and other resources; definitions and descriptions; benefits of Service-Learning; job opportunities; and conference calendar. [A very popular Service-Learning listserv.](#)

### **American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC) Service-Learning**

URL: <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/servicelearning/>

American Association of Community College promotes the value of Service-Learning to community colleges. The site provides links to general information on service learning and links to organizations related to service-learning and higher education.

### **American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) Service-Learning Project**

URL: <http://www.aahe.org>

The site describes publications and conferences sponsored by AAHE related to service-learning, and related service-learning links.

### **Campus Compact**

URL: <http://www.compact.org>

Campus Compact is a national alliance of colleges and universities interested in promoting service and leadership at their institutions. This site includes syllabi of courses with service dimensions, full text of and order forms to its publications, and job postings related to service and higher education.

### **Corporation for National Service (CNS)**

URL: <http://www.cns.gov>

Corporation for National Service engages more than a million Americans each year in service to help

their communities. This site provides links to general information on participation in service through Corporation for National Service sponsored programs such as AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America and Senior Corps. It also describes national partners in service, resources for program directors, employment and fellowship information, and research material.

### **Invisible College**

URL: <http://www.selu.edu/orgs/ic/index.htm>

The Invisible College is an association of educators in higher education that fosters and promotes community service-learning. Its web page supplies background information on the organization, links to related sites, and information about its upcoming conference.

### **Learn and Serve America Exchange**

URL: <http://www.lsaexchange.org/>

The Learn and Serve America Exchange, led by the National Youth Leadership Council supports service-learning programs in schools, colleges and universities, and community organizations across the country through peer-based training and technical assistance. If you need assistance implementing service-learning programs, have questions, or simply want to speak with someone who has "been there," you can utilize the Exchange as resource by calling toll-free 1-877-572-3924.

### **National Dropout Prevention Center**

URL: <http://www.dropoutprevention.org>

National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University serves as the Regional Information Center for the southern portion of the country, providing information about programs in eleven southern states. They also provide access to the National Dropout Prevention Network, a large organization that provides information on dropout prevention, and also the use of service-learning programs to help young people achieve success in school.

Clemson University, 209 Martin Street, Clemson, SC 29634-0726

Phone: (864) 656-2599; Fax: (864) 656-0136

Contact: Marty Duckenfield

### **National Service-Learning Clearinghouse**

URL: <http://www.servicelearning.org>

The Learn & Serve America National Service-Learning Clearinghouse is a comprehensive information system that focuses on all dimensions of service-learning, covering kindergarten through higher education school-based and community-based initiatives.

### **National Service Resource Center**

URL: <http://www.etr.org/nsrc>

The National Service Resource Center (NSRC) is a training and technical assistance provider to programs funded by the Corporation for National Service. This site contains a resource library, a master calendar, resource guides, online documents, sample forms collection, newsletters, and AmericaReads resources.

### **Northwest Regional Laboratory**

URL: <http://www.nwrel.org/cersc/index.html>

The Community and Education Volunteer Services Center provides information, tools, networks and training to support the development of effective and sustainable community service, volunteerism, and partnerships among educational, nonprofit, and public organizations.

### **Points of Light Foundation**

URL: <http://www.pointsoflight.org>

The Points of Light Institute meets the practical learning needs of individuals and organizations that seek to engage volunteers in community service efforts. The Foundation's mission is to engage more people more effectively in volunteer community service to help solve serious social problems.

### **ServeWeb**

URL: <http://www.ostberg.org/serveweb>

An on-line resource to help the national and community service network more effectively use the Internet, includes a list of state service sites (state commission sites, service-learning sites and more), tips on how to build a model state service site (with links to the best state commission sites in the country), technology resources geared toward non-profits, links to sites that offer free E-mail, free chat rooms and other free tools, and outstanding E-mail newsletters and mailing lists for the service and non-profit community.

### **101 Ideas of Combining Service and Learning , FIU**

URL: <http://www.fiu.edu/~time4chg/Library/ideas.html>

This site contains a list of ideas for combining service and learning within various disciplines (listed in alphabetical order).

### **Administrative Issues**

### **Service-Learning Internet Community (SLIC)**

URL: <http://www.slic.calstate.edu>

The Service-Learning Internet Community (SLIC) is a user-friendly, interactive tool on the web for sharing information among service-learning practitioners. Service-learning practitioners from the California State University developed this site to promote and facilitate the exchange of resources, questions, answers, and ideas among faculty, administrators, community partners, and students. You may sign up as a member of this on-line community (membership is not limited to members of the California State University system).

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### **Legislative History of Service Learning:**

### **History of the National Community Service Act of 1990**

(from the Learning in Deed site: <http://www.learningindeed.org/policy/federal/hstryncm.html>)

In the late 1980s, a federal initiative brought new force to the national grassroots youth service movement. After George Bush's election to the presidency in 1988, the White House Office of National Service was created. This led to substantially increased visibility and support for youth service and citizen volunteerism in general during President Bush's first term.

In 1989, Senator Edward Kennedy, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Relations, crafted the National and Community Service Act of 1990 with the help of leaders in the independent service movement.

After prolonged negotiations, President Bush and the bipartisan coalition agreed to the subtitles of the act, including establishing a national commission that administer the act.

The end result was the National and Community Service Act of 1990, which authorized grants to schools to support service-learning (Serve America program, later re-named Learn and Serve America) and demonstration grants for national service programs to youth corps, nonprofits, and colleges and universities.

When Bill Clinton was elected president in 1992, he set out to expand the federal commitment to national service. As one of his first major policy efforts, he signed into law the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 for the purpose of increasing the opportunities for Americans of all ages to serve their communities. This act created the Corporation for National Service to help achieve these goals.

(From the Corporation for National Service web site: <http://www.cns.gov/about/index.html>)

The Corporation for National Service was created with bipartisan support from Congress, the President, and community groups nationwide in 1993.

The Corporation merged the work and staff of two predecessor agencies, ACTION and the Commission on National and Community Service.

The rapidly expanding grassroots service movement led to the passage of the National and Community Service Act of 1990. This legislation, signed by President Bush, created both a private, nonprofit organization -- the Points of Light Foundation, and a new independent federal agency, the Commission on National and Community Service.

Through grants and national coordination, the Commission supported four streams of service: service-learning programs for school-aged youth, higher-education service programs, youth corps, and national service demonstration models.

In 1992, a bipartisan group of Senators, working with the Bush Administration, drafted legislation to create the National Civilian Community Corps as a demonstration program to explore the possibility of using post-Cold War military resources to help solve problems here at home. The NCCC, enacted as part of the 1993 Defense Authorization Act, is a residential service program modeled on the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps and the United States military. The NCCC became a part of a network of national service programs when the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 was signed into law.

In the 1992 presidential campaign, then Governor Bill Clinton made the expansion of national service a key proposal of his campaign. The National and Community Service Trust Act was drafted by the Administration with the assistance of Congress and introduced by a bipartisan coalition of Members of Congress in June of 1993. The bill passed nine months later and was signed into law on September 21, 1993. The legislation created the Corporation for National Service to administer AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and the other national service programs.

Since 1996, the GOP-led Congress has increased the Corporation's annual appropriation from \$600 million to over \$731.6 million for fiscal year 2000. The Administration has requested over \$850 million for the Corporation for fiscal year 2001 to expand service opportunities for all Americans.

### **The Corporation for National Service**

(<http://www.nationalservice.org/resources/cross/index.html>)

Legislative History section has pdf documents and links to the following legislation:

Regulations of the Corporation for National Service Under 45 CFR Chapter XXV

The National and Community Service Act of 1990 [As amended through December 17, 1999, P.L. 106-170]

The Domestic Volunteer Service Act [as amended by Public Law 106-170, approved December 17, 1999]

### **Service Learning Historical Time Line:**

1910

American philosopher William James envisions non-military national service in his essay "The Moral Equivalent of War."

1933-1942

Through the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), created by Franklin D. Roosevelt, millions of young people serve terms of 6 to 18 months to help restore the nation's parks, revitalize the economy, and support their families and themselves.

The GI Bill links service and education, offering Americans educational opportunity in return for service to their country.

1961

President John F. Kennedy establishes the Peace Corps, with authorizing legislation approved by Congress on September 22, 1961.

1964

As part of the "War on Poverty," President Lyndon B. Johnson creates VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), a National Teacher Corps, the Job Corps, and University Year of Action. VISTA provides opportunities for Americans to serve full-time to help thousands of low-income communities.

1960s

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program are developed to engage older Americans in the work of improving the nation.

1970

The Youth Conservation Corps engages 38,000 people age 14 to 18 in summer environmental programs.

1976

California Governor Jerry Brown establishes the California Conservation Corps, the first non-federal youth corps at the state level.

1978

The Young Adult Conservation Corps creates small conservation corps in the states with 22,500 participants age 16 to 23.

1980s

National service efforts are launched at the grassroots level, including the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (1984) and Campus Compact (1985), which help mobilize service programs in higher education; the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (1985), which helps replicate youth corps in states and cities; and Youth Service America (1985), through which many young people are given a chance to serve.

1989-1990

President George Bush creates the Office of National Service in the White House and the Points of Light Foundation to foster volunteering.

1990

Congress passes, and President Bush signs, the National and Community Service Act of 1990. The legislation authorizes grants to schools to support service-learning and demonstration grants for national service programs to youth corps, nonprofits, and colleges and universities.

September 1993

President Bill Clinton signs the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, creating AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National Service. VISTA becomes part of AmeriCorps.

1994

Congress passes the King Holiday and Service Act of 1994, charging the Corporation for National Service with taking the lead in organizing Martin Luther King Day as a day of service.

April 1997

The Presidents' Summit for America's Future, chaired by General Colin Powell, brings together President Clinton, former Presidents Bush, Ford, and Carter, and Mrs. Reagan to recognize and expand the role of AmeriCorps and other service programs in meeting the needs of America's youth.

1997

AmeriCorps expands by introducing the Education Awards Program, which allows more organizations to join the service network -- nonprofits, faith-based organizations, colleges and universities, welfare-to-work programs, and other groups.

Current Legislative Developments:

AACC Legislative Issues site:

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/leg/legislative.htm>

State Policy (from Learning in Deed site): <http://www.learningindeed.org/policy/state/>;  
<http://www.learningindeed.org/policy/state/exstngpl.html>)

California ( <http://www.learningindeed.org/policy/state/caexist.html> )

Maine ( <http://www.learningindeed.org/policy/state/meexist.html> )

Minnesota ( <http://www.learningindeed.org/policy/state/mnexist.html> )

Oregon ( <http://www.learningindeed.org/policy/state/orexist.html> )

South Carolina ( <http://www.learningindeed.org/policy/state/scexist.html> )

History of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act  
( <http://www.learningindeed.org/policy/federal/hstryelm.html> )

State Education Agency K-12 Service-Learning Network  
( <http://www.SEANetonline.org/> )

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