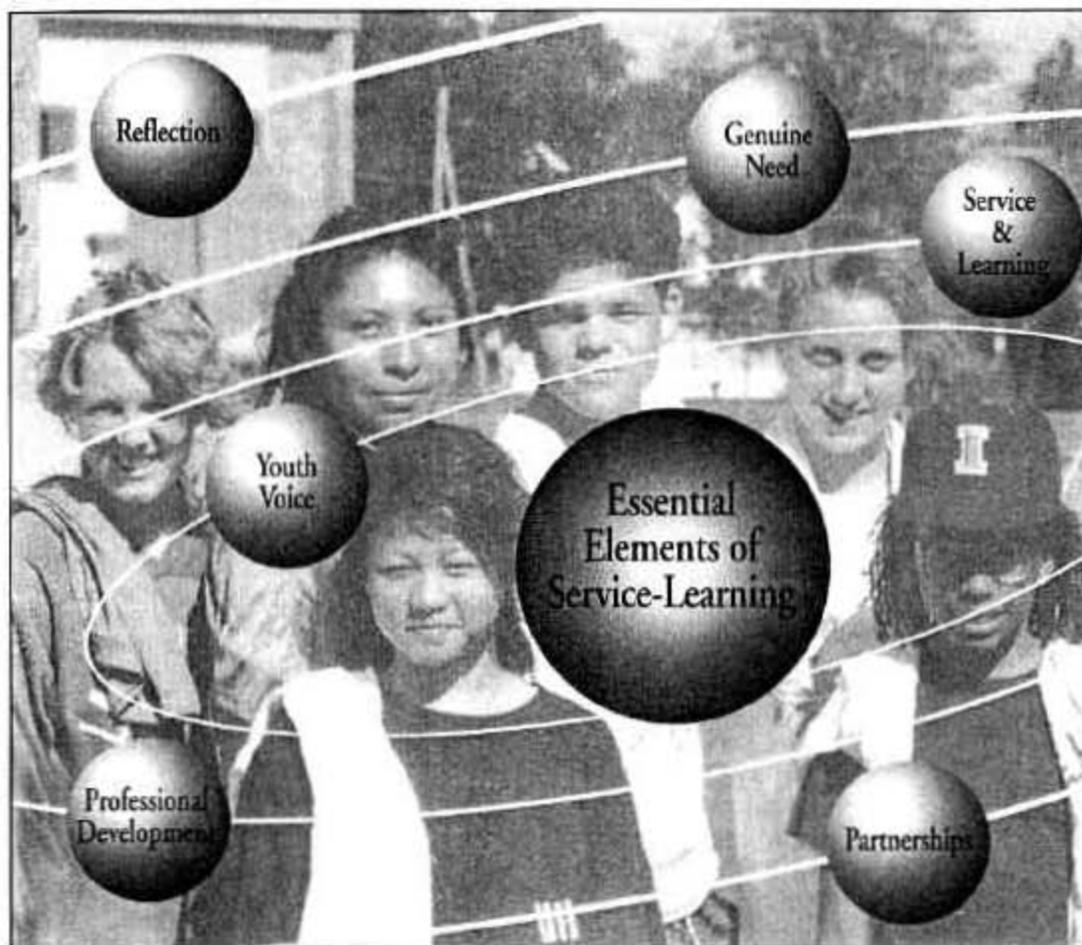


NATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING COOPERATIVE

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF SERVICE-LEARNING



FOR

- EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
- ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT



REVISED EDITION
APRIL 1999

PREFACE

I am delighted to share with you this document from Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Cooperative. The long-term goals of Learn and Serve America are to:

1. Identify, enhance, and promote the direct and demonstrable "getting things done" outcomes of student service and service-learning.
2. Facilitate the progression from community service to service-learning within Learn and Serve America, as well as across the streams of national service.
3. Identify, enhance, and promote the academic and personal development outcomes of service-learning.
4. Increase participation of students in service-learning from kindergarten through higher education.
5. Enhance the civic education component of service-learning and recognize civic responsibility as a valued outcome.
6. Facilitate the development of service-learning as a professional field that recognizes youth as leaders in the design and implementation of effective programs.

The Cooperative's approach to "Essential Elements for Service-Learning" addresses our vision for the field of service-learning, especially as stated in goals #2 and #6. The service-learning field has grown tremendously in the last few years; and the Essential Elements culled from that collective experience will be extremely useful to new practitioners just entering the field, as well as to seasoned "old hands" seeking benchmarks by which to measure their progress. For everyone interested in quality service-learning, the document should be a source of stimulating ideas that facilitate and support our professionalism.

Marilyn W. Smith, Ph.D.
Director, Learn and Serve America
Corporation for National Service

Fred Newmann and Gary Wehlage (1995) point out that educational innovations, just like hammers and saws and sandpaper, are tools whose value depends on how skillfully they are used. Service-learning is potentially a power tool for teachers seeking to re-engage student interest in learning, foster significant student achievement, develop successful citizens and workers, and reinvigorate community life.

The challenge, of course, is to know what it looks like when individuals and organizations effectively use service-learning. What are the purposes, conditions, and techniques under which service-learning can best contribute to a quality education—one rich in skills, knowledge, meaning, and long-term benefits both to individuals and to community?

This document represents the best current thinking of many people nationwide to answer that question. Its preparation has been hard work, yet good, pushed forward by the spirit and practice of collaboration that itself is central to service-learning. We hope it will be used by individuals and organizations interested in the impact of service-learning to discuss, challenge and improve their practice.

Pamela Toole, Ph.D.
Essential Elements Project Director, and
Director of Professional Development,
The National Youth Leadership Council

Newmann, F.M. & Wehlage, G.G. (1995). Successful School Restructuring.

INTRODUCTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is Service-Learning?	4
Understanding and Applying the Essential Elements.	6
Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning Practice	9
Essential Elements for Organizational Support of Service-Learning	21
Examples of Service-Learning	28
The National Service-Learning Cooperative Partners	33
Acknowledgement of Contributors	34
Example Request Form	35

WHY THIS DOCUMENT?

As service-learning practice and programs proliferated in the second half of the 1990s, the National Service-Learning Cooperative reported that educators expressed a need for technical assistance to systematize what had been learned about the essential elements of effective practice.

Practitioners were looking for a way to assess and deepen their work. They wanted some way to describe what exemplary practice would look like, as well as, suggest where a novice would start. A second, but equally important, need was to have something that would provide a guide for the important policies, resources, professional development, and organizational structure needed to support and ultimately sustain service-learning from an organizational perspective. This document is a response to these requests. It includes:

- 1) a definition and introduction to service-learning;
- 2) a description of how to use the Essential Elements and their accompanying benchmarks;
- 3) two sets of Essential Elements (one for effective service-learning practice and the second for organizational support for service-learning) each accompanied by benchmarks; and
- 4) a list of program examples to accompany each Essential Element.

WHO CONTRIBUTED THE IDEAS FOR THIS DOCUMENT?

The Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning Practice were proposed and written with the support and input of the National Service-Learning Cooperative, a group of 13 organizations funded by the Corporation for National Service to provide technical assistance across every region of the United States in the area of service-learning. This initiative was conducted by the National Youth Leadership Council which is the coordinating organization for the Cooperative. (See pg. 33 for a list of the Cooperative Partners).

The Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning Practice were identified by teachers, community educators, school administrators, community-based personnel and state Learn and Serve directors who had extensive personal and system wide experience with teaching and implementing service-learning. The original vision for this document came from the July 1996 meeting of the National Service-Learning Cooperative Partners.

An initial meeting was held at the 1997 Missouri Learn and Serve Conference. A second critical meeting was sponsored by the Community Service-Learning Center of Massachusetts with representatives from each of the New England States. A third meeting was held in the Mid West Region with representatives from Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

Additional input was given by individuals who agreed to read the document and offer us their comments, including ongoing feedback from each of the Cooperative Partners. A significant contribution was made through Compass Institute's first draft of an Essential Elements document with accompanying indicators. The primary writing team included the Project Director, Pamela Toole and veteran service-learning practitioners, Dan Conrad and Rick Nelson.

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WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

SERVICE-LEARNING PROVIDES EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES:

1. *under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated in collaboration with school and community.*
2. *that are integrated into the students' academic curriculum or provides structured time for a student to think, talk, or write about what the student did and saw during the actual service activity.*
3. *that provide a student with opportunities to use newly-acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities.*
4. *that enhance what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community and helps to foster the development of a sense of caring for others.*

National Community and Service Act of 1990

Service-learning is an educational method that involves students in challenging tasks that meet genuine community needs and requires the application of knowledge, skills and systematic reflection on the experience.

National Youth Leadership Council

Service-learning shares a great deal with all other educational methods. It aims to promote the goals of high academic achievement, productive citizenship, higher level thinking, and independent judgment. Students in a service-learning curriculum read and write, conduct research, and even listen to lectures. But there is one element that clearly and distinctly sets service-learning apart. At its very core is the emphasis on efforts to meet genuine community needs, to make a difference

in ways both students and the community see as important and worthwhile.

Without that, service-learning is not so different from other school experiences, rather like a field trip or simulation game. It may be more engaging than the usual fare, but not fundamentally different or more important.

With that young people have opportunities to work and interact with people of diverse backgrounds.

With that emphasis, however, the other elements in the model are energized. Students have a clear reason to accept tasks and roles that challenge them, that stretch their conception of what they can do and who they can be.

With that comes heightened motivation to acquire the knowledge and perfect the skills required to successfully meet the task. The experiences are real, significant, personal, and meaningful events on which to reflect.

With that comes heightened motivation to acquire the knowledge and perfect the skills required to successfully meet the tasks. The experiences are real, significant, personal, and meaningful events on which to reflect.

Service-learning as an educational method implies a unique perspective on the larger issues concerning schools, young people and the place of both in society. Service-learning offers, perhaps even demands, a unique vision of **the role of schools in the community**. The school is not seen as set apart like a moated fortress but as a fully participating member of the community. From the perspective of service-learning, the school is not just a place where students come to learn, but a place from which they go back into the community to apply what they have learned, to return some portion of the benefits they have received. Likewise the community is seen as an educational partner by the school with valued expertise and resources.

Alec Dickson, British pioneer in service-learning tells the story:

A traveler inquired at a gas station about the location of a particular high school. The name of the school being oddly pronounced, the person questioned looked quizzical then, brightening, said "Ah, you must mean... That's the place that does so much for the old people" and proceeded to give the directions.

When applied to K-12 age students, service-learning also offers and demands a unique vision of **the role of youth in society**. The familiar adage that "youth are our greatest resource" often implies little more than that they will grow up some day and contribute something in some distant, indeterminate future. The special vision of service-learning is that children and youth are a resource now, that young people are not just preparing to be productive citizens but are capable of productive participation now. They can simultaneously utilize their talents and energy to contribute today and develop skills and attitudes that will foster a more committed and participatory citizenry tomorrow. Active citizenship is not a mere textbook abstraction, but is a way of being, a practice, a commitment, even a habit, that can be, ought and must be entered into and made a part of one's life as early as possible.

As I walked through the hallway [to the service assignment] I realized what I had gotten myself into...a challenge. But as I step through the door I transform from student to person and I know I can do it....Well, things turned out great. Now I return to school and become student again.

(From journal of Debbie Witsoe, high school service-learning participant)

WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-learning offers and demands a unique vision of **what education is for**. No one has phrased it better than Herbert Thelen (*Education and the Human Quest, 1960*) in affirming the fundamental purpose of education to be “the humane application of knowledge” to the needs of society and the hurts of individuals. Service-learning views education as more than a rite of passage, a ticket to higher education, or a means to getting a leg up on the competition. It is also about changing that world. Service experiences can heighten a person’s confidence in their capacity to make a difference and can spark a sense of obligation to reach out to others in compassion and love. Service-learning shares as deep a commitment as any other educational method to the value of mastering basic skills and attaining academic excellence, but it asks for more. It values these not as ends in themselves, but as the means to nurturing thoughtful, skilled, productive and participating citizens. By students constructing their own knowledge and wisdom and developing, for themselves, more effective and complex ways to understand and act in the world, their learning is enhanced.

That service-learning can be transformative is not a wishful hope or article of faith, but a conviction well-grounded in educational theory. It is an outcome supported by extensive research and evaluation. A vast array of qualitative and quantitative studies have been consistent, if not conclusive, in documenting the power of service-learning when effectively implemented to promote the personal, social, and academic/intellectual development of children and youth. Study after study has shown service-learning to be effective in promoting growth in a wide variety of domains that include academic learning (particularly math and reading through tutoring), more complex thinking and problem solving skills, heightened self-esteem, deepened sense of social responsibility, and greater inclination of youth to participate actively in their community. More areas of impact could be delineated, but the point here is not to survey the literature, but to emphasize that service-learning touches many dimensions of human capacity and character. It may even be, that it is this very

combination of effects which most accounts for the power of the practice. The evidence suggests that well-designed service-learning programs impact not only how much is learned, but the motivation to learn, the confidence that one can learn, the development of the capacity to contribute, and the commitment to do so.

Service-learning is a practice with a long and rich lineage from which to learn. Many of today’s efforts parallel those of the late 1960s and early 1970s when service-learning emerged in thousands of K–12 classrooms and on numerous college campuses. These efforts were supported by conferences, journals, workshops, and public and private funds. Further inspiration came from national organizations such as the National Center for Service Learning (affiliated with VISTA under ACTION) and the National Commission of Resources for Youth. These efforts, in turn, built upon those of the early 1950s. One example of these efforts was the massive Citizenship Education Project centered at Columbia University with President Eisenhower as its honorary chair. Those efforts built upon reform efforts of the 1930s. Books such as *Youth Serves The Community* (Hanna, 1937), *Dare The Schools Build a New Social Order?* (Counts, 1932), and various works of John Dewey reflected the commitment that schools should and could be a force for social change, should encourage the desire to make a difference, and should provide the knowledge, skills, and opportunity to effectively do so. Service-learning roots can be traced back further to the “Project Method” of the 1920s where emphasis was placed on learning that took place outside the classroom through projects designed to meet genuine community needs.

The modern educational roots of service-learning can be tied to research in cognitive and developmental psychology in recent times. The work of Jean Piaget, Lauren Resnick, Howard Gardner, David Perkins and several others has shown that many students who pass traditional classroom exams do not completely understand the information, do not remember it, and

could not use it outside of the classroom. In response, methods like service-learning, teaching for understanding, performance-based assessment, authentic pedagogy (Fred Newmann) and apprenticeships have received increasing attention. Each of these tries to create thoughtful and meaningful contexts in which students can be motivated to not only acquire new knowledge, but retain and creatively transfer what they have learned throughout their lifetime to be successful citizens and workers.

The purpose of this document is to spell out, in as detailed fashion as seems practical, what experience has shown to be the Essential Elements of service-learning. It includes both the practice and organizational support aspects. Its focus is not on the “why”, but on the “how” of service-learning. While the “why” has been touched on in this introduction, the more complete case for service-learning would have to include theoretical models of how learning and development take place, a survey of research on how service effectively promotes learning and development, and a linkage to that peculiarly American vision of education as a vehicle for individual and social transformation. But even with all of that it may still be that the most persuasive case for service-learning lies in the personal testimony of the untold numbers of teachers and students who have experienced the power of learning through experience and the power of learning experiences that truly make a difference. The difference made is not just in the students and the corners of the world where their efforts are applied, but also in the teachers who gain from their efforts the satisfaction of guiding something that is experienced as powerfully transformative by the students and worthwhile by the community. This is why people become teachers and what students and teachers hope for in their lives—that who they are and what they do makes a difference, matters, is worthwhile, and is recognized as being worthwhile. It is no stretch to argue that what is most important in the lives of people of all ages ought also to be an important goal in the educational methods they experience and practice.

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE SERVICE-LEARNING PRACTICE AND ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

WHO ARE THEY FOR?

The Essential Elements are written to apply to the work of K-12 teachers using service-learning as a method of instruction and to the organizations where service-learning is being implemented. They may also be useful to administrators, parents, community-based organizations, foundations and teacher education programs interested in effective service-learning practice and the organizational support needed to sustain such practice.

WHAT DO THEY ADDRESS?

The Essential Elements address the issue of deepening and broadening the quality of service-learning practice and organizational support. They are meant to help define what it looks like when people and the broader organization in which they work implement quality service-learning. They provide what James Toole calls a "professional development map," whereby educators can locate the level of their current work and chart specific areas of progress that they would like to make. It is hoped that they will provoke self-assessment, reflection, and debate among practitioners as they make judgments about effective practice and the actual impact of their work.

HOW CAN THEY BE USED?

The elements might be used in a number of ways: 1) teachers and administrators can self-assess and reflect on their own practice; 2) teachers, administrators and other service-learning practitioners can use them as general guidelines in designing and carrying out service-learning work; 3) staff developers can use them to orient newcomers to the field; 4) teacher educators can use them to help orient new teachers to this method of instruction; and 5) administrators, foundations, parents and other groups can use them in order to make a general assessment of quality teaching in this area.

UNDERSTANDING THE BENCHMARKS

Each Essential Element is accompanied by a benchmark scale that ranges from 1 to 4. Level One is basically community service with an occasional element of service-learning. Level Two has some, but not all, of the Essential Elements of service-learning. Level Three meets the needed Essential Elements for service-learning. Level Four represents an exemplary and, in some cases, even idealistic level of practice. The benchmarks are meant to provide a scale for dialogue about where people are in the practice of a specific element.

It may be acceptable to be at Level Two on any particular scale given your progress in implementing service-learning, or the lack of organizational support in a given school or district. The benchmarks should provide an

opportunity for further insight and understanding into service-learning practice, but they are not meant for a mechanical application which may not fit a particular situation. They are teaching and organizational benchmarks, not content benchmarks. (e.g. They describe successful teaching and not the specific skills and knowledge that students should know.)

THE WISE APPLICATION OF THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

We want to help raise the quality of service-learning without standardizing teachers' work. Service-learning is successful partly because it is a flexible model of teaching that can be applied in a variety of settings for different purposes. The benchmarks are meant to be applied seriously but flexibly. For instance, student voice is a valued component because it provides opportunities for critical thinking and youth development. The amount of student voice in a single project, however, may vary depending on the particular project, the developmental stage of the youth, context, time, and learning outcomes. Skillful educators consciously mix and match service components in any one project to produce substantial learning and service outcomes. We strongly recommend that all individuals utilizing this document participate in a professional development workshop which covers the theory and practice of service-learning.

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE SERVICE-LEARNING PRACTICE AND ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS:

All elements have embedded within them a set of assumptions.

The basic assumptions of these elements are the following:

- 1) Both service and learning outcomes are critical to the integrity of effective practice.*
- 2) There is a link between service-learning pedagogy, as described in these Essential Elements, and significant student learning and personal development.*
- 3) Service-learning can provide a wide variety of outcomes from academic goals to citizenship to work skills to personal development, but they will not happen automatically through mere service involvement. Program design must consciously address the intended outcomes.*
- 4) A high quality and enduring service-learning program requires support through leadership, compatible structures, and adequate distribution of resources.*



ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE SERVICE-LEARNING PRACTICE

CLUSTER I: LEARNING

- ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 1:** Effective service-learning requires the application of concepts, content, and skills from the academic disciplines and actively involves students in their own learning.
- ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 2:** Effective service-learning engages students in tasks that challenge and stretch them cognitively and developmentally.
- ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 3:** Effective service-learning uses assessment as a way to enhance student learning as well as to document and evaluate how well students have met content and skills standards.

CLUSTER II: SERVICE

- ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 4:** Effective service-learning engages students in service tasks that have clear goals, meet genuine needs in the school or community, and have significant consequences for themselves and others.
- ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 5:** Effective service-learning employs systematic evaluation of the service effort and its outcomes through formative and summative methods.

CLUSTER III: CRITICAL COMPONENTS THAT SUPPORT LEARNING & SERVICE

- ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 6:** Effective service-learning seeks to maximize student voice in selecting, designing, implementing, and evaluating the service project.
- ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 7:** Effective service-learning values diversity through its participants, its practice, and its outcomes.
- ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 8:** Effective service-learning promotes communication and interaction with the community and encourages partnerships and collaboration.
- ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 9:** Effective service-learning prepares students for all aspects of their service experience including understanding their role, the skills and information required, safety precautions, and sensitivity to the people with whom they will be working.
- ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 10:** Effective service-learning includes student reflection as a central force in the fulfillment of curricular objectives and is done before, during, and after service using multiple methods that encourage critical thinking.
- ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 11:** Effective service-learning acknowledges, celebrates, and further validates students' service.

CLUSTER I: LEARNING

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 1: Effective service-learning requires the application of concepts, content, and skills from the academic disciplines and actively involves students in their own learning.

	LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III	LEVEL IV
1.1 OUTCOMES ARE CLEAR AND LINKED TO CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES	Learner outcomes are vague and only loosely related to the central curricular objectives.	Learner outcomes are more clearly stated and at least one is linked to a central curricular objective.	Multiple learner outcomes, expressing high expectations for student achievement are clearly stated and explicitly linked to the central curricular objectives.	Level III, plus accommodates for, even expects, learner outcomes that exceed and go beyond the boundaries of pre-established curricular objectives.
1.2 ACTIVITIES STIMULATE THE ACQUISITION AND APPLICATION OF COURSE CONCEPTS AND SKILLS	The activities relate only incidentally to central class objectives or are an add-on to the regular course.	Some activities are designed to relate to central disciplinary content and students are asked to apply at least some core concepts and skills in the service work.	All activities directly relate to central objectives. Deep application of core concepts and skills is elicited by the service and reflection on it.	Level III, plus the service work stimulates the acquisition and use of a wider range of skills and concepts than are required for the course.
1.3 HIGH LEVELS OF THINKING AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE ARE PROMOTED	Students are not asked or required to use more than lower level thinking skills to carry out the service project.	Students must access and interpret some new information and perspectives in order to carry out the service work.	Students are required to apply higher level thinking skills and more complex information to produce new meaning, understanding and solutions in order to complete their service work.	Level III, plus students apply higher order thinking to increasingly complex situations.
1.4 STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO COMMUNICATE INFORMATION AND IDEAS	Students are rarely asked or required to communicate information and ideas in either written or oral form and then only to the teacher.	Students may employ both written and oral means of communication but on an infrequent basis and with a limited range of audience—usually within a classroom.	Students use multiple methods of communication (oral, written, graphic) on an ongoing basis for multiple purposes and with diverse audiences (e.g. community members, teachers, peers and parents).	Level III, plus students take the initiative to promote dialogue with and understanding among diverse audiences.
1.5 CONNECTS TO STATE OR LOCAL STANDARDS	The teacher does not intentionally connect student activities to a state standard.	The teacher partially connects student activities to the fulfillment of a state or local standard.	The teacher directly connects student activities to the fulfillment of a state or local standard.	Level III, plus service-learning is publicly acknowledged and frequently used as a teaching methodology to utilize in fulfilling many of the state or local standards.

CLUSTER I: LEARNING

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 2: Effective service-learning engages students in tasks that challenge and stretch them cognitively and developmentally.

	LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III	LEVEL IV
2.1 SERVICE TASKS ARE CHALLENGING AND PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT	Students are essentially spectators or, at most, assistants to the primary providers of service.	Students take on developmentally appropriate tasks requiring them to apply existing knowledge and skills in relatively familiar settings and roles.	Students are engaged in challenging tasks that stretch them—physically, cognitively, socially and/or ethically—in new roles and/or in unfamiliar settings.	Level III, plus students are increasingly able to identify external and internal factors that impose limits on what they can do or be, and devise strategies to expand these boundaries.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 3: Effective service-learning uses assessment as a way to enhance student learning as well as to document and evaluate how well students have met content and skills standards.

	LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III	LEVEL IV
3.1 ASSESSMENT IS INTEGRATED WITH INSTRUCTION	Learning is expected, but goals are not spelled out and assessment is informal or by a single method, such as a concluding interview.	The learning goals are an integral part of the program design, and are clearly communicated at the outset along with expected performance standards. ("Here's what you must do to get an A.")	Assessment of student learning is consciously employed as a dynamic instructional (not just evaluative) tool that contributes to the quality of the experience. Emphasis is placed on giving students the insight and tools to assess, demonstrate and articulate, in a variety of ways, the things they are accomplishing and learning.	Levels II and III, plus special emphasis on assessing and articulating learning that goes beyond, or in a different direction, than what was anticipated. Unique ways to communicate to others what is being learned are devised.



CLUSTER II: SERVICE

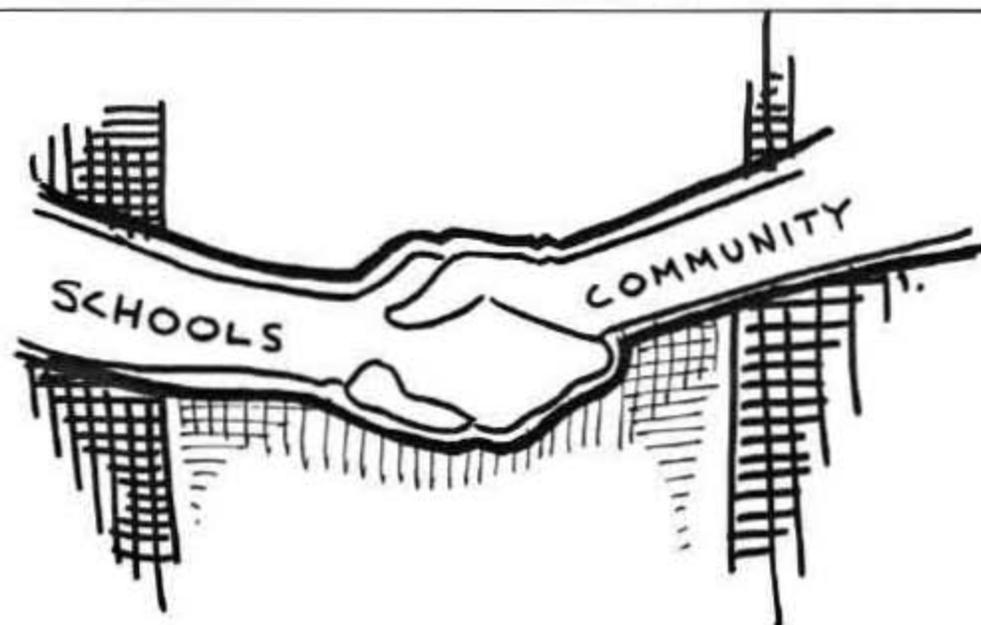
ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 4: Effective service-learning engages students in service tasks that have clear goals, meet genuine needs in the school or community, and have significant consequences for themselves and others.

		LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III	LEVEL IV
I.1	SERVICE GOALS ARE CLEARLY STATED	The goals are not written and/or are unclear to students.	One or more service goals are specified, but the overarching goal is unclear to students. (For instance, students may know that they will befriend an elderly person, but see no reason to examine the larger concept of aging and the role of institutionalized care in our society.)	The task-specific goals and the farther-reaching goals of the service project are clearly communicated to and understood by all participants.	Level III, plus the goals of the service project have been developed with the assistance and agreement of all participants.
I.2	ADDRESSES A GENUINE NEED	The identified need may be of minor consequence or, even if significant, not understood to be so by all participants.	The identified need is of some importance to those who are involved as providers or recipients of service.	The identified need is genuine, is significant, and is recognized as important by both the students and community at large.	The identified need is of deep and urgent importance to the community (i.e., rebuilding after a natural disaster or working to solve a long-term community concern).
I.3	SERVICE TASKS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES ARE SIGNIFICANT	Students provide assistance with useful, but routine tasks that would otherwise be handled by the individual or agency being helped.	Students assist with tasks that provide unique assistance requiring special skills and/or knowledge central to the mission of the agency or life of individuals.	Level II, plus students perform tasks which add new dimensions to previous efforts and provide assistance that would not be provided without the help of the students.	Level III, plus students work toward providing a lasting solution to the community need being addressed.

CLUSTER II: SERVICE

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 5: Effective service-learning employs systematic evaluation of the service effort and its outcomes through formative and summative methods

	LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III	LEVEL IV
5.1 EVALUATION OF SERVICE OUTCOMES	Evaluation is an afterthought, with no formal plan for how and when it will take place.	The evaluation plan is developed by the teacher and consists of gathering information and impressions at the completion of the service via questionnaire, interview, discussion or paper. It is summative only and not used to improve the project.	An evaluation plan is crafted before the project begins and students have a strong voice in its design and implementation. The evaluation occurs before, during and after service and is used to monitor and improve the project and to make recommendations for future projects.	Students, teachers, and when appropriate, community members are all involved in the evaluation. Evaluation includes comments on the impact of service on those being served and on those doing the service. Evaluation results are shared with interested audiences including community groups, parents and school faculty.



CLUSTER III: CRITICAL COMPONENTS THAT SUPPORT LEARNING & SERVICE

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 6: Effective service-learning seeks to maximize student voice in selecting, designing, implementing, and evaluating the service project.

		LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III	LEVEL IV
<p>6.1</p> 	<p>ENCOURAGES STUDENT VOICE</p>	<p>Students perform assigned tasks within a project designed and directed by the teacher.</p>	<p>Students make choices from options suggested by the teacher.</p>	<p>Students have significant voice in selecting, designing, implementing and evaluating the service-learning project.</p>	<p>Same as Level III, plus in some cases it is possible and appropriate for the service project(s) to be entirely student designed, directed and implemented with advice and assistance from the teacher and others available as needed.</p>
<p>6.2</p>	<p>PROMOTES TEACHER ROLE AS FACILITATOR</p>	<p>Teacher directs and controls nearly all aspects of the service and learning.</p>	<p>Teacher defines most aspects of service and learning but increases opportunities for student decision-making as s/he deems appropriate.</p>	<p>Teacher acts as mentor, coach, motivator and facilitator, while students define significant aspects of service and learning.</p>	<p>Teacher inspires, respects and encourages efforts that are student-directed in nearly all aspects of the service and learning.</p>

CLUSTER III: CRITICAL COMPONENTS THAT SUPPORT LEARNING & SERVICE

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 7: Effective service-learning values diversity through its participants, its practice, and its outcomes.

**The term "diverse" is here intended to be used as broadly as possible; it refers to human variety in terms of personal identity, experience (e.g., educational, work or personal experience), and capacity/access to resources. These categories may very likely overlap, are not intended as labels to "box in" a service-learning participant, but rather to recognize the richness s/he brings to the shared service-learning activity.*

		LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III	LEVEL IV
7.1	DIVERSITY IS DISCUSSED AND VALUED	Diversity is rarely considered as more than an afterthought either in preparing for service, doing it, or reflecting on it.	Diversity is appreciated, but only discussed when students bring it up. It is not an intentional part of the curriculum.	Diversity is one lens through which service work is always examined, and consideration of it is planned for in the curriculum.	Diversity is discussed by all involved in the service work, included in reflection and problem-solving, not only regarding the service project itself but examining deeper issues related to equity and justice in society.
7.2	COMMUNICATION WITH DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS IS FOSTERED	Communication and interaction occurs only incidentally and accidentally, being neither discouraged nor encouraged.	Communication is encouraged at the comfort level of each participant. There are no deliberate attempts to assure or facilitate interaction.	Goals related to diversity are established. The teacher encourages communication, particularly through service projects that require ongoing interactive work.	Students themselves embrace diversity as an asset to the program and seek out ways to insure interaction between and respect for all persons involved.
7.3	PARTICIPATION BY DIVERSE GROUPS IS ENCOURAGED	Service work is characterized by relatively homogenous groups helping others very much like themselves.	Participation with diverse groups or individuals occurs largely through one group helping another group with whom they would not typically interact (e.g., students helping elders).	Service work involves diverse participants working together.	Service work involves a wide variety of community participants and groups working together in a sustained relationship.

CLUSTER III: CRITICAL COMPONENTS THAT SUPPORT LEARNING & SERVICE

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 8: Effective service-learning promotes communication and interaction with the community and encourages partnerships and collaborations.

		LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III	LEVEL IV
8.1	TEACHERS AND STUDENTS BECOME KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT COMMUNITY RESOURCES	Teachers and students have little experience with or knowledge of community resources and potential partnerships.	Teachers and students learn about several key resources and potential partners in the community.	Teachers and students acquire a rich knowledge of community resources and a range of ideas for potential partnerships.	Level III, plus students and teachers become resources to others sharing their knowledge within and outside the school.
8.2	CONTACT WITH COMMUNITY RESOURCES OR PARTNERS IS CULTIVATED	There is only minimal contact between teacher, students and any service partners. The teacher sets up the project and the students implement it.	One or two individuals or representatives of community groups may help the teacher and students set up the service project and/or serve as consultants to it.	Ongoing partnerships are established with one or more community groups to work on and fulfill the service and learning goals.	Individuals and community groups come to view the school as a community resource. They understand that student learning and skills can be applied to help alleviate needs and solve community problems.
8.3	COMMUNICATION CLEAR RULES AND OUTCOMES ARE ESTABLISHED AMONG PARTNERS	Communication is irregular and unplanned, sometimes resulting in misunderstanding about the roles and responsibilities and the intended service outcomes.	The roles, responsibilities and service outcomes are discussed and agreed upon between partners at the outset of the project and reviewed at the end.	Roles, responsibilities, procedures for handling conflict and other major issues are clarified and agreed upon beforehand. Efficient lines of communication remain open between partners. Feedback and discussion is planned and encouraged throughout.	Communication evolves into dialogue and from dialogue emerges new perceptions of roles and responsibilities, with those in the community seeing themselves as significant partners in education and those in schools as significant partners in improving communities.

CRITICAL COMPONENTS THAT SUPPORT LEARNING & SERVICE

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 9: Effective service-learning prepares students for all aspects of their service experience including understanding their role, the skills and information required, safety precautions, and sensitivity to the people with whom they will be working.

		LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III	LEVEL IV
9.1	EXPLORES STUDENTS' PRIOR KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND SKILLS	The project begins with no specific reflection on students' previous learning experiences related to the project area.	Prior to the project, the teacher helps students/class to identify levels of current knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the project area. This could be accomplished through discussions, surveys, etc.	Level II, plus students prepare a presentation based on current levels of understanding of the project area. The teacher identifies levels of learning from these presentations. After presentations, the students determine what further preparation/training is needed.	Level III, plus out of the presentations and information gathered, students prepare materials to orient future participants.
9.2	ORIENTS STUDENTS TO THE COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE WITH WHOM THEY WILL WORK	Orientation to site and people may take place, if at all, upon students' arrival for project.	Prior to the project, the teacher and/or a representative from the community shares information about the agency, the people they serve, and community needs.	Level II, plus students continue to search for information and expand their understanding via their own contacts and through research and training conducted throughout the project.	Levels II & III, take place within a course of study providing a broader perspective of social/political issues (poverty, aging, pollution, discrimination, homelessness, etc.) that are manifested in the specific project in which they are engaged.
9.3	PREPARES FOR ANY RELEVANT SAFETY ISSUES	The teacher provides safety information to students before the project begins (at school or on-site).	The teacher provides safety briefings for students and parents as an integral part of the instructional plan.	Based on presentations, students and teachers identify possible safety hazards and plan together on how to minimize possible risks.	Based on student research, the class develops a risk management plan for the project. This may be reviewed by a knowledgeable expert and approved by the teacher, administrator and community partner.
9.4	PREPARES STUDENTS FOR THEIR ROLE AS IT RELATES TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS	The teacher presents a very general set of expectations to students before the project begins (either in classroom or upon arrival at site).	During class time, the teacher and/or community representative(s) assign specific roles and tasks to be performed by the students and expectations are very clear.	The teacher, community partner and students cooperatively develop an agreement concerning students' roles and tasks.	Students draft cooperative agreement that is signed by students, community partner, and teacher, and which is open for review, development, expansion, and ongoing revision.

CLUSTER III: CRITICAL COMPONENTS THAT SUPPORT LEARNING & SERVICE

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 10: Effective service-learning includes student reflection as a central force in the fulfillment of curricular objectives and is done before, during, and after service using multiple methods that encourage critical thinking.

		LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III	LEVEL IV
10.1	REFLECTION OCCURS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER SERVICE	Reflection occurs occasionally, usually only at the conclusion of a service event.	Reflection occurs consistently after a service event, but only occasionally and sporadically before and during it.	Reflection occurs regularly before, during and after service as a critical feature of the total service-learning experience.	Same as Level III, plus students are developing their own insights and ideas as a result.
10.2	MULTIPLE METHODS OF REFLECTION ARE USED	One method is used to engage students in reflection (e.g., students keep a journal, or do a final student project, or have an exit interview with the teacher.)	Two or three methods are used to engage students in reflection.	The use of multiple methods and media (visual, oral, written, artistic) is encouraged within multiple groupings (e.g., with individuals, small groups and whole class.)	Level III, plus students create their own structures, tools and guidelines for reflection.
10.3	ALL PARTICIPANTS ENGAGE IN REFLECTION	Students reflect only individually (e.g., through a personal journal or by meeting individually with the teacher.)	Students reflect with each other as well as individually.	Everyone involved in the service-learning experience is actively involved in reflection (e.g., students, teachers, adult volunteers, community members; those providing and those receiving service.)	Where appropriate, all groups are not only involved, but occasionally reflect together.
10.4	STUDENTS LEARN TO USE HIGHER LEVELS OF CRITICAL THINKING	Students primarily reflect upon the "what happened" of the service-learning experience.	Students begin to go past "what happened" to be able to comprehend and analyze their experiences.	Students are able to acquire, evaluate, and synthesize learning from their service experience and apply it to their own lives and to the broader community.	Same as Level III, plus students are able to apply learning to future projects and broader issues such as social responsibility, public policy, and citizenship.
10.5	CONNECTIONS ARE MADE TO CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES	Reflection exists separately from previously established curricular objectives.	Reflection is designed to provide a connection between the service project and a few of the given curricular objectives.	Reflection is at the heart of the curriculum, critically effecting both the choice of objectives and the means for meeting them.	Level III, plus reflection extends student learning into higher levels and depths that could not be predicted or required of students.

CLUSTER III: CRITICAL COMPONENTS THAT SUPPORT LEARNING & SERVICE

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 11: Effective service-learning acknowledges, celebrates and further validates students' service.

	LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III	LEVEL IV
11.1 THE PUBLIC (IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL) HAS OPPORTUNITIES TO RECOGNIZE THE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF YOUTH TO THE COMMUNITY	The teacher takes time in class for students to reflect on what they have achieved and to recognize them for their efforts.	Level I, plus others are invited to class to recognize students' contributions (community partners, administration, parents, community leaders).	Level II, plus students are recognized outside of class and by wider audiences (student assemblies, media coverage, community events). Types of recognition may include formal recognition on transcripts and invitations to advanced training in a service field.	A new vision emerges of the role of youth in society as a valuable resource to their communities, as providers, not just recipients, of service.

