



Guidelines for High Quality Lesson Plans

Source: RMC Research Corporation, April 2008

For additional resources on this and other service-learning topics visit Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse at www.servicelearning.org.



Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse wants to thank you for your interest in submitting to the Service-Learning Ideas and Curricular Examples (SLICE) database. Please follow the guidelines below to ensure that your lesson plan is as complete and relevant as possible.

Exemplary Lesson Plans:

The Role of Parks and Open Spaces in Society

www.servicelearning.org/slice/index.php?ep_action=view&ep_id=672

My Water, Your Water, Our Water Lesson

www.servicelearning.org/slice/index.php?ep_action=view&ep_id=670

School-Wide Recycling

www.servicelearning.org/slice/index.php?ep_action=view&ep_id=673

Not Forgotten

www.servicelearning.org/slice/index.php?ep_action=view&ep_id=674

Submission Guidelines

This is a set of guidelines to help you when submitting lesson plans to SLICE. The best submissions will follow these basic criteria. They should:

- be lesson plans you have successfully implemented in the classroom;
- include the subject areas addressed;
- be practical with regard to time requirements and cost;
- have clearly defined goals and objectives, and provide all of the instructional strategies and activities to be used in order to meet those goals and objectives;
- be clearly written and jargon free; and
- provide references to the original work if lesson plan is not original.

Each submission needs to include:

1. Title of the project
2. Area of service – for example: at-risk youth, environment, civic responsibility, etc.
3. Grade level/setting – the general age range of participants
4. Course description
5. Grading policy
6. Subject area
7. Description of service-learning coursework
8. Brief course introduction – a brief summary of the class service-learning project, its implementation, and goal.



9. Contact information – name, position, institution, address, email, phone number, fax

If possible, you could also include additional information: time needed for completion, materials needed, approximate cost, descriptive keywords, etc.

Service-Learning Components

Ideally a lesson plan will describe the implementation of the six components of service-learning: investigation of needs, preparation for service, action, reflection, demonstration of learning and impacts, and celebration.

Quality Standards

The criteria for quality K-12 service-learning lesson plans are grounded in the following criteria:

1. *Duration and Intensity.* The service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes. These include:
 - the processes of investigation of community needs, preparation for service, action, reflection, demonstration of learning and impacts, and celebration;
 - the service-learning is conducted during concentrated blocks of time across a period of several weeks or months; and
 - the service-learning provides enough time to address identified community needs and achieve learning outcomes.
2. *Link to Curriculum.* Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards. Indicators include:
 - clearly articulated learning goals;
 - the service-learning is explicitly aligned with the academic and/or program curriculum;
 - participants learn how to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting to another; and
 - the service-learning that takes place in schools is formally recognized in school board policies and in student records.
3. *Partnerships.* Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs. Ideally they should:
 - involve a variety of partners, including youth, educators, families, community members, community-based organizations, and/or businesses;
 - include frequent and regular communication between partners about activities and progress;
 - promote collaboration to establish a shared vision and set common goals to address community needs; and
 - allow joint development and implementation of plans to meet specified goals.
4. *Meaningful Service.* Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities. Indicators would be:
 - Including experiences appropriate to participant ages and developmental abilities;
 - addressing issues that are personally relevant to the participants;
 - providing participants with interesting and engaging service activities;
 - encouraging participants to understand their service experiences in the context of the underlying social issues being addressed; and
 - leading to attainable and visible outcomes that are valued by those being served.

5. *Youth Voice*. Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults. This includes:
 - engaging youth in generating ideas during the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes;
 - involving youth in the decision-making process throughout the service-learning experiences;
 - involving youth and adults in creating an environment that supports trust and open expression of ideas;

 - promoting acquisition of knowledge and skills to enhance youth leadership and decision-making; and
 - involving youth in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the service-learning experience.
6. *Diversity*. Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants. Indicators include:
 - helping participants identify and analyze different points of view to gain understanding of multiple perspectives;
 - aiding participants in the development of interpersonal skills in conflict resolution and group decision-making;
 - helping participants actively seek to understand and value the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of those offering and receiving service; and
 - encouraging participants to recognize and overcome stereotypes.
7. *Reflection*. Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society. Reflection should:
 - include a variety of verbal, written, artistic, and nonverbal activities to demonstrate understanding and changes in participants' knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes;
 - occur before, during, and after the service experience;
 - prompt participants to think deeply about complex community problems and alternative solutions;
 - encourage participants to examine their preconceptions and assumptions in order to explore and understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens; and
 - encourage participants to examine a variety of social and civic issues related to their service-learning experience to understand connections to public policy and civic life.
8. *Progress Monitoring*. Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability. Participants should:
 - collect evidence of progress toward meeting specific service goals and learning outcomes from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience;
 - collect evidence of the quality of service-learning implementation from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience;
 - use evidence to improve service-learning experiences; and
 - communicate evidence of progress toward goals and outcomes with the broader community, including policymakers and education leaders, to deepen service-learning understanding and ensure that high quality practices are sustained.

All of these criteria would be included in high-quality lesson plans. Lesson plans considered by our panel of service-learning advisors to demonstrate especially good adherence to these standards will be featured in the database as exemplary submissions.

For more information, see

www.nylc.org/objects/publications/StandardsStandaloneDocument.pdf.

