

1.18 Teacher Tool Box- Service-Learning



Service-Learning is defined as a *type of experiential education in which students participate in **service** in the community and **reflect** on their involvement in such a way as to gain further **understanding of course content** and of the discipline and its relationship to social needs and an enhanced sense of **civic responsibility**.*

Hatcher and Bringle, IUPUI, 1997

Another definition is:

“Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that **integrates meaningful** community service with instruction and **reflection** to enrich the learning experience, teach **civic responsibility** and **strengthen communities**.”

Resource: Corporation for National and Community Service. www.nationalservice.gov

As you can see Service-Learning has basic components. There must be service within the community that gives meaning to the content and skills that the students are learning within the classroom. The students must have time to reflect on the service and the connection to learning so that they can construct their own understanding and meaning of the experience. Finally there must be a sense of reciprocity and partnership with the community. Service-Learning is a relationship between students, their community and stakeholders where all members learn, grow and prosper in some way from the experience.

Characteristics of Service-Learning

- 1) **Service** (community engagement) – Students must be engaged in some kind of work within the community using their expertise that they are learning in their classroom to make lives better for underrepresented members of their community or school.
- 2) **Standards Based**- The service that is performed must be linked to the academic standards and content that the students are learning within the classroom.
- 3) **Partnerships**- the students and the community members are working together to determine a need that can be addressed through the service-learning project. With this kind of partnership, the students, teachers and community all benefit from the project experience. The partnerships that are established during service-learning projects are long lasting and the school could continue to work with the partners over long periods of time.
- 4) **Reflection**- Throughout the project, the student will be analyzing and reflecting on the work and learning for the service-learning that is being completed through the engineering design process. The students will be creating artifacts that will include the recording of data from the project but also creating presentations that will chronicle the progress of the project for stakeholders, teachers, peers and administration.

Service vs Learning- In EPICS we use this graphic to illustrate the importance of the reciprocity of the project. Service and Learning must have equal weight for the learning experience to be of benefit to students and of meaning to the community and stakeholders. This is a very difficult balance to maintain, but with diligence, it is possible.

service learning	Service and learning goals are separate
SERVICE-learning	Service outcomes are primary; learning goals are secondary
service-LEARNING	Learning goals are primary; service outcomes are secondary
SERVICE-LEARNING	Service and learning goals have equal weight; each enhances the other for all participants

Resources:

Donahue, D. M., Bowyer, J., & Rosenberg, D. (2003). Learning with and learning from: Reciprocity in service learning in teacher education. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 36(1), 15-27.

Lima, M., and Oakes, W. (2013). *Service Learning: Engineering in Your Community*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.