Service Learning Framework

Make Your Teaching Stick, and Change the World!

A Manual for Developing Your Own Service Learning Project

Developed by:
Facing the Future

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Introduction

Service learning is designed to meet community needs, complement your curriculum and meet the interests of your students. This manual offers you a step-by-step process to create service learning projects for your subject, standards, and students.

Here's a quick checklist of the steps you will need to complete to plan and implement your project:

- Identify the Curriculum Where You Want to Integrate Service Learning
- Select a Service Learning Project Idea
- Develop Goals and Objectives
- Connect to National and State Standards
- Plan for the Project
- Develop Pre and Post Reflection Activities
- Develop Assessment
- Do the Project
- Plan a Demonstration/Celebration

Each of these areas are discussed in this manual. At the end, you will find worksheets for use in planning your own service learning project. Be creative when designing your project and explore both direct and indirect ways of addressing a community need. Advocacy and fundraising, which can be done in the classroom and at school, are just as important as working directly with the beneficiaries of community organizations.

Curriculum

The curriculum you choose will vary depending on your subject. Your curriculum content may drive the project you choose, although some teachers find great projects, and then work them into the curriculum they are teaching.

If you are covering global issues, please look at the curriculum we offer through *Facing the Future*'s Teachers Corner website (www.teacherscorner.org). You'll find extensive curriculum, hands-on activities, discussion questions, and research assignments that address issues of population, poverty, consumption, sustainability, conflict, the environment, and much more. All activities are aligned with national standards and can be used together or independently to reinforce content.

Standards

The educational standards you meet when you do your service learning project will vary depending on the curriculum project and reflection activities. All service learning projects can address (and exceed) standards and should in no way be considered 'additional' or 'extra' content. Service learning is simply an effective and engaging way to address standards that often allows students to learn and retain more than they might in regular classroom learning.

There are two ways to go about including standards in your service learning plan. The first is to identify the standards that you must satisfy and then design the curriculum and other aspects of the project in order to meet them. The other is to design the project, go through the standards and determine which ones you meet with your project, note any missing standards, and revise your plan to include work that will allow students to meet those standards.

To view national standards in different subject areas, go to the following website pages:

> National Council for Social Studies:
> http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/
>
> National Science Teachers Association:
> http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/nses/html/
>
> National Math Standards:
> http://standards.nctm.org/
>
> Environmental Education Guidelines for Excellence:
> http://www.naaee.org/npeee/
>
> National Geography Standards
> http://www.nationalgeographic.com/resources/ngo/education/standardslist.html

State standards can be obtained from your State Office of Superintendent of Public Education.

Goals and Objectives

One way in which service learning is different from community service is the conscious thought around the goals and objectives of the project. We know that unexpected learning and 'teachable moments' will also occur, but taking the time to create goals and objectives helps establish parameters for the project. *Goals* are the large learning components you want the service learning project to accomplish. *Objectives* are the specific ways you will meet the project goals and satisfy national and state standards.

You can plan your service learning goals and objectives in two different ways. You can:

1) Write the goals and objectives at the beginning of the project if you have a clear sense of what you want to accomplish,

OR

2) Develop the project and curriculum, then work backwards to see what goals and objectives your project meets, and what components are missing and need to be incorporated.

Goals
You can have several goals for a project, which should range from broad to specific. Generally, goals summarize what you intend students to learn as a result of the curriculum, the actual project, and the reflections you incorporate.

Examples:

Broad Goals
- Students will recognize that they can have an impact in the world; whether this impact is positive or negative is a choice they make
- Students will learn project planning and communication skills
- Students will use important scientific concepts and information in an integrated fashion
- Students will be able to demonstrate the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and principles of democratic civic involvement

Specific Goals
- Students will become aware of the effects of poverty on people around the world and its connection to other critical issues, and they will be able to communicate that in a verbal presentation
- Students will understand how collected data can be used to make real life decisions, and be able to collect, synthesize, and interpret data for the purpose of an energy audit
- Students will know the geography of different world regions, and will have in-depth knowledge about one country's geography, economics, history, and current events
- Students will prepare and present a current event activity once per week, becoming familiar with different media sources as well as the general perception of the media about the issue
- Students will learn how to use video technology and create a presentation on PowerPoint

Objectives
Once you have the goals written, objectives address how students will reach the goals in terms of specific tasks or projects. Objectives may also include the methods students will use that may satisfy standards but not be explicit in the goal (for example, as part of a project to clean up a stream bed, students will be doing various water and soil tests).

Examples:
- Students will utilize multiple media sources to complete six current events reports that address global poverty and then analyze the articles and write a brief summary
- Students will learn how to do soil and water tests in the classroom, and then run similar tests to the service learning project, providing data with which to make practical project decisions
- Students will complete written, visual and oral reflection activities throughout the project to measure the attitudinal change about community service and citizenship that occurs during the project
- Students will complete a long-term project with a presentation at the end that will require them to do a planning process, write rough and final drafts, compile a bibliography, practice public speaking, and work on time management

Reflection

Reflection is one of the most critical pieces of service learning. It is the structured time in which students move from participation into deeper understanding. We want to help them think about their experience not only in the context of what they actually did, but also how it relates to their lives in a bigger sense and the decisions they will make in the future.

Another important piece of reflection is 'preflection' – students' thinking about the project before they engage in it.

> "Reflection is the use of creative and critical thinking skills to help prepare for, succeed in, and learn from service experience, and to examine the larger picture and context in which the service occurs."   – J. Toole & P. Toole

All reflection activities should come back to the central question of how the service is connected to the learning, and how it is connected to each student's personal development. When designing pre/reflection activities, try to offer a range of options that fit into students' different learning types. Consider how to offer reflections in the following categories: linguistic, logical, kinesthetic, spatial, musical, and interpersonal.

Examples of student reflection activities:
- Keep an ongoing journal with specific reflection questions throughout the project
- Compose a letter to one of the service recipients, or to a politician
- Write a poem that reflects your experience for that week
- Explain what scientific knowledge would help you with the project, and why; see if you can get that information
- Compile statistics on your project and compare them to other data available for similar circumstances
- Create a skit based on your project and perform it for the class/school/parents
- Create a TV or radio commercial on your project

- Make a visual display outlining what you accomplished and what it meant to you
- Make a video documenting different students' reactions to parts of the project
- Create a map, display, or other visual aid for the service recipients
- Compose a song about your experience
- Have small group discussions about the project
- Write an article for a newsletter or paper to share the story of your project
- Role-play something that happened during the project that was challenging for you. Show what you did or could have done differently
- Engage in large group discussions periodically
- Stage a debate with students advocating different positions around the issue of your project

Examples of questions you might ask students to address in any of the above reflection projects:

Preflection
- What is service learning?
- What issues are so important you would be willing to offer your services to see a change made?
- What could people of your age do to impact the world in a positive way?
- What do you think might happen during this project?
- What are you looking forward to?
- What are you nervous about?
- What do you think you might learn from this project?

Reflection
- What has been the best part of the project? Why?
- What has been the hardest part of the project? Why?
- What have you learned that you didn't know at the beginning of this project?
- What is the most valuable thing you learned during your project? Why was it valuable?
- If you could make changes in the lives of the people benefiting from your project, what would they be and why did you choose those things?
- How did you feel about your project?
- What are some concerns you have about what you experienced in this project?
- What data or information did you find useful? Why?
- How is this project connected to your life?
- What have you learned from the people involved in this project? What have they learned from you?
- What have you learned about yourself and your community by doing this project?
- What is one thing you intend to do differently as a result of what you learned during your project?
- Are there ways that you could stay involved in this project in the future?
- How do you think differently about (the name of your topic/class [geography, science, civics etc.]) after completing this project?

Assessment

Evaluating a student's performance on a service learning project is often best done with a rubric because it measures many different elements of the project. A rubric assigns a number based on how well each task within the project was completed. Many teachers also involve students in the assessment process. This can be done simply by sharing the rubrics with students at the beginning of the project so they know what is expected of them. Some teachers will also ask the students to do a self-evaluation, using the rubric, as part of the overall assessment.

The rubric categories will depend on what assignments you set. However, most service learning projects contain formal reflections, which are included in the final evaluation, as well as final group or individual projects. Examples of two different rubrics are shown below, followed by a brief worksheet for developing your own rubric.

This is a rubric used by a middle school civics class to evaluate students' final project. During the service learning component students volunteered at different social service agencies. The final project included a speech using visual aids.

Presentation Rubric	5	3	1
Persuasive Argument	Student speaks for at least 3 minutes, clearly presents opinion and facts	Student speaks for up to 3 minutes, presents opinion but no facts	Students speaks for less than 3 minutes, presentation doesn't include opinion or facts
Examples	At least three specific examples which clearly support the argument	Three examples are used but their connection to the argument is vague	Fewer than three examples are given
Speaking Presence	Student makes eye contact with audience, articulates argument, does not rely on notes	Student looks up at times, some difficulty articulating argument, occasionally uses notes	Student rarely makes eye contact, is unable to articulate argument, reads directly from notes
Total/15			
Visual Aid Rubric			
Creativity- Unique and colorful	2	1	0
Neatness – Professional quality	2	1	0
Connection to service – obvious reflection of service activities	2	1	0
Use of class work time – Time used efficiently and effectively	2	1	0
Group Participation – all members participated in creation of visual aid	2	1	0
Total/10			
Project Rubric			
Journal with at least 6 reflection activities	5	3	1
Overall participation	5	3	1
Total/10			
Grand Total/35			

The following is a rubric used for a science unit that included a service learning component focused on restoring the environmental health of a local watershed. Each category can get points ranging from 5 points for excellent work, to 2 points for poor work. The four boxes allow the following evaluations throughout the project:

1 – mid-term student evaluation
2 – mid-term teacher evaluation
3 – final student evaluation
4 – final teacher evaluation

	1	2	3	4
Presentation				
Is it typed, bound and organized neatly?				
Table of Contents?				
Art work on cover and 14 sketches				
Parts and Completion				
Reflections (3-4 pages double spaced, dated, thoughtful)				
Questions (10 original questions with hypotheses)				
Experiments (both at stream site and in classroom)				
Bonus Points				
Depth of thinking, creativity, etc.				
Penalty Points				
Misspellings, poor grammar, no bibliography, incomplete data				
Total Points/Final Grade				
Teacher Comments:				
Student Comments (what did you get out of this project?):				

Answer the following questions to help you get started on creating your own rubric:

1. What are the different components of the project?
    a.
    b.
    c.
    d.

2. What practices or learning do you want to emphasize (related to learning objectives or standards)?

3. Rank the elements of the project from most to least important. This will help you establish how many total points each component should be worth.

Demonstration/Celebration

Demonstrating what was learned is an important piece of the service learning experience. Planning a celebration at the end of the project allows students to understand the impact of what they have done, and to further reflect on how the project has affected them. In addition, it allows them to share their accomplishments with the community, garners community support and recognition, helps the students feel closure of the project, and is great fun.

Celebrations can be planned either at your school, or at another spot that would highlight your project. For example, if your curriculum was around energy and you did a school or home energy audit project, you might approach your local power company, a local politician, or a group working on conservation, and ask if you could hold your celebration there.

The actual content of the celebration will vary depending on your curriculum and project. However, celebrations usually include some kind of presentation of the project by the students, certificates of accomplishment given to each student, and time for students and guests to meet and talk with each other, eat, drink, and have fun.

Another great potential for celebrations is to get some public recognition from the press. Not only will your students love to see themselves in the paper or on TV, but your administration will likely be pleased as well. Check out the Action Toolbox (http://www.creativeaction.org/toolbox.htm) for ideas about how to contact the media.

Important components of a celebration:
- Student participation
- Demonstration of service learning project learning
- Recognition from parents
- Recognition from administrators
- Press
- Certificates of acknowledgement
- Chance for students to show off work/knowledge (verbally or through visual displays)

Appendix: **Service Learning Project Planning Worksheet**

This worksheet will help you plan your service learning project from beginning to end.

1. What are the curriculums/concepts you will be covering?

2. How long do you have to do the curriculum and project?

3. Make a list of the goals and objectives you have for this unit, and those that will address standards.

Project Goals & Objectives	Standards Addressed

4. Brainstorm and research a list of possible projects that might help your students understand the material better. Visit Facing the Future's website at http://www.creativeaction.org/ for access to over 30 ready to go projects developed in cooperation with other organizations. Keep notes on different project ideas here.

5. Identify and list resources (organizations, key people, natural resources, etc.) and information that will help you implement your service learning project.

6. Record the types of reflection activities you want to use before, during and after the service learning project.

7. Create an assessment. Write down the important aspects of the curriculum/project that you want to see on the rubric or assessment tool.

8. How do you want to demonstrate/celebrate your success? Brainstorm ideas.

9. Brainstorm ways that you can include student voice and involvement in any and all phases of the service learning project planning, implementation and demonstration/celebration.