

# Service Learning

## WHY: Key Goals

1. Reforming the role of the teacher or instructor as a facilitator of knowledge rather than a controller of knowledge.
2. Ensuring that learning by doing is at the center of discovery.
3. Engaging the learner in ongoing critical reflection on what is being experienced for effective learning.
4. Ensuring that learners help to direct and shape the learning experiences.
5. Ensuring that new knowledge, concepts and skills are linked in meaningful ways to the learner's personal experiences.

## WHAT: Service-learning:

- Is developed, implemented, and evaluated in collaboration with the community.
- Responds to community-identified concerns.
- Attempts to balance the service that is provided and the learning that takes place.
- Enhances the curriculum by extending learning beyond the classroom and allowing students to apply what they've learned to real-world situations.
- Provides opportunities for critical reflection.
- Increases student engagement.
- Is a benefit to students and the community – not just to one or the other.
- Is a sustained effort to build a strong, connected community – not an episodic volunteering program.
- Offers a deeper level of learning and understanding – not a watering down of academic rigor.
- Helps improve academic performance – not distract from it.

## HOW: Service Learning in the Curriculum

1. Brainstorm about possibilities in your curriculum.
2. Contact the Office of Service Learning.
3. Consider your goals for the program.
4. Choose an appropriate opportunity.
5. Integrate service-learning into the syllabus.
6. Promote the opportunity in class on day 1.
7. Help students develop their service and learning objectives.
8. Help students achieve their goals
9. Link these experiences to your academic course content.
10. Evaluate the success and needed improvements of your service-learning curriculum.

## **HOW: Developing Community Partnerships:**

- Partnerships form to serve a specific purpose and may take on new goals over time.
- Partners have agreed upon mission, values, goals, measurable outcomes and accountability for the partnership.
- The partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, and addresses needs and increase capacity of all partners.
- Begin partnerships by assessing and building upon the value and importance of what each side brings to the table. Be creative as to how resources and assets are defined.
- Find areas of common ground in values and goals before defining roles and processes.
- Don't just "help" communities. Instead, provide resources that communities can use to develop their capacity to help themselves.
- Establish real and accessible channels of communication, and be rigorous in your dedication to comprehensive evaluation and intentional change.