SERVICE LEARNING TOOLBOX:

WORK PAGES AND CHECKLISTS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED AND KEEP YOU GOING

Elke Geiger
Rural Education Program

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 SW Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97204
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Each project is unique to the needs of the community. The purpose of these work pages is to help you clarify your goals and keep track of project details. You will need to figure out specifics on your own. You may or may not need to utilize each section of these work pages. You possibly will want to add to the sections to make them meaningful for your unique context, since these are not comprehensive. These work pages are divided into four key areas:

1. Preparation (Project Identification and Planning)
2. Action
3. Formal Evaluation
4. Online Resources

Success in developing something new takes time and practice. Reflecting, and keeping good notes as the project proceeds, will assist you with evaluating the process and its outcome.

PREPARATION

Preparation for a Service-Learning Project consists of two parts: project identification and planning.

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION
Consider this first step as a needs assessment to determine what kinds of service will benefit the community and what skills your students can learn in this context.

Brainstorming a Project: Community Needs
Finding a meaningful and useful project may require some investigation. Are there community groups that could use a helping hand? What are some niches in your community that need development? Brainstorm with your students about possibilities. They could be aware of additional resources! The following people may have needs or ideas about possible projects. They also could have resources available, including assistance, sponsorship, or expertise.

- Business people
- Personal contacts
- Community groups
- Public agencies (forest service, library)

Who is your community partner? Your school? Another organization? To what extent will the partner work with you? Establish these mutual expectations early in the process.
List your ideas for projects here. This is a great opportunity for you and your students to discuss the possibilities and weigh the merits of each. Projects that are not selected may be explored another time (either as spin-offs or parts to an ongoing series of service-learning projects)?

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PLANNING
The following checklist provides an overview of the main considerations for planning your project. Your project may or may not require all these considerations. Description, in further detail, for each consideration follows in alphabetical order.

**Done Considerations**
- Budget Requirements
- Celebration and Demonstration
- Curriculum and Assessment
- Goals and Objectives
- Liability Issues
- Media Coverage
- Participant Roles
- Scheduling
- Structure
- Supervision
- Timeline
- Training
- Transportation
- Prepare for Reflection
Budget
Service learning does not need to be costly; however, sometimes funds are required for materials or transportation. What parts of the project require funds?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>AREA REQUIRING FUNDING</th>
<th>ESTIMATED COST</th>
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Sources of funding include:
- Community partner sponsorships
- Grants¹
- Business sponsorships
- Fundraising

Celebration/Demonstration
Celebrating the accomplishments of your project is important, as it allows students to step back and see what they’ve achieved. Considerations:

- What will you demonstrate or exhibit?
  - Presentation of concepts learned during the project and how they relate to the service
  - Demonstration of the service or “product”
  - Possibilities for further service-learning
- Who will be invited to the celebration? Any outside guests?
  - Parents
  - Community partner
  - Students and teachers from other classes
  - Local news media
  - District level staff
  - Chamber of Commerce or business leaders

Curriculum for the Project

Service-learning will provide an alternative context for your existing curriculum. There is no recipe, since each project is unique. However, including the following in the development of the learning opportunities should provide a rich learning experience:

- Activities that stimulate the acquisition and application of course concepts and skills
- Promotion of high levels of thinking and the construction of knowledge
- Communicate of information and ideas, both directed and random
- Assessments that are integrated with instruction

Develop multiple methods for students to demonstrate their successes. Assignments that students complete for course credit may include:

- Journals kept for the entire service-learning process
- Oral presentations and/or demonstrations
- Essays
- Products developed for the project, or photos of them
- Diagrams that map out solutions to the defined problem
- Research papers on relevant background information
- Students self-evaluations (see Formal Evaluation section)

Include several of these items in a portfolio for students to use during the reflection process.

Developing your project curriculum in line with your goals and objectives (see the next section) increases your chances for success. It is paramount to involve students in this process to give them ownership of the project.
Goals and Objectives
Tying project goals to specific outcomes of the project is one of the most important steps of the planning process. Whether you start with a service idea and seek learning objectives to match, or vice versa, it is useful to clearly develop goals for both. *Again, it is paramount to involve students in this process to give them ownership of the project.*

First, define where the project falls on the service-learning map in Figure 1. Consider the levels of both service and learning outcomes of the project. Some projects may have high levels of one continuum but do not have much of the other. For example, students may be studying a local watershed (high learning), but they do not assist in its needed restoration (low service); such a project falls into quadrant III. Likewise, some projects may have high levels of service but do not consider an academic component (quadrant II).

Aim for the top right quadrant, IV, which will provide participants with a good balance of learning and service.

![Figure 1.](image)
Your overall goals can be outlined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE GOALS</th>
<th>LEARNING GOALS (KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits to students:</td>
<td>Students will know:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits to the school or community partner:</td>
<td>Students will understand:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students will be able to:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning Needs Assessment**
What do your students need to learn, and how can it be linked to the project? Organize this by breaking down the learning goals into specific objectives that are clearly linked to your students’ curricular objectives so outcomes are clear. The U.S. Department of Labor (1991) SCANS\(^2\) Report offers a framework that integrates well with the principles of service learning. It includes five competencies and a three-part foundation that span both service and learning. (Note that your project may or may not lend itself to these competencies. You may also have fewer than three objectives for each one.)

**FIVE COMPETENCIES**
1. Resources: Identifies, organizes, plans and allocates
2. Interpersonal: Works with others
3. Information: Acquires and uses information
4. Systems: Understands complex interrelationships
5. Technology: Works with a variety of technologies

**THREE-PART FOUNDATION**
1. Basic Skills: Reads, writes, performs math, listens and speaks
2. Thinking Skills: Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn and reasons
3. Personal Qualities: Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity and honesty.

Use the tables on the following pages to establish student learning objectives and their connections to curriculum and/or state/local standards. *Post these on large sheets for your students to use in reflection and evaluation of the project as it progresses.* Students appreciate knowing exactly how they will be assessed.

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\(^2\) More information on the Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) can be found online at http://wdr.doleta.gov/SCANS.
Why write out the objectives?

1. It can assist you with your learning needs assessment.
2. Clear objectives guide the evaluation of project outcomes (see Formal Evaluation section).
3. Tracking the objectives is very useful if you are using grant funds for the project; it facilitates the reporting process and increases the likelihood that you will be refunded.

Finally, look at what students know already, and what they'll need to know:

1. Define students’ prior knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) and determine what additional KSAs they will need beforehand to be successful in carrying out the project; and
2. Determine the KSAs that students will gain while completing the project. Will they gain these “on the job” (OTJ) or in class? How do these match curriculum/standards?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Corresponding Curriculum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>1.1:________________________</td>
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<td>1.2:________________________</td>
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<td>1.3:________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>2.1:________________________</td>
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<td>2.2:________________________</td>
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<td>2.3:________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>3.1:________________________</td>
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<td>3.2:________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Systems</td>
<td>4.1:________________________</td>
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<td>4.2:________________________</td>
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<td>4.3:________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>5.1:________________________</td>
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<td>5.2:________________________</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.3:________________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

An example objective for systems competency for an environmental science service learning project might be, "Students will be able to demonstrate their understanding the positive effects of stream log jams on fish habitat."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundation</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Corresponding Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Skills</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.1: ______________</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.2: ______________</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.3: ______________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thinking skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.1: ______________</td>
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<td>7.2: ______________</td>
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<td>7.3: ______________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Qualities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8.1: ______________</td>
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<td>8.2: ______________</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8.3: ______________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Your state or district may or may not have curriculum in personal qualities or thinking skills.*
**Liability**
Talk with your school administrator about all liability requirements. Some of these include:

- Permission slips, releases for all minor participants
- Drivers insurance for those providing transportation
- Site/agency insurance for community partners
- Emergency binder to take with you to community sites (with student home contact information)

**Media**
Will you involve the local newspaper or television station in recording the project at all? Ideas include:

- Coverage during and after the project is in action
- Letters to the editor describing your students’ accomplishments
Participant Roles
Roles of participants may differ from those in a traditional classroom setting. These multiple roles include but aren’t limited to the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Multiple Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>• planners • risk takers • collaborators • independent workers • valuable contributors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>• facilitator • community resource expert • public relations director • architect of safety • leader • mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community partner</td>
<td>• teacher • leader • supervisor • information source • mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>• facilitator • extra support • information source • mentor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See the Training section for more on exploring and making the most of these roles.

Scheduling
How much time will you need for each component of the project? Do you need blocks of time? If you teach high school, you may need to combine efforts with other teachers/classes (see Structure section). Plan each session carefully to make sure the time of your students’ and of your community partner is well spent. Align your needs with your Timeline (see Timeline section).
Structure
How will you implement the project into your class(es)? How many teachers are involved? How does this effect scheduling? Is this project a stand-alone? Or is it part of a larger project?

Supervision
The ideal number of students for each adult varies with the age range of the students, complexity and difficulty of the project, and the service site. What is the student to teacher ratio? Is this sufficient to carry out the goals of the project?

Timeline
Map out the timeline for the project. Include start and end dates, onsite activities and any classroom instruction or reflections related to the project. Projects that involve frequent site visits and/or are relatively intensive may be more difficult to pinpoint.

Training
Preservice training is a good idea for all participants. It gives participants a better understanding of expectations and procedures, and may alert you to other needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT</th>
<th>GENERAL TRAINING NEEDS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>• Effective communication • Problem solving • Base knowledge required • Cooperation and collaboration • Appreciation for community and diversity • Safety and workplace rules • Understanding expectations of community members • Philosophy and methodology • Base skills/knowledge (see Goals section)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Partner and Volunteers</td>
<td>★ Expectation for student learning (include SCANS info) ★ Expectations for student service ★ Evaluation strategies • Where to go for help with challenges with students • Philosophy and methodology • Mentorship³</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ For more information on mentoring visit the National Mentoring Center Web site at www.nwrel.org/mentoring/research.html.
Tailor the general training needs to your project. Training can take place in the classroom, on site, or in smaller meeting spaces, if appropriate. It can be formal or informal.

A preliminary meeting for all participants to meet, prior to starting the project, is also advised; students may prepare questions or concerns in advance.

**Transportation**
Does the service project take place outside of the school? If yes, how will you get there? Options: school bus, public transportation, walking (if close by), volunteers (see Liability section).

**Reflection**
What are strong points in the service learning project?

What needs more development? What are some possible solutions?
Go for it! Review your plans for each session to keep on track with goals, reflect on progress and problems, and continue striving for solutions. General questions to consider during the action phase:

☐ Is the timeline realistic?
☐ Have unseen needs arisen? Involve students in finding solutions. (Such reflection can assist in modifying the project, as in the case of “Fish to Goats,” see Appendix 1).
☐ How are students feeling about the process?
☐ How are community partners feeling about the process?
☐ How can you maintain/strengthen the connection between service and learning?

Reflection and Evaluation During the Project
Reflection can be written, oral, or large group dialogue. It can be a self-evaluation done by students or evaluation of the project by the group. Suggested questions for reflection:

★ What kinds of things are we doing? How do our actions match our goals and objectives (both as a group and as individuals; refer to posted goals and objectives)?
☐ Do they match our expectations? If not, should we revise expectations? Or the project?
☐ Are leaders emerging? Who?
☐ What is the most difficult part? The most rewarding?
☐ What is your main contribution?
☐ Did we miss something in our planning? What?
☐ What kind of skills and/or knowledge do we need to make this project a success?
☐ What have you learned?
☐ How have we helped solve the problem that is the basis of the service component of this project?
☐ Are there any other needs arising that might be a good second project?

More questions are available at www.fiu.edu/~time4chg/Library/reflect.html, Reflection: Getting Learning Out of Serving.
The formal evaluation process can be broken down into three major areas: student learning, student service, and student experience. Evaluation is crucial in order to assess the success of the project and also give feedback for improvement in future projects.

1. Assessing your Students’ Learning
Linking your assessment of the service and learning components to your earlier goals and objectives will give you the best picture for both summative and formative (for future projects) evaluations. It also eliminates surprises for students, provided that you have included them in the entire development process (see Goals and Objective section).

There are several ways to evaluate the success of the program. Using rubrics allows you to clearly link outcomes to objectives. Students, teachers and community partners can use these to evaluate the process as a whole, the project outcomes, or individuals (e.g., self-evaluation or teachers evaluating students). Students may also want to evaluate the community partner on willingness to work with them in positive ways.

An example of using rubrics for each participant is given below. Scoring occurs on a high-to-low scale. Scales can measure performance, satisfaction, learning, etc. Scales should be clearly stated at the top of each rubric.

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It is essential if you are going to use rubrics that you also include a section for written comments so that students and the community partner have a chance to express additional thoughts or to refer to a tangible outcome (e.g., an assignment for the project; see Curriculum section).

Check one for each objective.
- 4=Outstanding; 3=Very well; 2=Satisfactory; 1=Needs Improvement†

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
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<th>Comments</th>
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Assignments or portfolios that are submitted for course credit can be evaluated in accordance with your normal procedures.

2. Assessing Your Students’ Service
Design an instrument to collect information from your community partner. You may want to ask about:

- Perceptions of students’ willingness to participate
- The extent to which students met expectations

Share and discuss the information you receive with your students.
3. Assessing the Experience for Students
Design an instrument to collect information on your students’ attitudes about the project. You may ask them:

☐ What do they think they learned?
☐ What do they think they contributed to the community?
☐ What are their attitudes about service learning? Have they changed?
☐ Do they have any other ideas for projects?
☐ What is their perception of the community partner and their involvement?
ONLINE RESOURCES

Corporation for National & Community Service

www.nationalservice.gov

The Corporation for National & Community Service is a federal agency that works with state governments and community organizations to provide opportunities for Americans of all ages to serve through Americorps, Learn and Serve, and National Senior Service Corps programs.

National Service Resource Center

http://nationalserviceresources.org

The National Service Resource Center (NSRC) is a training and technical assistance provider to programs funded by the Corporation for National & Community Service. NSRC is your one-stop shopping destination for information specific to community service programs.

Learn & Serve America

www.nationalservice.gov/about/programs/learnandserve.asp

Learn & Serve America is one of the “streams of service” administered by the Corporation for National & Community Service. Learn and Serve America offers grants for service-learning programs in institutions of higher education, K-12 schools, and community based organizations.

Learn & Serve America National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

www.servicelearning.org

The Learn & Serve America National Service-Learning Clearinghouse is a comprehensive information system that focuses on all dimensions of service-learning and includes school-based as well as community-based initiatives.

Learn & Serve America Service-Learning and Other Resources

www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/highered/resources.asp

Find information specifically for colleges. Learn more about service-learning, how to implement projects, and the impact that service has on youth.

Close Up Foundation

www.closeup.org

National Youth Leadership Council
www.nylc.org

The National Youth Leadership Council’s mission is to engage young people in their communities and schools through innovation in learning, service, leadership, and public policy. As one of America’s most prominent advocates of service-learning and youth service, the NYLC is at the forefront of efforts to reform education and guide youth-oriented public policy.

Project Service Leadership
www.projectserviceleadership.org

Project Service Leadership (PSL) is committed to improving the quality of our schools and communities by tapping the talents and energy of youth. It assists Pacific Northwest schools in integrating service into their curriculum and assessment programs. PSL provides professional development and training for educators, students, and community members.

Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)
http://wdr.doleta.gov/SCANS

SCANS provides valuable information for individuals and organizations involved in education and workforce development.