

DEFINITIONS AND NON-EXAMPLES OF SERVICE-LEARNING

Arranged in order from general to more specific definitions and specialized applications

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Eyler, J. & D.E. Giles, Jr. (1999). *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

"Service-learning is a form of experiential education where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection as students work with others through a process of applying what they are learning to community problems, and, at the same time, reflecting upon their experience as they seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding and skills for themselves."

Bringle, R.G., & Hatcher, J.A. (1996). *Implementing Service Learning in Higher Education.* *Journal of Higher Education.* Vol. 67 (2), p221-239. p222.

"We view service learning as a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. Unlike extracurricular voluntary service, service learning is a course-based service experience that produces the best outcomes when meaningful service activities are related to course material through reflection activities such as directed writings, small group discussions, and class presentations. Unlike practica and internships, the experiential activity in a service learning course is not necessarily skill-based within the context of professional education."

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, a program of Learn and Serve America

http://servicelearning.org/welcome_to_service-learning/service-learning_is/index.php

"Service-learning is still evolving and has not yet settled into a shared vocabulary, a set of common ideas and theories and a generally accepted approach to validation. This has encouraged a great deal of experimentation, discovery and local adaptation, but it is also impossible to have one definition for all service-learning programs.

"Service-learning combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity change both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content.

"For example, if school students collect trash out of an urban streambed, they are providing a service to the community as volunteers; a service that is highly valued and important. When school students collect trash from an urban streambed, then analyze what they found and possible sources so they can share the results with residents of the neighborhood along with suggestions for reducing pollution, they are engaging in service-learning. In the service-learning example, the students are providing an important service to the community AND, at the same time, learning about water quality and laboratory analysis, developing an understanding of pollution issues, learning to interpret science issues to the public, and practicing communications skills by speaking to residents. They may also reflect on their personal and career interests in science, the environment, public policy or other related areas. Thus, we see that service-learning combines SERVICE with LEARNING in intentional ways.

"The National Commission on Service-Learning in its recently issued report entitled "Learning in Deed: The Power of Service-Learning for American Schools," offers a definition of service-learning that incorporated the most essential features common to service-learning across the country. According to the Commission, service-learning is different from volunteerism in that it is "a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities."

According to the National Commission on Service learning, service-learning:

- Links to academic content and standards

Robert Schoenfeld's Service-Learning—Guide and Journal: Higher Education Edition (paper packet obtained from Dana Baylor, UA AmeriCorps VISTA, August 2007)

"Service-Learning is a method of teaching and learning that enriches your academic life and life-long learning by engaging you in meaningful hands-on service to the community while gaining valuable knowledge and skills that integrate with course objectives. Service-Learning focuses on critical reflective thinking and experiential learning that address local needs and foster civic responsibility."

Wayne State College - http://academic.wsc.edu/service-learning/what_is/

"Academic Service Learning is a pedagogy that integrates service in the community with academic study (theory/curriculum). Faculty, in partnership with representatives of non-profit, community organizations, design service learning projects based on two main objectives.

- Meeting identified community needs, which helps strengthen the community
- Advancing the students' understanding of course content

Strong reflective components are built into the course to help students consider relationships between their service, the course curriculum, and its impact on their personal values and professional goals.

Co-curricular Service Learning differs only with regard to a link to course content. It maintains the service to meet a community need and includes strong reflection and evaluation components. Generally these service activities are directed under the leadership of student organizations and groups."

(Adapted from [The Midwest Consortium for Service-Learning in Higher Education, 2003](#))

For more about the basics of service-learning, see the Service-Learning Resources page of Campus Compact's website http://www.compact.org/resources/service-learning_resources/.

Start with:

Introduction to Service-Learning Toolkit: Readings and Resources for Faculty (Second Edition)

http://www.compact.org/publications/detail/introduction_to_service-learning_toolkit

The first section deals with definitions of service-learning and includes recommended readings.

Wellens, J., Berardi, A. Chalkley, B., Chambers, B., Healey, R., Monk, J., & Vender, J. (2006). Teaching Geography for Social Transformation. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*. Vol. 30 (1), p117-131. p123. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=20453910&site=ehost-live>

"Another form of learning that aligns particularly well with social transformation is learning linked to public scholarship and service to the community. In many universities students, in effect, withdraw from participating in society for the duration of their course rather than connecting to their communities. Public scholarship refers to the conceptualization and practice of knowledge that applies scholarship—the "discovery and creative performance generated by faculty and students in their teaching and learning, research and service—to the civic, cultural, artistic, social, economic, and educational well-being of the community" (Cohen & Yapa. 2003. pp. 5-6). *Service learning* is a pedagogy that integrates community service into an academic context. Essential elements of *service learning* that distinguish it from *service projects* include academic learning and reflection that occur before, during and after the actual experience. Service learning becomes public scholarship when issues of civic and social consequence are engaged in ways that both learn from and give back to the communities involved, and engagement with the community "becomes an integral part of how new knowledge is generated" (ibid., p. 6).

"Geographers have incorporated community-based service learning into coursework covering introductory geography (Orf, 1998; Zeigler, 1999); urban geography (Bouman *et al*, 1998; Yapa. 2000; Downey, 2001; Veness, 2001); poverty/hunger issues (Jarosz *et al*, 1996; Yapa, 2000); community development (Kotval. 1998; Waddington. 2001; Dennis, 2003) land-use planning (Dorsey 2001); gender geography (Oberhauser, 2002); regional geography (Bein, 2002; Vender *et al*, 2002, Vender. 2004); field/research methods (Buckingham-Hatfield. 1995; Crump. 2(X)2); geomorphology (McEwen, 1996); water resources (Fearn, 2001), GIS(Benhart. 1998; Dennis. 2003); and pre-service teacher education (Rice. 2003). Service learning may be incorporated as part of a single semester/term course, or as a multi-course sequence covering several semesters/terms; the service component may be optional (e.g. as an alternative to a library-based research project) or a mandatory, integral part of the course."

Cohen, J, & Yapa. L, (2003) Introduction: what is public scholarship?, in: J, Cohen & L, Yapa (Eds)/ *Blueprint for Public Scholarship at Penn State*, pp, 5-8 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Office of Undergraduate Education)

Cohen, J. (2006). A Laboratory for Public Scholarship and Democracy. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning*. Spring 2006 Issue 105, p7-15. p11-12.

Abstract: The founder of Penn State's Laboratory for Public Scholarship and Democracy and chair of Penn State's Public Scholarship Associates establishes public scholarship's connections with democracy by distinguishing public scholarship from service, outlining a curriculum of consequence, and suggesting the constitutional roots of public scholarship. Persistent link to the record (full-text pdf available): <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=20269022&site=ehost-live>

"Like service learning, public scholarship employs pedagogies of experiential learning and community practice that hold the potential for students to move beyond their sophomore perceptions of learning as stagnant, received knowledge. Experiential learning may foster a focus on the relativity of knowledge and highlight the consequences of operating from within a given epistemological domain. But the distinction between public service and public scholarship is more than semantic. Public scholarship is a reaction to the transient nature of volunteerism and philanthropic service and a statement of belief in the power of education and expertise to contribute to the democratic compact. Yet the public scholarship curriculum remains a theory, an idea that supports a view of the university as a laboratory in NEW DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING • DOI 10.1002/tl which faculty and student work may identify a curriculum that engages and sustains the arts of liberty."

A metaphor, and food for thought:

Dan W. Butin Ph.D., Cambridge College, School of Education

Keynote Speaker. Ohio Campus Compact Service-Learning Symposium. August 6, 2008.

Described service-learning as "a runaway glacier," referring to the slow pace of the movement due to what he sees as significant theoretical, pedagogical, political, and structural/institutional barriers encountered by a wealth of passionate advocates who have nonetheless successfully implemented it *at some level* across the United States. Butin proposes adjusting our vision of and approach to civic engagement and service-learning to bring them to the next level of legitimacy and successful practice.

See Butin article: "The Limits of Service-Learning in Higher Education." *The Review of Higher Education: The Journal of the Association for the Study of Higher Education*. Summer 2006. Volume 29. No. 4.

Butin's forthcoming book, November 2008: *Rethinking Service Learning: Embracing the Scholarship of Engagement within Higher Education*. Foreword by Elizabeth L. Hollander. Stylus Publishing, LLC. 256 pp. 6" x 9".