Service-Learning for Students with Disabilities: Strategies and Resources

2015

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Objectives

After this training, participants will be able to:
- Define service-learning
- Describe types of service-learning projects
- Discuss phases and steps for developing a service-learning program for students with disabilities
- List and provide examples of the K-12 service-learning standards
- Summarize research on impact of service-learning on students
- Identify service-learning resources and tools

Service-Learning Defined

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
- Strengthen communities

(Florida Learn and Serve, 2009)

Service-Learning Defined

Service-learning is a method of instruction in which classroom learning is enriched and applied through service to others.

(Student Characteristics

Please list the following skills and learning styles of your students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Skills</th>
<th>Social Skills</th>
<th>Employability Skills</th>
<th>Learning Styles</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengths and/or Challenges</td>
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<td>List and Give Examples</td>
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“Everybody Can be Great, Because Everybody Can Serve”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkRdj9L3wyE

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Ebenezer Baptist Church, 2/4/1968

“To Serve” (Vivanco, 2007)
Service-learning provides work-based learning experience. Students learn, develop, and apply academic and vocational skills to address the real life needs of their local communities. (Brown, 2006)

Educational Benefits of Service-Learning

Research suggests that students in well designed service-learning projects out-perform their non-serving peers and have positive academic, social, civic, and skill-acquisition impacts. (Florida Learn and Serve, 2009)

Educational Benefits of Service-Learning

- Positive, meaningful, and real to the participants
- Cooperative rather than competitive experiences
- Engages in community-based work experience and problem-solving
- Promotes deeper learning because the results are immediate and uncontrived
- Supports social, emotional, and cognitive learning and development

(Reese, 2010)

Service-Learning is Not:

- An episodic volunteer program
- Add-on to existing curriculum
- Logging of hours to graduate
- Compensatory or punishment
- One-sided, benefiting only student or community

Service-Learning is Not:

- The link to specific curriculum objectives distinguishes service-learning from community service and volunteerism
- The service-learning process explicitly involves:
  - Preparation
  - Action
  - Reflection
  - Celebration

(Florida Learn and Serve, 2009, Learn and Serve America, 2013)
Service-Learning Answers the Age-old Student Question

“Why do I have to learn this stuff...?”

Because it puts coursework into context

(Reese, 2010)

Florida Service-Learning Projects

Since 1991, Florida has provided funding, training and technical assistance for over 3,000 service-learning projects

(Florida Learn and Serve, 2009)

Florida Learn and Serve 2010-2011 Awards

Statewide Totals

- Projects: 66
- Projected Service Hours: 1,335,500
- Student Participants: 29,475
- Districts: 26
- Total Awarded: $710,684
- Average Award: $10,768

Promoting Inclusive Education Through Service-Learning

- It meets the needs of all students
- Enables students with disabilities to receive community-based instruction with their peers without disabilities
- Develops a sense of community among students

(Gent & Gurecka, 1998)

The Benefit of Service-Learning to Schools

Examples:

- Planting flowers to beautify the grounds of home school
- High school students tutoring elementary students in reading or math

(Dymond, Renzaglia, & Chun, 2007)

Bringing Learning to Life

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2-ae66FCDc

(Service Resources, 2009a)
Types of Service-Learning Projects

- Direct Service-Learning
- Indirect Service-Learning
- Advocacy Service-Learning
- Research Service-Learning

Direct Service-Learning

Projects that impact individuals who receive direct help from students, e.g., person to person, face-to-face
- Examples: Tutoring, work with elderly, oral histories, peer mediation
- Impact on students
  - Caring for others, dependability, patience, personal responsibility, getting along with others who are different, people skills

(Florida Learn and Serve, 2009)

Indirect Service-Learning

Projects that benefit community as opposed to individuals
- Examples: Environmental, construction, restoration, town histories, food and clothing drives
- Impact on students
  - Develops cooperation and teamwork
  - Big picture learning
  - Organization and prioritizing skill development

(Florida Learn and Serve 2009)

Advocacy Service-Learning

Projects that create awareness of issues of public interest
- Examples: Promoting reading, safety, care for environment, local history, violence and drug prevention, disaster preparedness
- Impact on students
  - Perseverance, engaged citizenship, working with adults and elected officials, understanding rules, compromise

(Florida Learn and Serve 2009)

Research Service-Learning

Projects that involved gathering and reporting of information on topics of public interest
- Examples: Water testing, energy audits of homes or public buildings, flora and fauna studies, surveys
- Impact on students
  - Learn methods of inquiry/problem solving, find information, form and test hypotheses, organize, assess, measure, predict, and evaluate

(Florida Learn and Serve 2009)

Examples of Service-Learning

- Environmental Projects
- Addressing Social Problems
- Cultural and Regional History Projects
- Advocacy and Civic Engagement Projects

(O'Connor, 2009)
Environmental Projects

- Students engage in research involving natural areas such as streams, wetlands, and forests
- Students gather and analyze scientific data (testing water quality) with the assistance of environmental professionals and report findings

(O'Connor, 2009)

Addressing Social Problems

- Students address local social issues such as:
  - Homelessness
  - Hunger
  - Literacy
- Action
  - Food or clothing drive
  - Tutoring younger students or adults in literacy

These activities can be tied into student research and writing regarding the identified social issues

(O'Connor, 2009)

Cultural and Historical Projects

- Students research and compile historical and/or cultural information relevant to their local communities or regions
- May interview adults in the community, record important cultural information passed down from previous generations
- Disseminate the information through writing, paintings, film or internet sites

(O'Connor, 2009)

Advocacy and Civil Engagement Projects

- Students identify and research social problems such as literacy, hunger, child welfare
- Prepare presentations for local and state legislatures, community agencies and civic groups
- Create and distribute informational literature and promote awareness of the issues

(O'Connor, 2009)

Example:

High school students in a construction class repaired beds for a homeless shelter.
The school-setting allowed controlled access to dangerous equipment.

(Dymond, Renzaglia, & Chun, 2007)

School-Based Service-Learning Benefits the Community

Steps for Developing a Service-Learning Program for Students with Disabilities

1. Preparation
2. Planning
3. Carry Out Project
4. Student Reflection
5. Celebration

(O'Connor, 2009)
Preparation

Hold brainstorming sessions with students to identify and discuss the following:
- Community problems that might be addressed in a project
- Possible solutions
- Learning objectives and standards that will be addressed in the project
- Goal of the selected project

(O'Connor, 2009)

Planning

- Have students organize the project; develop an action plan
- Define student roles and responsibilities within the project
- Integrate instruction (how learning standards and objectives will be addressed in the project)
- Identify community and school partners needed for project

(O'Connor, 2009)

Carry Out Project

Provide structured opportunities for students to:
- Document the project, give feedback, and discuss possible problems and solutions
- Discuss the meaning of the project in class
- Receive teacher feedback on their work and collaborative skills

(O'Connor, 2009)

Student Reflection

Provide structured opportunities to reflect on the significance of the project after completion:
- Analyze the significance to the community, academic significance, their own personal roles and emotional reaction to the experience
- Reflections may be written, or a presentation to class or other methods depending on the student’s ability

(O'Connor, 2009)

Celebration

Set aside time after service-learning activity for celebration:
- Occurs with all participants (school and community)
- Participants celebrate each other
- May involve a final product that’s given to the community at the time of the celebration
- Can be informal or formal
- Should occur immediately after a project

(Dymond, Renzaglia, & Chun, 2007)

Florida Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice

1. Link to Curriculum
2. Meaningful Service
3. Youth Voice
4. Reflection
5. Partnerships
6. Diversity
7. Progress Monitoring
8. Duration and Intensity

(Dymond, Renzaglia, & Chun, 2007)
1 Link to Curriculum Indicators

Service-Learning:
- Has clearly articulated learning goals
- Is aligned with the academic and/or programmatic curriculum
- Helps students learn how to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting to another
- Is formally recognized in school district policies and student records

(Florida Learn and Serve, 2009)

2 Meaningful Service Indicators

Service-Learning:
- Experiences are appropriate to students ages and developmental abilities
- Addresses issues that are personally relevant to participants
- Provides interesting and engaging service activities
- Leads to attainable and visible outcomes that are valued by those being served

(Florida Learn and Serve, 2009)

3 Youth Voice Indicators

Service-Learning:
- Leads to attainable and visible outcomes that are valued by those being served
- Engages youth in generating ideas during the planning, implementation, and evaluation process
- Involves youth in the decision-making process throughout the experience
- Promotes leadership and decision making skills

(Florida Learn and Serve, 2009)

4 Reflection Indicators

Service-Learning:
- Includes a variety of verbal, written, artistic, and nonverbal activities to demonstrate understanding and change in participants knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes
- Provides opportunities for reflection before, during, and after the service experience

(Florida Learn and Serve, 2009)

5 Partnerships Indicators

Service-Learning:
- Involves a variety of partners, including youth, educators, families, community members, community-based organizations, and/or businesses
- Partners collaboratively develop and implement action plans to meet specific goals

(Florida Learn and Serve, 2009)

6 Diversity Indicators

Service-Learning:
- Promotes development of interpersonal skills in conflict resolution and group decision-making
- Supports identification and analyses of different points of view to gain understanding of multiple perspectives

(Florida Learn and Serve, 2009)
7 Progress Monitoring Indicators

Service-Learning:
- Supports the collection of evidence of progress toward meeting specific service goals and learning outcomes from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience
- Uses evidence to improve service-learning experiences

(Florida Learn and Serve, 2009)

8 Duration and Intensity Indicators

Service-Learning:
- Includes the processes of investigating community needs, preparing for service, action, reflection, demonstration of learning and impacts, and celebration
- Is conducted during concentrated blocks of time across a period of several weeks or months

(Florida Learn and Serve, 2009)

Service-Learning Research Findings

Service-learning participation improved students’
- Attendance and grade point average
- Ability to work well with others
- Leadership and communication skills
- Personal and social responsibility
- Career awareness and options
- Acceptance of diversity
- Pre-employment skills, job readiness and workforce preparation

(Dymond, Renzagalia, & Chun, 2007; Brown, 2006)

Service-Learning Research Findings

Service-Learning Research Findings

Service-Learning participation improved students’
- Pre-employment skills and job readiness and workforce preparation
- Engagement with schools and attendance
- Attitudes towards schools
- Behavior and decreased discipline actions

(Brown, 2006; McPherson, 1997)

Students’ Top Ten Reasons to Participate in Service-Learning

1. Lets you know you have made a positive difference in the community
2. Promotes diversity
3. Allows you to see the results and impacts of your work in the community
4. Provides the chance to explore careers and get job experience
5. Boosts self-confidence and brings personal gratification

(Florida Learn and Serve, 2009)
Students’ Top Ten Reasons to Participate in Service-Learning

6. Challenges you, your attitudes, and your abilities
7. Helps you make new friends, contacts, and networks
8. Makes learning fun and real
9. Broadens horizons and perspectives
10. Teaches practical skills and gives career exploration

(Florida Learn and Serve, 2009)

References/Resources


References/Resources


Vivanco, A. (2007, Jan 15). Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (To serve). Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVRb@bl_bawE

References/Resources


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