

What is Service-Learning?

*"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."
-Benjamin Franklin*

Service learning is a teaching and learning method that promotes student learning through active participation in meaningful and planned service experiences in the community that are directly related to course content, with a focus on critical reflective thinking as well as personal and civic responsibility.

Service-Learning

- Emphasizes active learning in different environments.
- Allows students to see and experience the relationship between theory and practice.
- Links academic study to community service through structured reflection.
- Engages students in meaningful service benefiting the community.
- Provides students with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations.

Service-Learning @ City College of San Francisco

There are two institutional service-learning programs at City College of San Francisco. The first is AmeriCorp, the nationwide service learning organization that has funded projects at CCSF since 1997. The AmeriCorp office can be reached at (415) 239-3998.

The second program is run out of the Office of Mentoring and Service-Learning (OMSL). These service-learning efforts are largely driven by faculty interests. The OSML sponsors faculty-designed projects which offer students enrolled in specific courses the opportunity to be placed in the community, where they apply both their academic and practical skills. Faculty design the projects around four principles:

1. **Engagement**- Does the service component meet a public good?
2. **Reflection**- Is there a mechanism that encourages students to link their service experience to course content and to reflect upon why the service is important?
3. **Reciprocity**- Is Reciprocity evident in the service component? Does the service benefit both the student and the community partner in meaningful ways?
4. **Public Dissemination**- How will the community be informed of the service and its effects?

Who are the participants?

A Service-Learning triad consists of a Faculty member who has identified learning outcomes in a course that could be achieved by a community service project, a Community Partner whose mission and goals align with the goals of the Faculty members' learning outcomes and who would benefit from the service of CCSF students, and most importantly service-learning students who are willing to provide service related to the academic content of their CCSF course to the Community Partner.

What are the benefits?

...for the student

- Connects the classroom to the community
- Increases skills in learning from experience
- Develops academic and social self-confidence
- Develops higher level thinking skills of critical thinking and problem-solving
- Improves communication skills
- Provides opportunities for career exploration, experience and professional connections
- Provides experience which can be used on a student's resume and future college applications
- Builds student awareness of local, national and/or global issues
- Promotes positive values, leadership, and civic and personal responsibility

...for the Faculty Sponsor

- Invites innovative and creative teaching methods
- Engages and motivates students
- Establishes the connection between theory and application
- Contributes to the community
- Engages the community as co-educators
- Promotes collaboration and interdisciplinary efforts

...for the Community Partner

- Helps meet the needs of non-profit agencies, private sector companies with community projects, community based organizations, neighborhoods and individuals in need
- Boosts visibility and profile of partner organizations
- Brings energy and enthusiasm to organizations
- Builds base of potential future volunteers and donors
- Increases campus-community collaboration and partnerships

...for City College of San Francisco

- Has the potential to increase student retention
- Contributes to the college's outreach and service efforts in the local community
- Increases campus-community collaboration and partnerships
- Increases the college's awareness of societal issues as they relate to academic areas of interest
- Provides opportunities to extend the college's knowledge and resources
- Promotes an environment that encourages personal and civic responsibility
- Fosters a culture of student participation and leadership on campus
- Promotes the vision of the college to be a Teaching and Learning Community, a Service Community, a Diverse and Caring Community, and a Contributing Community

Thank you to Monroe Community College Service-Learning Manuals and the Center for Service Learning at San Jose State University website (www2.sjsu.edu/csl) for inspiring these materials.