



SERVICE-LEARNING – EVERYBODY WINS!

The contents of this article explain what service-learning is (and isn't), the requirements of a service-learning program, the benefits of service-learning and the types of activities Marketing 100S students might engage in during this aspect of the course.

Service-Learning Defined

Service-learning is well established in academics. Two early definitions of are below and are followed by the definition of service-learning adopted by Fresno State.

1. "A method under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs, that [are] integrated into the students' academic curriculum or provide structured time for reflection, and that enhance what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community." (Corporation for National and Community Service, 1990).
2. Service Learning is "Any carefully monitored service experience in which a student has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what he or she is learning throughout the experience." (National Society for Experiential Education, 1994).

According to these definitions, the "service" occurs when students apply what they are learning in their classroom to activities that benefit the community. The student examines an academic concept while performing the service. The "learning" occurs when students analyze and reflect on what took place. Reflections are accomplishing through writing a journal or report, class discussions, or other activities.

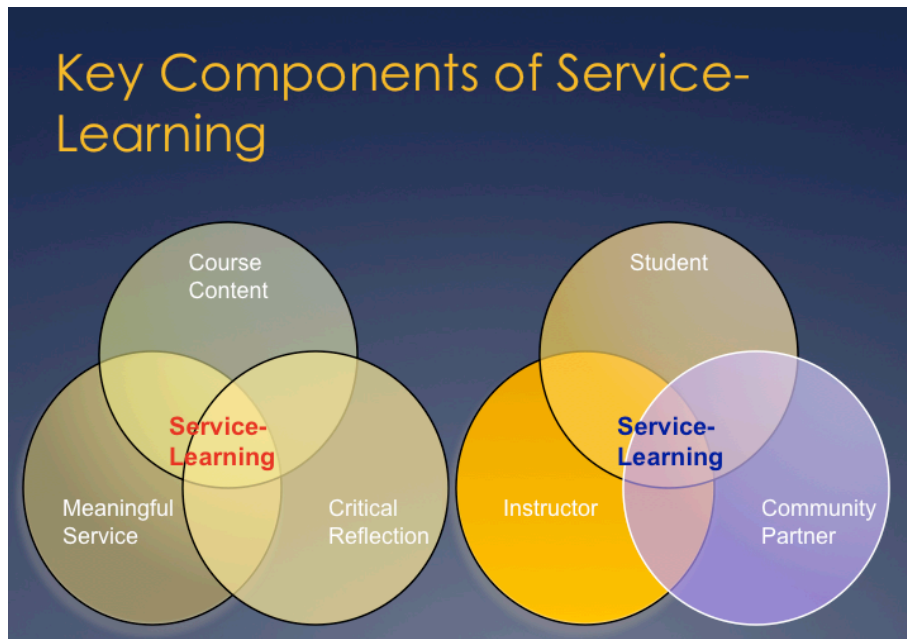
Fresno State's service-learning includes three key elements.

1. *Relevant and meaningful service with the community*
2. *Enhanced academic learning*
3. *Purposeful civic learning preparing students for active civic participation in a diverse democratic society*

CSUF Definition: Service-learning is a method to enhance students' learning and foster civic understanding through active participation in meaningful service linked to academic study through structured reflection. The service may include improvement of community resources, direct service to people in need, applied research, community outreach and education, or policy analysis and advocacy. The academic study may be in any discipline or combination of fields.

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Students may find the below graphic helpful in understanding the elements of service learning. In the figure on the left, service learning is the intersection of course concepts, their application in a service activity, and the student's reflection on that experience. The figure on the right indicates a successful service-learning experience requires the student, the CBO (community partner), and the instructor to work together to create and complete a meaningful experience.



Service-Learning vs. Other Types of Service

The difference between service learning, community service, and volunteerism can be described using the following example of a marketing student.

Volunteerism engages students in activities where the primary emphasis is on the service being provided and the primary intended beneficiary is only the service recipient. A student who simply assists or “volunteers” at the local blood bank in an individual effort unrelated to a structured course is performing a volunteer activity.

Community Service programs involve more structure and greater commitment than volunteer programs. The same student volunteering on a regular basis also learns more about the needs of the blood bank and what needs to be done to effectively educate the public. The student may begin to make presentations to encourage individuals to donate blood in their classes. While the primary beneficiaries of the service are still the blood bank and their constituents, the student is receiving some benefit by improving verbal skills and learning about how their service makes a difference.

Service-Learning requires the student to make a connection between the service and concepts being studied in the classroom. The result is the student examines an academic concept while performing the service. The connection is normally made by requiring a journal, report, class discussion, or other reflective activity. Our student at

the blood bank, who is enrolled in a marketing course, now writes a report that illustrates how the organization attempts to reach donors through a variety of media and promotions. The student has now been "shown" not "told" how this aspect of marketing works. Additional reflective activity asking the student to share personal thoughts on the impact of their experience acts to reinforce the importance of community involvement. It is this equal emphasis on service and learning which distinguishes this experience from community service and volunteering.

Service-Learning Activities in MKTG100S

In order for an activity to qualify as service-learning, it must meet the needs of the community. The student will work with a Community Benefit Organization or nonprofit that will define what needs to be done – not the student or the professor. For the purposes of Marketing 100S, service-learning activities may include a variety of interesting service work. For example:

- Assisting with fundraising events
- Creating brochures, flyers, and other collateral material
- Performing marketing research
- Creating and managing social media accounts
- Assisting with donor database management
- Writing press releases
- Creating promotional videos
- Performing advocacy

Benefits of Service Learning for Students

The benefits of service-learning are many and varied, and accrue to students, faculty, the institution of higher learning, and most of all to the community. Students' benefits include:

- Students expand problem solving, organizational, and communication skills, all of which transfer to many occupations.
- Students are able to engage in active rather than passive learning.
- Develops initiative, independent reasoning and independent learning.
- Helps student to understand the relationship between theory and practice.
- Enhances exposure to and respect for different cultures and socio-economic conditions, which in turn enhances communication with different and diverse groups.
- Students learn understand broader aspects of their community and their community's issues, and fosters students' understanding of civic responsibility.
- Allows students to explore moral values and ethical issues.
- Helps students realize they can make a difference and provides a rewarding experience to remember for a lifetime.
- Service-learning experience broaden a student's background and thus may enhance a student's résumé.

Key Effects of Service-Learning Programs

Research has shown that service-learning has many positive effects on students, faculty, the community, and the academic institution. Service-learning:

1. Has a positive effect on student personal development, including: a sense of personal efficacy, a personal identity, spiritual growth, and moral development.
2. Has a positive effect on the development of interpersonal skills and the ability to work well with others, and on students' leadership and communication skills.
3. Positively impacts academic outcomes such as problem analysis, critical thinking, and cognitive development.
4. Has the positive effect of reducing cultural stereotypes and of facilitating cultural and racial understanding.
5. Has a positive effect on the development of social responsibility, citizenship skills, civic engagement, and commitment to service.
6. Contributes to career development and can influence major and career selection.
7. Fosters stronger student-faculty relationships.
8. Has long-term effects even years after graduation in public service commitment, willingness to contribute to social causes, and willingness to give back to one's institution
9. Has relevancy as it helps to link often abstract theories of course material with day-to-day experiences of students and community members
10. Builds stronger communities as it links students, faculty and the institution of higher learning with the local community.

Service-Learning and the Craig School

Mission

The Craig School of Business educates and inspires a diverse student body and supports economic development in Central California and beyond.

The Craig School's objectives include educating a highly diverse student body and supporting economic development in the region. To achieve these goals, the School must continually find ways to allow students to learn by practical application and collaboration, through an "applied learning" approach. While internships may be the ultimate application of classroom knowledge, they may be insufficient or impractical for all students. Service learning is another way to accomplish these objectives.

Key reasons for business students specifically to be involved in service-learning include the following.

- Students need to be aware of and consider more than the bottom line. A study sponsored by AACSB registered a concern that while business students may have the required analytical skills, they may be insensitive to factors other than the bottom line. There is a growing need to deal more effectively with the external environments of business. The recommendation was that business faculties ensure students graduate with exposure to a wider range of issues than is typical of today's business graduate, indicating there is a growing need for greater social awareness and accountability.
- The non-profit or civil sector as a source of employment is increasing in importance. There are currently more than 1.4 million nonprofit organizations in the United States. Over ten percent of the nation's total employment is in this sector. While the professional positions with these non-profits may not be among the highest paying jobs, they can be among the most challenging and gratifying available in today's society.
- Business students need more exposure to the growing importance of cultural and demographic factors in the conduct of business. Understanding, accepting, and valuing a diverse workforce is critical for today's business graduate. Service-learning can expose students to diverse cultures and individual needs. These opportunities allow the student to leave their own personal comfort zone and to learn about and experience the value of diversity.
- Service participation results in a number of long-term positive impacts on behavior. If the business school can contribute to the development of a proactive, rather passive citizen, it will be fulfilling its obligation to serve the community at large.

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