



The University of Tennessee Southern Faculty Service-Learning Manual

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Introduction

Service-Learning is being adopted by an increasing number of colleges and universities as an effective method of teaching students how to absorb what they learn inside the classroom and apply it in the “real world.” Campus Compact stated that in 2008, “Nearly a third of college students (31%) at Campus Compact member schools participated in community service, service-learning, and civic engagement activities, performing an average of 3.7 hours of service each week.”

This Service-Learning Manual provides relevant information for faculty members at the University of Tennessee Southern.

What is Service-Learning?

Service-Learning at the UT Southern is a course-based teaching methodology that helps students learn and develop through active engagement in organized service experiences combined with structured time for reflection, fostering academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility.ⁱⁱ

The National Center for Service-Learning expands on these definitions with three key characteristics of service-learning:

1. Clearly defined course objectives combining service with learning.
2. Activities focused on meeting human needs in the community.
3. Reflection on students’ experiences and the connection to course objectives.

Every service-learning program is unique, but all aim to help students increase their academic skills by understanding how they learn in school and can be applied to the real world. Service-learning programs help students become interested in their communities and learn how they can affect their quality of life.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Service-Learning should not be equated with Community Service, which refers to action taken to meet the needs of others and better the community as a whole.

Why Do Service-Learning?^{iv}

- Service-learning positively affects students' personal development, such as a sense of personal efficacy, personal identity, spiritual growth, and moral development.
- Service-learning has a positive effect on reducing stereotypes and facilitating cultural & racial understanding.
- Service-learning positively affects the sense of social responsibility and citizenship skills.
- Service-learning has a positive effect on commitment to service.
- Volunteer service in college is associated with involvement in community service after graduation.

- Students and Faculty report that service-learning positively impacts students' academic learning.
- Students and Faculty report that service-learning improves students' ability to apply what they have learned in “the real world.”
- Service-learning participation impacts such academic outcomes as demonstrated complexity of understanding, problem analysis, critical thinking, and cognitive development.
- Students engaged in service-learning report stronger faculty relationships than those not involved in service-learning.
- Service-learning improves student satisfaction with college.
- Students engaged in service-learning are more likely to graduate.
- Faculty using service-learning report satisfaction with the quality of student learning.
- Community service affects student retention.
- Communities report enhanced university relations.

Service-Learning at UT Southern

1. The Service Learning Liaison is responsible for pairing Faculty, presentations, and assessments and overseeing the Service Learning program.
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UT Southern’s Model for Service-Learning^v

UT Southern offers selected faculty the possibility of including a Service-Learning component in their regular curriculum. Those interested should contact UT Southern Serves to discuss. Faculty will be given access to information on the UT Southern website including course materials, a list of our current Community Partners who have agreed to take on Service-Learners, and a Service-Learning Faculty Handbook.

Faculty often include Service-Learning as an option in their course syllabus, instead of another research requirement or exam. They specify how students integrate their service experience with their coursework and what coursework credit they will receive from Service-Learning.

Students complete a requisite number of service hours (usually 15-20) at their placement site during the semester, participate with faculty in pre-determined reflection opportunities, and fulfill their instructor’s academic requirements.

Community Partners place students in direct contact with persons in need, train and supervise the students and maintain a record of their service during the semester.

Types of Service-Learning Components^{vi}

1. Option Within a Course

Students will have the option to become involved in a Service-Learning project. A portion of normal coursework will be replaced with the Service-Learning component.

2. Required Within a Course

All students are involved in service as an integrated aspect of the course which can either be student based or be done collectively as a class.

3. Class Service Projects

The entire class is involved in a one-time service project. Note: one-time projects have different learning outcomes than ongoing service activities.

4. Independent 4th Credit Option

Students negotiate with instructors to define parameters of service components and ways to document learning derived from service.

5. Disciplinary Capstone Projects

Service-Learning builds upon students' cumulative knowledge in a discipline and demonstrates the integration of knowledge with real-life issues.

6. Service Research Projects

Involve students in research within the community. The research results are communicated to a Community Partner so they can be used to address community needs.

Choosing a Service-Learning Component^{vii}

1. How necessary is the service experience to the course content?
2. What knowledge and skills will students need to succeed with their service project?
3. Does the community partner have experience with Service-Learning?
4. How many students can the service site accommodate?
5. What resources are available to support Service-Learning efforts?

Planning Your Service-Learning Course

Service-Learning has applications for virtually any curriculum. The challenge is to integrate the academic and service components in ways that tailor the program to meet the specific needs of

all participants: instructors, students, and community partners. Designing a quality Service-Learning course offering requires planning and forethought to develop a dynamic learning environment that engages students as they take an active role in their educations. You can use the following steps to help you prepare a successful program.

Step 1: Determine whether service-learning is right for you.

What are some of the reasons you are considering incorporating service-learning into your courses? Do you want to engage your students? Enliven your classes? Help develop a sense of civic responsibility in your students. Can service-learning classes help you to fulfill your teaching objectives more effectively?

What changes would you like your students to see from participation in a Service-Learning course?

What specific learning outcomes do you expect from a Service-Learning course?

Step 2: Consider how community service can be integrated into your course.

To what extent are the objectives of Service-Learning compatible with the needs and values of your students? Are any objectives incompatible with the needs and values of your students?

What activities could students engage in to help them learn what you are trying to teach them?

What local agencies, organizations, or projects could benefit from student service participation?

Are there types of students for whom you would not recommend participation in community service activities?

Step 3: Design the course, integrating the Service-Learning elements.

Your first decision will be whether service will be required or optional. Consider whether the service is central to or on the periphery of the course and to what extent the success of the course is dependent upon service experiences.

If the service element is optional, determine what class work will be considered equivalent to community service. How will alternative assignments be weighed against service work? How will class time be managed when all students are not involved in the same activities?

What type and how much service will be considered adequate if service is required? How are the service and non-service requirements related, and how do they work together to satisfy teaching goals?

Alternative plans must be considered for students who cannot satisfy requirements. Unexpected problems can arise not only with students but also with partnering agencies.

Decide how students will be grouped for service participation. One method is to place students into partner agencies individually. The student normally completes reflection assignments and discusses experiences in regular meetings with the instructor. A second method is to place groups of students into agencies together. These students complete reflection exercises and discuss experiences with other group members, with groups placed in other agencies, and/or

with the instructor. Another method is to involve the entire class in an activity that benefits an agency or the community, incorporating reflection assignments and group discussions into the project. *Part of this decision will be based on the agency's needs in the community.*

Reflective activities are a vital element in Service-Learning programs. There are many reflection exercises, with journaling being the most common. Others include PowerPoint Presentations, class discussions, and papers. Determine which reflection assignments will be most effective in achieving the academic goals of the class.

Grading and student evaluation are generally more subjective in Service-Learning courses than in traditional classes. Determine the criteria on which you will evaluate student performance.

Finally, decide whether outside texts or other assignments will be needed to supplement the community service work.

Step 4: Develop course materials

The first item you will need is a tailored course syllabus. The following items should be given particular attention. Refer to the Resources section for examples.

Course goals: academic and service-learning goals should be discussed separately.

- **Academic goals:** What are the learning goals of the course? How does the incorporation of service change these goals?
- **Service component goals:** What role will the service components have in achieving the academic goals?

Service activities and assignments: determine what types of service activities support the academic goals, how the placement will be handled, how many service hours will be required, how hours will be recorded, and what activities/assignments can be substituted for service.

Reflection activities: decide what type(s) of reflection exercises will best enhance academic goals and encourage understanding of the service provided.

The most common reflection activity is journal assignments. They can be:

- **Three-part journals:** Each journal entry is divided into thirds: description, analysis, and application. In the description section, students record some aspects of their service experience. In the second part, they analyze how course content relates to that experience. In the last section, they speculate on how the academic and service aspects can be applied in their future personal and professional lives.
- **Key-phrase journals:** The course instructor provides a list of key terms and phrases at the beginning of the course. Students then include these terms in their journals, and they are evaluated based on their use and demonstrated application.
- **Double-entry journals:** On the left pages of the journal, students describe service experiences and their thoughts and reaction to them. On the right page, they write about key issues in class discussions or reading assignments and draw arrows between related concepts and experiences.

While the evaluation of journal content can be highly subjective, certain critical elements can be objectively analyzed, including

- Observations
- Questions
- Speculation
- Self-Awareness
- Synthesis

Instructors may want to implement a standardized journal format that includes specific questions for students to answer to obtain comprehensive yet uniform responses. The use of journal forms also facilitates objective evaluation of the journal content.

Other reflection activities include:

- Directed writings: The course instructor periodically identifies a section from a textbook or assigned reading and assigns an essay question based on the concepts in the reading. An alternative is including an essay question(s) on an examination.
- Case studies: Students are directed to write up a case study of any dilemma they have experienced during service participation. Case studies are read in class, discussing how the situation could be handled.
- E-mail discussion: The instructor sets up a listserv for students to discuss service experiences. The instructor can periodically post discussion questions related to a textbook, other assignments or critical concepts.
- Exit cards: Students are given a set of index cards, each bearing the question: "How does information from today's class period relate to your service experience?" At the end of each classroom period, the students must write a response relating that period's lesson with their service experience. The cards are graded, with an average of 2-3 points awarded per card, and the results are included in the student's overall grade for the course.
- Graffiti boards: The instructor posts graffiti boards around the classroom and asks students to respond to questions, quotes, statistics posted on the boards.
- PowerPoint Presentation: Students are allowed to do a presentation about specific experiences that occurred during their Service-Learning project.
- Reflection Papers: Students can write about their Service-Learning project and how it relates to their class material.

Texts and other assignments: list all textbooks, readings, papers, and projects that will be required.

Responsibilities and expectations: detail what each participating party will be responsible for. At a minimum, include:

- How placements will be handled;
- Who is responsible for transportation;
- How service hours will be tracked/verified;
- How the instructor will be involved;
- How absences will be handled; and
- How to handle problems at the placement site.

Grades and student evaluations: discuss how assignments will be evaluated, and grades will be determined.

- Other materials or forms may be required, depending on the course and type of service activities being contemplated. Some forms may need to be developed for specific activities, but many standard forms can be utilized.

Course Implementation

Service-Learning as a teaching method is not new, but it is safe to assume that your students have not yet been exposed to this learning style. It is a good idea to begin the first day of class by explaining what Service-Learning is and how you expect it to enhance their learning experience. Discuss the benefits to the community as well as the students. Clarify service expectations and stress the importance of commitment to the project. Talk about the various placement possibilities in the community and the types of activities students would be participating in. In addition to the syllabus, distribute Service-Learning agency contact forms, liability releases, pre-participation surveys, timesheets, or other applicable materials. Explain reflection assignments and discuss how they facilitate and reinforce the learning experience. BE POSITIVE. The students should view community service as an opportunity and not a burden.

The next step is placement within a Community Partner organization or business. Placement can be arranged through UTSouthern Serves. All applicable forms and other paperwork should be completed once the student volunteer has been placed. Students should participate in an on-site orientation which will include a tour of the site/facility and a discussion of the following:

- Agency history, mission, and purpose
- Staff and volunteer roles and schedules
- Emergency procedures
- Agency policies and safety requirements
- Confidentiality issues, and
- Agency protocols (dealing with conflicts, interpersonal relations, etc.)

The assigned reflection exercises and other assignments should be completed, evaluated, and discussed with students during the course. **Reflection is a vital part of Service-Learning as it is a key element in creating meaning**, promoting academic learning and personal development. Regular class or group discussions where students share experiences and insights are also highly encouraged. These dialogues not only build community skills but also give the instructor opportunities to identify service experiences that reflect the academic goals of the course. Facilitated discussion is even more important as the students reach the end of their service projects. Instructors can help reach closure with the Community Partner staff and clients, especially those students working with children. Students may also have the option to continue serving through UT Southern Serves in this location or another.

Performance should be evaluated at the end of the course. Individual participation and learning will be reflected in the student's grades. Feedback and agency evaluations of the student volunteers can assist you in gauging student performance. By developing flexible standards, it is possible to evaluate the service components like an oral or written presentation: Did the student master the course material? A similar approach can be used to evaluate how much you realized your teaching objectives. The student participants should also be asked to evaluate their experiences, which will help determine the overall

effectiveness of the course and offer suggestions for improvement. Further assessment measures and methods are discussed in the next section.

Assessment

The extent of “learning” achieved in Service-Learning courses can be assessed in the same ways that learning in conventional classroom settings is assessed. A meaningful, thorough evaluation is based on sound underlying principles applicable to any teaching pedagogy. The American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum (1992) developed the following Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning.

- The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
- Assessment is most effective when it reflects any understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
- Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
- Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
- Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.
- Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.
- Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions people care about.
- Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of the large set of conditions that promote change.
- Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.

Service-Learning courses do, of course, have certain unique characteristics that must be taken into account. The most important consideration in evaluating a Service-Learning course is that all parties in the project must be evaluated: student participants, community partners, and the sponsoring institution and faculty instructor. Therefore, Service-Learning courses should be evaluated from several perspectives, such as:

- To what extent did the students achieve the learning objectives?
- To what extent were service goals met?
- How successful was the project for each student?
- How successful was the project for the class as a whole?

- How successful was the project for the community agency/organization?
- How beneficial was the project to the service recipients?

The programs relative success in terms of participant personal and educational development, improved achievement of academic goals, and benefit to the community being served is often measured through the participation survey tools. Agency evaluation forms are good indicators of individual student performance and the program's effectiveness in general. Student exit surveys are good measurements of the impact of the service component on their learning experience. This survey asks the students to rate the course using questions like: "The community work I did in this course helped me to understand key course concepts better." They are also useful in qualifying and quantifying "soft" outcomes such as increased feelings of self-esteem or self-efficacy, perceptions of cultures different from one's own, attitudes towards the environment, etc. These outcomes are best assessed through pre-service and post-service questionnaires that compare changes in student attitudes directly attributable to the course. Any other specific evaluations for students, community partners, and faculty are readily available in the Office of Religious Life.

Service-Learning Faculty Information Sheet

Faculty Name: _____

Dept.: _____

Phone: _____ **Office Location:** _____

Email: _____

Course Number: _____ **Course Title:** _____

Service-learning is: _____required _____Optional

A. Briefly describe the objectives of the course and the type of placement you have envisioned. [Service may be direct (hands-on), indirect (at the CP organization, behind the scenes), or non-direct (e.g., research a topic for the CP organization)].

B. Will you require a certain number of hours (from about 12 – 25 hours per semester on this campus, e.g., tutoring, work at a social service organization) or completion of a project (e.g., video, research survey)? Will the class meet at the CP Organization for any of the classes? If so, when?

C. What type of reflection do you intend to use as you process the service experience with your students?

Pre-Service-Learning Survey

Please take a moment to share about past service experiences and attitudes toward future service. Please circle a response to each question.

Demographic Information

1. What is your ethnicity:
 - A. Caucasian/White
 - B. African American
 - C. Hispanic
 - D. Native American
 - E. Asian/Asian American
 - F. Other

2. What is your age group?
 - A. Under 20
 - B. 20 to 44
 - C. 25 to 29
 - D. 30 to 34
 - E. Over 35

3. What is your gender?
 - A. Male
 - B. Female

4. What is your class level?
 - A. Freshman
 - B. Sophomore
 - C. Junior
 - D. Senior

5. In addition to college, I have a paying job that requires me to work...
 - A. 1 – 10 hrs/week
 - B. 11 – 20 hrs/week
 - C. 21 – 30 hrs/week
 - D. 31-40 hrs/week
 - E. 41+ hrs/week
 - F. I do not have a job

6. What Division are you in?
 - A. Business
 - B. Education
 - C. Humanities
 - D. Mathematics and Science
 - E. Nursing
 - F. Social Science
 - G. Undecided

Please continue on the back page-

Service-Learning Experience

We would like to gain your perspective about the service-learning in which you will participate.

Please circle the number that reflects your agreement level with the following statements utilizing the scale below:

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree; 6 = Not Applicable

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7. This course's community participation aspect will help me to see how the course material I learn can be used in everyday life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 8. Participation in service-learning will help me better understand the material from my lectures and readings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 9. I feel I will learn more from the courses if more time is spent in the classroom instead of in the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10. Service-learning should be implemented into more classes at the College. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 11. Participation in service-learning will make me take more responsibility for my learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 12. I would like to enroll in additional service-learning courses offered through my degree program. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

The next set of questions relates to your attitude toward service-learning in which you will participate. Please circle the number that reflects your agreement level with the following statements utilizing the scale below:

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree; 6 = Not Applicable

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13. I have been volunteering before this service-learning experience. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 14. The community participation aspect of service-learning will show me how I can become more involved in my community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 15. I feel that the work I will do through service-learning will benefit the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 16. I probably won't volunteer or continue community involvement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 17. Service-learning will help me to become more aware of the needs in the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 18. I am responsible for serving the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Post Service-Learning Survey

Please take a moment to share about past service experiences and attitudes toward future service. Please circle a response to each question.

Demographic Information

19. What is your ethnicity:
- G. Caucasian/White
 - H. African American
 - I. Hispanic
 - J. Native American
 - K. Asian/Asian American
 - L. Other
20. What is your age group?
- F. Under 20
 - G. 20 to 44
 - H. 25 to 29
 - I. 30 to 34
 - J. Over 35
21. What is your gender?
- C. Male
 - D. Female
22. What is your class level?
- E. Freshman
 - F. Sophomore
 - G. Junior
 - H. Senior
23. In addition to college, I have a paying job that requires me to work...
- G. 1 – 10 hrs/week
 - H. 11 – 20 hrs/week
 - I. 21 – 30 hrs/week
 - J. 31-40 hrs/week
 - K. 41+ hrs/week
 - L. I do not have a job
24. What Division are you in?
- H. Business
 - I. Education
 - J. Humanities
 - K. Mathematics and Science
 - L. Nursing
 - M. Social Science
 - N. Undecided

Please continue on the back page- →

Service-Learning Experience

We would like to gain your perspective about the service-learning in which you have participated. Please circle the number that reflects your level of agreement with the following statements utilizing the scale below:

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree; 6 = Not Applicable

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25. The community participation aspect of this course has helped me see how the course material I learn can be used in everyday life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 26. Participation in service-learning has helped me better understand the material from my lectures and readings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 27. I would have learned more from the courses if more time had been spent in the classroom instead of in the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 28. Service-learning should be implemented into more classes at the College. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 29. Participation in service-learning has made me take more responsibility for my learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 30. I would like to enroll in additional service-learning courses offered through my degree program. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

The next set of questions relates to your attitude toward service-learning in which you will participate. Please circle the number that reflects your agreement level with the following statements utilizing the scale below:

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree; 6 = Not Applicable

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 31. I had been volunteering before this service-learning experience. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 32. The community participation aspect of service-learning showed me how I can become more involved in my community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 33. My work through service-learning benefited the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 34. I probably won't volunteer or continue community involvement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 35. Service-learning has helped me become more aware of the needs in the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 36. I am responsible for serving the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

ⁱ <http://www.compact.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/2008-statistics1.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Definition created by the University of Tennessee Southern-Learning Committee.

ⁱⁱⁱ Bringle, Robert and Julie Hatcher. "A Service-Learning Curriculum for Faculty," in *Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning*, 2, pp. 112-122. (taken from Campus Compact)

^{iv} Adapted from *At A Glance: What We Know about the Effects of Service-Learning on College Students, Faculty, Institutions and Communities, 1993-2000: Third Edition.* (Janet S. Eyster, Dwight E. Giles, Jr., Christine M. Stenson, and Charlene J. Gray Vanderbilt University August 31

^v Taken from Betsy Alden and Mark Rutledge's *The Praxis Project*.

^{vi} Enos, S.L., & Troope, M.L. ((1996). Service-learning in the curriculum. In B. Jacoby & Associates (Eds.), *Service-learning in higher education: Concepts and practices*, 156-181. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Taken from San Antonio College's website.

^{vii} Foos, C.L. & Hatcher, J.A. (1999). *Service-learning Workshop Curriculum Guide*, Indiana Campus Compact.