



Making Professional Education a Transformative Experience

As Philadelphia University advances work on its signature pedagogy, we are excited to present a relatively new concept into our pedagogical process: Service Learning. Our commitment to this emerging program is stronger than ever, and as an interested faculty member, you are at the forefront of this exciting educational movement.

Bridging the gap between the classrooms, labs, and studios and the real world by utilizing community service allows our students to realize how they are able to make a difference as both citizens and professionals. More than simply applying volunteerism as a course component, service-learning courses provides the opportunity to uphold our strong tradition of graduating well-rounded professionals with diverse interests and experiences.

The benefits of service learning transcend the student-teacher relationship. Students are able to apply their classroom education to real-world settings and develop a sense of civic engagement, an educational objective that we all too often forego. They are able to explore new ideas while learning the values and skills that make them good citizens in their communities.

The benefit to faculty is that it simply makes our courses better. In a truly collaborative education environment, one of the many truths is that education cannot exist in a vacuum and be effective. Combining practical and relevant service opportunities with the lessons presented in the classroom makes all involved parties stronger, creating better graduates and better communities.

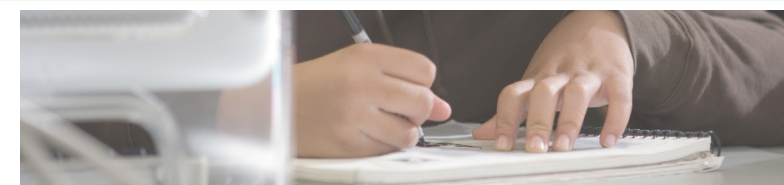
While the office of Community Service Learning works actively to expand the use of service-learning as a teaching pedagogy at Philadelphia University, there is a strong history of using service-learning in the classroom that should be recognized. In fact, the practice of using service-learning is a teaching tool to develop civic minded professionals is a key element of the University's signature learning, described as "active, collaborative, and real-world."

Examples of service-learning at Philadelphia University include:

- Occupational Therapy and Industrial Design Students Collaborate on Devices for Disabled Clients
- PhilaU Receives 'University Green' Grant; Launches Campus Tree Tenders Chapter.
- Interior Design Students turn dream room into reality for ailing Elkins Park girl

Faculty interested in using service-learning in their courses can review a database of syllabi from various disciplines at the following website. In this online resource you will find over 200 exemplary service-learning syllabi across a wide variety of disciplines and an introduction which provides a framework by which faculty can best conceptualize integrating service learning into their courses.

www.compact.org/syllabi



Kanbar Campus Center, Suite 311
4201 Henry Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144



Online Resources for Faculty

The Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning (MJCSL) is a national, peer-reviewed journal consisting of articles written by faculty and service-learning educators on research, theory, pedagogy, and issues pertinent to the service learning community.

www.umich.edu/~mjcsl

National Service Learning Clearinghouse - The NSLC website has a robust online resource with information and technical assistance pertaining to academic research, program startup, assessment and evaluation, downloading online documents, or anything else regarding service-learning.

www.servicelearning.org

Campus Compact is a national coalition of more than 900 college and university presidents committed to the civic purposes of higher education.

www.compact.org

For more internet resources, visit our website:

www.PhilaU.edu/community/servicelearningresources.html

Contact Us

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Next Steps

1. Contact a service-learning staff member to set up an initial discussion of our program, issues relating to it, and how to find a community partner that will be best for your learning outcomes and objectives.
2. Complete an intake form (insert) to help design service learning options for your courses.
3. Consider applying for a service learning mini-grant which offers up to \$500 for support in sustaining service-learning. Applications are available in Kanbar Campus Center, suite 311 or online at www.PhilaU.edu/community.
4. Develop a service component to your syllabus and evaluation plans for students' service.
5. Work with the Community Service Learning staff to develop appropriate site partner relationships.
6. Participate in the various curriculum development, grant and learning programs offered through our affiliations such as Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND) and Pennsylvania Campus Compact, among others.

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The Fundamentals of Service-Learning

Coming out of the sixties, there was a thought if universities started co-curricular volunteer programs that got students out to the community, they would figure out the importance of being civically engaged on their own. Unfortunately, this was not always the case, and an intentional connection to the curriculum was necessary to link service to educational goals. As a result the concept of service learning was born, a pedagogical concept that has increasingly been embraced by universities nationwide.

As we are preparing the future generation for lives of civic engagement, there is no better way to do so than through the classroom. The added value that comes through this pedagogical method brings classes to life and creates the future civic-minded professionals and leaders of America.

The benefits that are seen in classroom involvement, student performance, and the work that they produce most often justify the time. Service-learning takes activities, discussions and theory that are presented in the classroom and allows students to apply them to the real world through specifically designed service activities.

In order to relate service-learning concepts to the classroom, it is important that the project is able to reinforce classroom concepts and that the classroom is a forum for expressing these concepts. The following is a sample of how different fields can incorporate service learning; we can help you find a program for most areas of study. Please note that these are only a few examples:

Design – internships with non-profits, design branding and online identities for non-profits, develop civic and community oriented campaigns, design for and inclusive of underserved and underrepresented populations.

Architecture – design solutions for low-income families, partner with communities in need of revitalization, work with related agencies such Habitat for Humanity and Women’s Community Revitalization Project.

History/Political Science - field studies; tracing history of non-profits, homelessness issues; philanthropy studies; ethnographic studies of homeless men’s or women’s cultures, history of social issues.

Psychology - Field work at local hospitals or shelters, community psychology issues, children’s psychology in low income areas

Natural Sciences - Working with school systems for demonstrations and tutoring to children, environmental studies, guiding at nature centers.

Business - internships with non-profits, historical studies of social policy, field studies, research projects on trends in school funding.

SERVE-101: A 4th credit approach for Service-Learning

Recently the Undergraduate Education Committee (UEC) approved a one-credit Civic Engagement (SERVE-101) class to be offered beginning Fall 2009. This hybrid course is an innovative approach to promoting civic engagement and consistent with the University’s strategic plan by focusing on signature learning that “deepen(s) and broaden(s) experiential learning opportunities both in and outside the classroom (p. 18).” This course also promulgates the mission of Philadelphia University by “blending liberal arts and sciences, professional students, interdisciplinary learning, and collaborations in and out of the classroom. (2008 Revised Mission Statement).”

For faculty interested in utilizing a service-learning option in their curriculum, having students co-enroll in SERVE-101 and linking their service activities to this class helps create a learning community in which students utilize this stand-alone course as an additional one credit option. This 4th-credit approach offers students the opportunity to earn an additional credit in conjunction with a 3-credit course. Participating in the 4th-credit approach helps many students find a deeper understanding of class content through real world application of what they are learning. The 4th-credit approach requires students to take ownership of their learning experience by applying course concepts in the community and using service to enhance in-class learning.

SERVE-101 is designed to create an opportunity to understand the reciprocal nature and responsibility of citizenship through both practical applications and critical reflection. Students will have the option to work with a community partner, explore the impact of service on the community, and understand the vehicles that contribute meaningful social action to address societal and policy issues that perpetuate social inequities. This intentional service, reflection, understanding and action model is designed to help students evolve from “volunteers” to “ethically responsible citizens.”



Frequently Asked Questions About Service Learning

What is service learning?

Service-learning is a teaching tool, a philosophy of education. As a program type, service-learning includes a number of ways that students can perform meaningful service to their communities and to society while engaging in some form of reflection or study that is related to the service. As a philosophy of education, service-learning reflects the belief that education must be linked to social responsibility and that the most effective learning is active and connected to experience in some meaningful way. It strengthens both the educational experience and a student’s civic perspective.

How is service-learning different than community service?

Service learning uses targeted and relevant community service as the vehicle for the attainment of students’ and professors’ academic goals and objectives. Community service, alternately referenced as volunteerism, fills a need in the community through individuals’ efforts. Service learning also fills that need, but it uses that need as a foundation to examine ourselves, our society, and our future. Furthermore, service learning provides students with opportunities to use acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations.

What about co-op/internships/paid jobs - do these count as service-learning?

Many students work for non-profit or for-profit community organizations (such as hospitals) that have a benefit to our society, and many professors choose not to include these as fulfilling their service learning requirement because the students are being paid for their work. The alternate side of this argument states that as service learning is applying classroom concepts to the needs of the community, what is important is the student’s experience at the location, not whether the student is being paid or not. Both sides have their advantages and disadvantages; it is up to you to decide what meets your definition of service learning.

How many hours of service should my students perform?

Again, this is up to you. We’ve found that approximately 15-20 hours throughout the course of the semester is appropriate as a ballpark figure, although several courses have offered more or fewer hours and still been effective, and many service learning courses are project based. The focus should be more on having meaningful service activities that complement your coursework, not necessarily on the quantity of service hours. Professors should also be reminded that PhilaU has a high percentage of design students that are under time constraints.

I have 30 students in my class. How do I incorporate service and still have it be meaningful to the students?

Service-learning is a concept that can be applied to all courses, small and large. However, you might want to choose to make service learning an optional part of the course if you have a large class, or, if mandatory, you can pair students who have

community service experience with those who don’t. We can work with you to find appropriate community service sites for any class size.

Won’t some of my students be resistant to the idea of service learning?

In all likelihood, there will be some students in any class that will be resistant to participating in service-learning. There are many reasons: lack of previous service, being uncomfortable with the idea of serving certain populations, feeling like asking them to do service is “unfair”, and others. However, though there are students who might initially not be excited about the idea, most view it as a valuable experience by the end of the semester. Faculty certainly do not eliminate other useful education tools—tests, readings, presentations, discussion—when students express resistance to them.

How Do I Evaluate Service Learning in the Classroom?

One of the largest transitions that many faculty who incorporate ideas of service learning into their classroom have to make is the change from more traditional based classroom instruction to basing a class on activity that occurs outside of the classroom. There are many ways to evaluate these projects in such ways that are able to simultaneously incorporate grading procedures with student evaluation and reflection. While your learning goals and objectives should be reflected in your evaluation, a number of examples are journaling, papers, creative projects and presentations.

Service Learning Conceptual Framework

four
Service Learning in Academic Major - Developing a “Civic Professional”

Community service-learning programs used to support educational outcomes and learning objectives in courses that compromise the major discipline program of study.

three
Service Learning in College Studies - Developing an “Active Citizen” (Core-Curriculum)

Community service-learning programs used to support educational outcomes and learning objects in courses that compromise the core curriculum at Philadelphia University.

two
Promoting Social Action

Service programs designed to meet community need which also includes an educational awareness and/or social action component. These initiatives not only serve community need, but also include efforts to raise awareness and address societal and policy issues that contribute to community need. NOTE: This category is ideal for students choosing the SERVE-101 for credit option to meet the Physical Education requirement.

one
Engagement in the Community

Programs, largely but not exclusively, sponsored by Student Affairs designed to involve students in service initiatives in the community. These programs support the development of an ethic of service within the “Finding Philadelphia” first-year experience (FYE) program. Examples include, but not limited to Community Plunge sponsored through New Student Orientation (NSO), Saturdays of Service, and Day of Service.