

## **Principles of Good Practice for Service-Learning Pedagogy**

*Excerpted from* Howard, Jeffery, ed., *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning: Service-Learning Course Design Workbook*, University of Michigan: OCSL Press, Summer 2001, pp. 16-19

### **Principle 1: Academic Credit Is for Learning, Not for Service**

Academic credit is not awarded for doing service or for the quality of the service, but rather for the student's demonstration of academic and civic learning.

### **Principle 2: Do Not Compromise Academic Rigor**

#### **Principle 3: Establish Learning Objectives**

It is a service-learning maxim that one cannot develop a quality service-learning course without first setting very explicit learning objectives. This principle is foundational to service-learning.

#### **Principle 4: Establish Criteria for the Selection of Service Placements**

Requiring students to serve in any community-based organization as part of a service-learning course is tantamount to requiring students to read any book as part of a traditional course. Faculty who are deliberate about establishing criteria for selecting community service placements will find that students are able to extract more relevant learning from their respective service experiences, and are more likely to meet course learning objectives.

#### **Principle 5: Provide Educationally-Sound Learning Strategies To Harvest Community Learning and Realize Course Learning Objectives**

Requiring service-learning students to merely record their service activities and hours as their journal assignment is tantamount to requiring students in engineering to log their activities and hours in the lab. Learning interventions that promote critical reflection, analysis, and application of service experiences enable learning. These activities include classroom discussions, presentations, and journal and paper assignments that support analysis of service experiences in the context of the course academic and civic learning objectives.

#### **Principle 6: Prepare Students for Learning from the Community**

Most students lack experience with both extracting and making meaning from experience and in merging it with other academic and civic course learning strategies. Therefore, even an exemplary reflection journal assignment will yield, without sufficient support, uneven responses. Menlo (1993) identifies for competencies to accentuate learning from the community: reflective listening, seeking feedback, acuity in observation, and mindfulness in thinking.

#### **Principle 7: Minimize the Distinction Between the Students' Community Learning Role and Classroom Learning Role**

Classrooms and communities are very different learning contexts. Each requires students to assume a different learner role. The solution is to shape the learning environments so that students assume similar learning roles in both contexts. Re-norm the traditional classroom toward one that values students as active learners.

### **Principle 8: Rethink the Faculty Instructional Role**

If faculty encourage students' active learning in the classroom, what would be a concomitant and consistent change in one's teaching role? Commensurate with the proceeding principle's recommendation for an active student learning posture, this principle advocates that service-learning teachers, too, rethink their role. An instructor role that would be most compatible with an active student role shifts away from a singular reliance on transmission of knowledge and toward mixed pedagogical methods that include learning facilitation and guidance.

### **Principle 9: Be Prepared for Variation in, and Some Loss of Control with, Student Learning Outcomes**

### **Principle 10: Maximize the Community Responsibility Orientation of the Course**

One of the necessary conditions of a service-learning course is purposeful civic learning. Designing classroom norms and learning strategies that not only enhance academic learning but also encourage civic learning are essential to purposeful civic learning. For example, efforts to convert from individual to group assignments, and from instructor-only to instructor and student review of student assignments, re-norms the teaching-learning process to be consistent with the civic orientation of service-learning.



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## Principles of Good Practice for Service-Learning Pedagogy

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Abstract:

This is a brief guide to the teaching of service-learning in the college environment. Includes best practices, such as not compromising academics, having objectives, harmonize community and classroom learning, and others.

Full Text Link: [http://ilt.colostate.edu/sl/faculty/Principles\\_Practice.pdf](http://ilt.colostate.edu/sl/faculty/Principles_Practice.pdf)

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