

Service-Learning Best Practices

<p style="text-align: center;">PCC CORE OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication ▪ Community & Environmental Responsibility ▪ Critical Thinking & Problem Solving ▪ Cultural Awareness ▪ Professional Competence ▪ Self-Reflection 	<p style="text-align: center;">BEST PRACTICE 1: Course Relevance & Assessment</p> <p>Curricular goals of the project are defined and stated. A connection to curricular learning outcomes is clearly met through service-learning.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BEST PRACTICE 2: Communication with Partner Agency and Preparation for Service</p> <p>Service goals meet a genuine community need and are clearly established. Selection, design, and evaluation of the project are shared by all participants. (Students are provided the opportunity to interact with the community.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BEST PRACTICE 3: Understanding the Community Context for Service</p> <p>Community connections are made that build knowledge about the community, identify community resources, and cultivate partnerships. All participants are prepared with the knowledge and skills needed to perform the service.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BEST PRACTICE 4: Diversity/Cultural Competency</p> <p>Opportunities are offered to discuss value differences or to interact with a variety of individuals or groups, providing a deeper understanding of diversity, oppression, equity, and inclusion.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BEST PRACTICE 5: Reflection</p> <p>Students are involved in some method of reflection. Community partners may also be involved in this process.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BEST PRACTICE 6: Recognition</p> <p>All achievements (from students and possibly even the community partners) are celebrated and all participants are recognized. This can be any number of ways through presentations, information sharing, poster sessions, zines, etc.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Math students tutor elementary students.</p>	<p>Students practice their skills, reinforce previous knowledge, and gain confidence by teaching simpler mathematical concepts. Later, these math students create word problems combining course concepts with elements of their volunteer experience, which they present to their math class as a form of practice and review.</p>	<p>Students attend an orientation with the partner agency to learn about elementary students, the math concepts they're studying, and goals for the tutoring project. Students have clear guidelines on tutoring policies and expectations.</p>	<p>Students understand the reasons behind the need for tutors (under-funded, over-crowded classrooms), and the impacts that basic math skills have on thinking skills and daily life. They know how the tutoring program is funded (whether school-based, volunteer-run, or non-profit), and about any additional volunteer opportunities.</p>	<p>Students are likely to work with children for whom English is their second or even third language. Learning how to bridge cultural divides fosters patience and understanding.</p>	<p>Students record their tutoring experiences and ideas for the assigned word problems in a journal. Students later compare their experiences with other tutors, and collaborate on designing the word problems.</p>	<p>The instructor recognizes the students' volunteer work in class, as well as their contribution to the class' understanding of the material via their word problems.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Biology, Science, or Environmental Courses do trail restoration and create educational material for the Nature Conservatory.</p>	<p>With the goal of improving a local nature trail, students apply their science skills to map four animal and plant habitats. The maps are then shared with the local Nature Conservatory organization for use with their public education program.</p>	<p>Students, instructor, and community advisor investigate, discuss, and brainstorm the restoration needs of the trail, as well as the needs and use for educational material. All agree on a list of tasks to be completed during the service project.</p>	<p>Students discuss the public and societal impact of creating and maintaining nature trails. They understand how the maintenance of natural areas is funded and the role of public education programs in protecting access to nature.</p>	<p>The community advisor is a senior citizen who uses a cane and walks slowly. Students help her through difficult places on the trail. Students reflect on how differently-abled people might experience nature trails.</p>	<p>Students reflect in journals about specific topics posed by instructor (i.e. the role of nature trails in an urban society, the health of a particular animal habitat, etc.)</p>	<p>The trail group's work is celebrated in class, and they invite their community partners to attend. The educational material created by the students is formally presented to the agency.</p>

	BEST PRACTICE 1: Course Relevance & Assessment	BEST PRACTICE 2: Communication with Partner Agency and Preparation for Service	BEST PRACTICE 3: Understanding the Community Context for Service	BEST PRACTICE 4: Diversity/Cultural Competency	BEST PRACTICE 5: Reflection	BEST PRACTICE 6: Recognition
Writing courses create oral histories for senior citizens, immigrants, or homeless people.	Students apply writing skills to prepare a writing piece based on the interviews they conducted with the community members. Students use the writing techniques learned in the course.	Students attend an orientation by the community organization to learn about the people they serve and how the community organization operates. Guidelines and structures are given for conducting interviews. There is discussion about how to use the final writing pieces to influence local policies.	Students understand how increasing the public awareness of the experiences of marginalized communities can have a powerful impact on city policies and funding, etc. Students might work with the community organization to identify people whose stories are particularly relevant.	Students will likely be interviewing people of different backgrounds. Learning how to ask appropriate questions will foster inter-cultural communication and compassion.	Students keep a journal of their interviews and their experiences. All the students conducting interviews meet with each other to discuss and share their experiences. Student also makes notes of ideas to include in the final writing piece.	The writing instructor celebrates the students' participation by displaying or hosting a reading of the writing produced by the students. The community members are invited to join.
Multi-media, Photography, Graphic-Design, Journalism, or Foreign-Language students create videos or brochures for a local non-profit about how to access community resources	Students apply technical concepts learned in the course to create this final product. Students learn to adjust the language and images in the video/brochure for the target audience. The video/brochure is graded by a rubric given to students beforehand, and students present their final project to the class.	Students meet with the organization to learn about the challenges faced by their community. Sample brochures/ videos are provided as models. There is discussion about how the final products might be distributed to other agencies that could benefit from them.	Students understand the challenges faced by marginalized communities in accessing resources. Students work together and with community partner to identify greatest need and to understand why it is important.	Students will likely be preparing videos/ brochures to be used by people (or organizations) of different backgrounds. Students will learn to see the world from the perspective of someone with different life experiences.	Students chronicle their experience and process of learning about the community organization and developing their ideas for a final project through an illustrated story-board. The instructor also provides space and time for the students to discuss the challenges and victories of the process.	The instructor celebrates students' participation by displaying all the brochures/ videos created by the class. A representative from each represented community agency is invited to the celebration (and to collect the final, usable products).
Computer Science, Information Technology students teach basic computer literacy skills to low-income families or senior citizens (or... provide free technology trainings to staff members of local non-profits)	Students reinforce their knowledge of basic computer skills by teaching community classes. (Or, students practice advanced computer skills by training staff members at a local agency). Students gain useful practice in communicating complex ideas to non-computer specialists.	Students meet with the organization to identify which computer skills are most needed. Students know the mission of the organization and are familiar with the machines they will be using for the computer trainings. There is also discussion about how organizations might benefit from the creation of a "technology tips" poster.	Students reflect on the digital divide and how this affects poverty. Students also work with the community organization to understand how many non-profit organizations need additional technology resources to accomplish their missions (due to being underfunded, understaffed, etc.).	The people who attend the technology trainings may be from a variety of backgrounds. Students will learn to interact with and make difficult concepts clear to a diverse group of people.	Students keep a journal in which they respond to reflection prompts from instructor. Working with other students in the class who are also participating in the project, they create a handbook for future service-learning students with tips and suggestions.	The instructor recognizes the work done by the students by sharing the handbook they created for future service-learning students. If appropriate, the service-learning students are invited to share a memorable moment from the project with the class.

