

Service-Learning

Kennebec Valley Community College

Student Handbook and Workbook



1st Edition

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Welcome!

Welcome to the Student Handbook and Workbook for Service-Learning at Kennebec Valley Community College! By reading this you are joining a nationwide group of students like yourself who are interested in experiencing a dynamic, energizing, and valuable learning opportunity!

This handbook has been developed by the Kennebec Valley Community College Center for Civic Engagement (CCE or “the Center”) to assist you in understanding what Service-Learning is, how to engage in a Service-Learning project, and information on resources available both here on the KVCC campus and on the web.

Service-Learning has been a part of the KVCC community for quite some time. A few departments; Nursing, Physical Therapist Assistant, Occupational Therapy Assistant, and Social Sciences, have had Service-Learning as part of their curriculums and courses for many years. Indeed, service-based coursework are a part of the individual accrediting components of each of these programs.

In 2004 the College, a member of the Maine Campus Compact, applied for a grant geared toward institutionalizing Service-Learning and toward providing a structure to support developing and sustaining Service-Learning courses on campus.

The Center for Civic Engagement

The CCE was created to provide an official structure for the institutionalization of Service-Learning at KVCC. The major goals of the CCE are as:

- promote the development of Service-Learning courses
- provide education and consultation to Faculty interested in developing Service-Learning courses
- promote and support a high degree of community involvement and civic engagement across all aspects of the campus community
- develop and maintain a library of reference materials on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement
- track the service and volunteer hours of the campus community
- develop and maintain a database and communication structure between the campus and community partners
- assist students who are engaged in service to create “links” between academic and real-world learning
- provide students with experiences to enhance their knowledge of diversity within our community

The Center is still very new but it will employ a full-time staff in the future so that we can best meet these very demanding goals.

Introduction to Service-Learning

Many of you may have heard the term “Service-Learning” at one time or another. (Maybe too many times!) As with many terms, however, our understanding of them does not come from simply hearing about them and speculating as to their meanings. We will start here with some basic definitions of Service-Learning that will hopefully shed some light on what it actually is.



Because Service-Learning can be different things, it needs a number of definitions.

Definitions of Service-Learning

Service-learning means a method under which students learn and develop through thoughtfully organized service that: is conducted in and meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an institution of higher education, and with the community; helps foster civic responsibility; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students enrolled; and includes structured time for students to reflect on the service experience

American Association for Higher Education (AAHE): Series On Service-Learning in the Disciplines (adapted from the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993)

Service-learning seeks to engage individuals in activities that combine both community service and academic learning. Because service-learning programs are typically rooted in formal courses (core academic, elective, or vocational), the service activities are usually based on particular curricular concepts that are being taught.

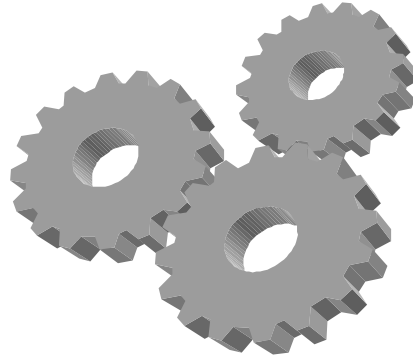
Andrew Furco, “Is Service-Learning Really Better than Community Service?” in Furco, Andrew and Shelly H. Billig, eds. Service-Learning: The Essence of the Pedagogy. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing Inc. 2002. p. 25

Service-learning is a teaching method which combines community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility. Service-learning programs involve students in organized community service that addresses local needs, while developing their academic skills, sense of civic responsibility, and commitment to the community.

Campus Compact National Center for Community Colleges

Six Models for Service-Learning Courses

There are a number of ways in which Service-Learning for a course can be accomplished. Below you will find descriptions of the ways in which SL may be implemented in your class.



(excerpt from Heffernan, Kerrissa. Fundamentals of Service-Learning Course Construction. RI: Campus Compact, 2001, pp. 2-7, 9)

“Pure” Service-Learning

These are courses in which students go off campus to serve. These courses have as their intellectual core the idea of service to communities by students, volunteers, or engaged citizens. They are not typically lodged in any one discipline.

Discipline-based Service-Learning

In this model, students are expected to have a presence in the community throughout the semester and reflect on their experiences on a regular basis throughout the semester using course content as a basis for their analysis and understanding.

Problem-based Service-Learning

According to this model, students (or teams of students) relate to the community much as “consultants” working for a “client”. Students work with community members to understand a particular community problem or need. This model presumes that the students will have some knowledge they can draw upon to make recommendations to the community to develop a solution to the problem.

Capstone Courses

These courses are generally designed for majors and minors in a given discipline and are offered almost exclusively to students in their final year. Capstone courses ask students to draw upon the knowledge they have obtained throughout their coursework and combine it with relevant service work in the community. The goal of capstone courses is usually either to explore a new topic or to synthesize students’ understanding of their discipline. These courses offer an excellent way to help students make the transition from the world of theory to the world of practice by helping them establish professional contacts and gather personal experience.

Service Internships

Like traditional internships, these experiences are more intense than typical service-learning courses, with students working as many as 10-20 hours a week in a community setting. As in traditional internships, students are generally charged with producing a body of work that is of value to the community or site. However, unlike traditional internships, service internships have regular and ongoing reflective opportunities that help students analyze their new experiences using discipline-based theories. These reflective opportunities can be done with small groups of peers, with one-on-one meetings with faculty advisors, or even electronically with a faculty member providing feedback. Service internships are further distinguished from traditional internships by their focus on reciprocity: the idea that the community and the student benefit equally from the experience.

Undergraduate Community-based Action Research

A relatively new approach that is gaining popularity, community-based action research is similar to an independent study option for the rare student who is highly experienced in community work. Community-based action research can also be effective with small classes or groups of students. In this model, students work closely with faculty members to learn research methodology while serving as advocates for communities.

Your Service-Learning Project



How to Get Started!

You've been assigned or have chosen to do a Service-Learning project for one of your classes! Congratulations...you are about to embark on one of the greatest learning experiences offered at KVCC.

The rest of this book will help guide you through the process of completing your Service-Learning project successfully.

As you are contemplating your Service-Learning project here a few things you will need to do:

- Devote at least 20 hours (faculty change this number as you will) of service to the project you choose.
- You must keep a journal that demonstrates what is being learned from the project. The main purpose of the journal is to encourage you to think critically about issues presented in both the classroom and the service experience. Questions are provided to get you started on your journal.
- You will write an Evaluation summarizing the Service-Learning experience. Emphasis should be placed on the connection to the class content, service goals, learning goals, and any other requirements your instructor has for you.

STEP 1: Selecting an Organization

Where can I do my Service-Learning Project?

In some courses the instructor may have a list of organizations or projects for you to choose from, in other classes you may need to go out and find an organization to work at.

The Center for Civic Engagement maintains a list of agencies who utilize volunteers and the staff of the Center are there to help you narrow down the possibilities based on your interests and your instructional goals.

www.kvcc.me.edu/cce/partners.htm

The KVCC campus community and the Center may announce opportunities to participate in Service projects that may meet the needs of your course Service-Learning requirement...or may be of interest to you outside of the classroom.

If you have “no idea” where you might want to do your service, try the following:

List any organization that you currently belong to (church, clubs, etc.)

List activities that you have always wanted to get involved with or heard about:

STEP 2: Defining your Project

Now that you have found an organization you will need to meet with them to see what the scope of the work is. This might be done over the phone or in person but you will need to have a good idea as to what you will be doing on the site before you move on to define your project.

You will be spending up to 20 hours of your time working for this organization so it will be good to have a plan in mind what you expect to accomplish while you are there.

Complete the following questions:

My service-learning project is...(describe your Service-Learning project what you will do, work on, plan, help with, change, organize, effect or affect)

(These are your service goals)

I expect to learn (or observe) during this project in the following situations, interactions, relationships, methods, connections, etc.:

(These are your learning goals)

Notice there are two kinds of goals in an SL project...Service Goals (which are accomplishments you want to make at the site for the organization) and Learning Goals (which have to do with what you expect or want to learn while completing your project).

PART 3: Complete the Placement Agreement

Once you have located an organization you will have to complete the Service-Learning Placement Agreement between you, the organization (the Community Partner), and the instructor. This document makes sure that each party understands the goals of the project and each other's responsibilities. (See the back of this booklet for copies of this form.)

STEP 4: Begin your Reflection Journal

It is vital that you begin your reflection journal early in the process of setting up your project. You should begin to document your experience as soon as you can since you will likely be using this material to write your reflection paper or other assignments that your instructor has asked you to complete.

The Reflection Journal has been described as the most critical piece of the Service-Learning experience. The questions below are designed to jog your thought processes. Question what you are learning. Question your perceptions. Be sure to record discoveries that you are making about the class material in relation to your service experience. Summarize key experiences that make the class material live. Your final paper may include some of these answers.

The Reflection Journal is done in three parts: before, during, and after your service. This method best identifies the relationship between expected outcomes and actual outcomes for your service.

Part A: Reflecting BEFORE the project begins:

On the following page you will find a document that will help you reflect upon the project you are about to embark upon.

Reflection Journal
Before the Service-Learning Project begins...

Date: _____

What are the social issues that your project or the service site addresses? _____

What do you think your project or service site will be like? _____

What impact do you think you will have on the people you will be working for or with?

How do people contribute to this problem? _____

How do we solve it, or how does the service site try to solve it? _____

Write any additional comments in the space below:

Part B: Reflection DURING the project:

On the following page you will find a document that will assist you in reflecting upon your service while you are completing the project. It may be easier to make a copy of this sheet for each day or time that you are engaged in service. Make as many copies as you would like.

Reflection Journal
During the Service-Learning Project...

Date: _____ Hours of Service: _____

Does anything surprise you about the Service Site? _____

What topics from your class are you seeing in your Service-Learning Project? _____

What do you do at the service site that makes you feel like you are making a difference?

What are the most difficult and satisfying parts of your service? _____

Write any additional comments in the space below:

Part C: Reflection AFTER the project has been completed:

On the next page you will see a document that you can use to reflect upon your service after you have completed all your hours.

Reflection Journal
After the Service-Learning Project...

Date: _____

What have you learned from any disappointment or successes in your project?_____

What did you do that seemed to be effective or ineffective in your Service-Learning Project? _____

How does your understanding of the community change as a result of your project?_____

Was your understanding of the class work enhanced, magnified, or made easier as a result of your participation in this project?

Write any additional comments in the space below:

Additional General Reflection Questions

What is reflection? Why is it necessary?

What can we learn from service?

What impact can service have on your personal growth?

Is the government doing the same kind of work as community agencies? Should the government be expected to provide these services?

How does your involvement in service make you feel about yourself?

Why is service fulfilling?

What impact has the service experience had on you and on those whom you are serving?

Do humans have a natural inclination to help?

Is compassion necessary to serve?

Has this service experience changed your concepts of civic responsibility and your desire to help others?

This list was taken from A practical guide for integrating civic responsibility into the curriculum Karla Gottlieb & Gail Robinson (Eds) Community College Press.

STEP 5: Ending your Service Project

Once you have completed the project or the number of hours required by your instructor you can begin the process of ending your service. However, your site may have outlined specific expectations from you that go beyond the scope of the class...or you may wish to continue serving the organization outside of any course responsibility...so feel free to continue working and reflecting on this valuable experience!

If you are going to end your service you should approach your site as you would any employer. You should tell them of your plans to end your service in plenty of time for them to prepare for your absence...you have likely been a valuable part of their team and they may need to replace you or reassign your job duties. It is also important to communicate your intentions for the image you leave with the agency (not to mention the image of the college and the CCE); be professional in all you do.

You will need to have your site supervisor complete the Supervisor Assessment Form (See the back of this booklet for copies of this form.) Depending on your instructor the site supervisor may need to mail these directly to instructor.

The final “paperwork” to complete is the Service-Learning/Engagement Experience Summary Sheet. This form is rather lengthy but it documents the kind of information that the Center needs to apply for grants, scholarships, and more effectively provide support services for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement at KVCC. This document must be sent directly by you to the Center for Civic Engagement. It is available in the Library or from your instructor.

Center for Civic Engagement
Kennebec Valley Community College
92 Western Ave.
Fairfield, ME 04937

Other Paperwork...

Your instructor may require that you submit other forms, time-logs, reflection sheets, etc. to meet the learning goals of those specific classes. You are responsible to get those to your instructor. **THOSE DOCUMENTS CANNOT BE USED AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE DOCUMENTS IN THIS MANUAL.** Even if there is some duplication the documents in this manual must be completed in full.

CONGRATULATIONS!

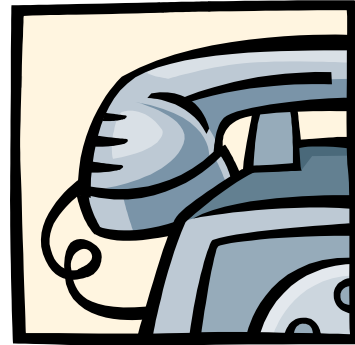
You have just completed a great project, a great learning experience, and a valuable service to your community!

Be sure to keep this document for your records. This may serve as a valuable part of your portfolio...documenting your experience and learning.

WELL DONE!

Contacts and Information

The Center is currently a small group of dedicated staff and faculty, a website, and set of resources. Please contact any of the following people if you have any questions about this manual or the programs of the Center.



Mark Kavanaugh, Director
453-5189
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Erica Nardi
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enardi@kvcc.me.edu

The CCE maintains a collection of resources on Service-Learning, Civic Engagement and various training and resource opportunities. Please contact the Director for more information on these.



Please be sure to check out the KVCC Center for Civic Engagement website at www.kvcc.me.edu/cce for more information on resources, civic opportunities and events, and research on Service-Learning.

There are many resources on Service-Learning on the web. A good place to start is the National Campus Compact website (www.compact.org).

- www.compact.org/programmodels for access to the program models database
- www.compact.org/syllabi for access to sample course syllabi
- www.compact.org/newssc/highlights.html for statistics on service and service-learning

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