

SDDFS NOTES on Service-Learning

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Special Points of Interest:

- *Service-Learning as a Prevention and Intervention Strategy*
- *Improving Program Implementation*
- *Spotlight on Effective Programs*

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Service-Learning as a Prevention and Intervention Strategy



In Florida and nationwide, increasing numbers of school, district, and state-level practitioners and administrators are recognizing the value of service-learning as an effective prevention and intervention tool for students. Since 1990, the Florida Department of Education has awarded over \$17,000,000 to support and encourage the initiation and expansion of service-learning in Florida; every district has received awards.

Currently, Title IV Community Service Grants, part of Safe & Drug-Free Schools Program, fund 35 pilot initiatives or programs that engage students in service-learning. These programs serve students who have been suspended, expelled, or are in alternative programs.

The longstanding Florida Learn & Serve program supports dozens of prevention and intervention-focused service-learning projects each year. A growing body of research shows that such projects not only meet real community needs, but that improvements are made among participating students in academics, social development, self control, job skills, and civic engagement.

You're probably familiar with the term, "service-learning," and you likely have some projects in your district. But what is service-learning, exactly? How is it different from

community service, charity, volunteerism, or court-mandated service? How does/can it support the Sunshine State Standards, reading initiatives, and the FCAT? Why should teachers and districts add service-learning when their plates are so full already?

This newsletter addresses these questions. It provides practical information on service-learning and the ways that schools and districts use it for prevention and intervention. Examples are provided as well as numerous web links for additional information.

It is important to note that service-learning is neither a new idea, nor a canned program, nor another "thing" that teachers must add to their responsibilities. It is not a

See "Service", page 2

Why do Service-Learning?



- Students participating in service-learning benefit both academically and socially.
- In a four-year analysis of 382 Florida service-learning projects involving more than 117,000 students:
 - 70% of reporting projects showed improvements in attendance,
 - 73% of reporting projects showed improvements in students' GPAs,
 - 74% of reporting projects showed a decline in the number of discipline referrals of participants.

Service-Learning as a Prevention and Intervention Strategy

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“thing” at all. Rather, service-learning is a strategy, pedagogy, tool, vehicle, or methodology to help educators reach their existing goals. In a school-based context, service-learning projects have students practice—through service—the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that they need to learn. Service-learning is a method that:

1. enables students to learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that meets actual community needs;
2. is integrated into students' curriculum and provides structured time for students to reflect on their efforts and demonstrate what they have learned;
3. provides students with opportunities to use new skills and knowledge in real situations;
4. helps foster the development of caring for others; and
5. is supported by regular assessment, often student-conducted, to provide feedback and guide improvement.

In service-learning projects, the service is both a means and an application of learning. Elements of effective school-based learning include preparation, action, reflection, demonstration, youth empowerment, partnership, evaluation, and recognition.

Interested? Read on for more details on the elements of service-learning, examples of current projects, impacts of service-learning

on at-risk students, sources for funding to support service-learning, training opportunities, and more.

Websites for Service-Learning Resources



Research on Service-Learning & Teen Pregnancy/Risk Behavior Prevention - <http://www.learningindeed.org/research/slresearch/riskbib.html>

Constitutional Rights Foundation seeks to instill in our nation's youth a deeper understanding of citizenship through values expressed in our Constitution and its Bill of Rights, and educate them to become active and responsible participants in our society. CRF is dedicated to assuring our country's future by investing in our youth today. Their Service-Learning NETWORK publication is free of charge. <http://www.crf-usa.org/marketing/catindex.html>

Corporation for National and Community Service (CNS) is a federal agency that works with state governments and community organizations to provide opportunities for Americans of all ages to serve through AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve, and National Senior Corps programs. CNCS provides nearly \$800 million in support for service initiatives each year. <http://www.cns.gov/>

Education Commission of the States provides links to state and national educational issues. They have outstanding free/downloadable publications on many aspects of service-learning. <http://www.ecs.org/>

The Impacts of Service-Learning on Youth, Schools and Communities: Research on K-12 School-Based Service-Learning, 1990-1999. <http://www.learningindeed.org/research/slresearch/slrsrchsy.html>

Sample Projects



Elementary School

- 200 3rd-4th graders are paired with kindergarten and 2nd graders to teach violence prevention and promote development of reading skills.
- 20 “Tiger Talkers” act as peer mediators and perform role-plays and skits about conflict mediation. Fifteen “Tiger Timers” are paired with students who are habitually tardy to act as role models and block monitors observe students on the way to school.

Middle School

- Students in grades 6-8 facilitate the school’s Teen Court.
- 110 students in grades 7-8 at four middle schools serve over 500 6th graders by teaching them conflict resolution skills. Students research and then develop presentations that include model situations where the 6th graders will put the lessons into practice.
- Middle school students in south Florida create web sites for local non-profit agencies working in drug and violence prevention and health issues. Other students teach younger students lessons about self-control and life management.

High School

- A school district establishes a district youth service-learning council. Students on the council develop an application, review proposals, and then award dozens of mini-grants to teachers and student groups for service-learning projects that focused on violence prevention.
- At-risk and adjudicated youth provide peer education in the areas of drug and violence prevention, sexually transmitted disease, and teen pregnancy. As part of a Life Skills class, students compose skits, songs, raps, and plays on those topics that they perform for other students.
- Students and senior citizens in south Florida work together to help reduce crimes against the elderly. Students are active in altering bus schedules, increasing lighting in crime-prone areas, producing PSAs on how to avoid being a victim, and successfully write local ordinances and state legislation to reduce crime.

After-school and Prevention Clubs

Students in an after-school club promoting tolerance and prevention meet weekly to create a unified, safer school, build school-wide tolerance, and develop leadership skills. They cooperate with law enforcement, juvenile justice and youth prevention organizations to produce and perform prevention and public safety campaigns for their peers and hundreds of elementary school students.



Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Service-Learning

Service-learning employs many research-based strategies proven to prevent and intervene in youth alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, as well as youth violence. Likewise, service-learning components are incorporated into several research-based, proven effective programs. Because these strategies and programs adhere to the U.S. Department of Education's Principles of Effectiveness, districts and their schools can use Safe and Drug-Free School funds to implement these strategies and programs.

A list of effective strategies and research-based programs are available on the University of North Florida, Florida Institute of Education's Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools web site: <http://www.unf.edu/dept/fie/sdfs/>.

The following lists include several research-based strategies and proven programs that employ service-learning, particularly student-to-student activities. Applicants seeking SDFS funds for service-learning would need to choose one or more of these strategies or proven programs for its prevention-focused service-learning project:

Research-Based Strategies Database

Substance Abuse/Prevention Strategies

- Refusal/Resilience Skills Training
- Social Skills Training
- Peer Leaders
- Mentoring
- Social Influences

Violence/Antisocial Behaviors Strategies

- Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation
- Role Play
- Mentoring



Proven Prevention Programs Inventory

ATOD Prevention Programs

Lion's Quest Skills for Adolescence (6-8)--Skills for Adolescence is a comprehensive youth development program that brings together educators, parents, and members of the community to support the development of life and citizenship skills in young adolescents in Grades 6-8. The program comprises five key components that address different aspects of young people's lives: (1) school curriculum; (2) parent involvement; (3) positive school climate; (4) community involvement; and (5) school staff training and follow-up supports. The program is school-based and intended for use in a variety of school settings with youth of diverse ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

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SDFS and Service

ALPHA (middle and high school)--ALPHA is a peer-led substance use prevention program that enlists socially prominent, drug-free 11th and 12th grade youth to introduce communication techniques, refusal skills, assertiveness skills, and decision making skills to 7th, 8th, and 9th grade youth. Peer leaders are selected by the student body, faculty, and school administrators and are trained in methods of classroom management and group facilitation.

Violence Prevention Programs

Lions-Quest Working Toward Peace (elementary school)--Working Toward Peace is a school-based, comprehensive program designed to teach and reinforce a repertoire of anger management and conflict resolution skills. It brings together the school, the family, peers, community, and the media in a network of support to teach and reinforce anger and conflict management skills. The major goals of the program are to help students understand the value of peaceful conflict resolution; to encourage peaceful student role models; and to learn ways to manage anger and resolve conflicts peacefully.

Peers Making Peace (K-12)--Peers Making Peace is a peer-mediation program that uses a preventive approach for handling conflicts both in and out of school. The program's goal is to improve school environments by reducing violence, assaults, discipline referrals, and increasing academic performance. This is accomplished by training teams of students to act as peer mediators on their school campuses.

Peer Mediation Program (6-12)--In this program, students are selected on nominations by faculty, staff, and students to receive peer mediation training, preparing them to serve as neutral mediators who assist other students in resolving conflict situations. The suggested basic peer mediation training takes approximately 12 to 15 hours over two days and includes activities related to understanding conflict, responses to conflict, origins of conflict, communications skills, the role of the mediator, and the mediation process.

Other SDFS Programs

Mentoring

Let Each One Teach One Mentor Program is a mentoring program specifically for at-risk, black male adolescents. The goals of the program center on increasing academic success of students. The program measures its effectiveness by monitoring improved grades, enhanced self-efficacy, improved behavioral conduct, improved self-perceptions, fewer office referrals, fewer suspensions, and improved attendance.

Service-Learning

The *Leadership and Resiliency Program* is a prevention and intervention program affiliated with the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, Alcohol and Drug Services. The program focuses on enhancing the internal strengths and resiliency in youth, while preventing involvement in substance abuse and violence, using a three-tiered approach that involves clinical process groups, alternative activities, and community service projects.

Essential Elements of Service-Learning

In school-based service-learning projects, students apply curricula, classroom learning, or behaviors/skills they need to learn through hands-on service they help design. The service must meet a real need and is both a means and an application of learning. Activities are related directly to learning goals and incorporate specific learning objectives that are linked to the Sunshine State, Goal 3, or Applied Technology Standards. It is the combination of experiential learning, personal growth, skill building, and civic engagement that makes service-learning such an effective teaching and learning tool.

It is critical to include youth empowerment and youth voice throughout all stages of the development, implementation, and evaluation of a project. Sustainable service-learning projects include meaningful collaborations with community organizations, other schools, businesses, associations, and those the students are striving to serve. Below you will find a list of core elements that well-developed service-learning projects should include.

A. Preparation/Planning/Design

- Conducting needs identification and assessment—those being served help define their needs and how to meet them.
- Learning the context for the need(s) to be addressed.
- Discussing and selecting issues.
- Examining policies and systems impacting needs.
- Designing a project.



B. Action

- Research and knowledge-based activities are identified; activities flow from the preparation students have done.
- Students apply leadership skills when conducting the project.
- Activities evolve as the project progresses - some needs are addressed, and others are identified.
- Students collaborate with the “served” and partners.
- Multiple learning styles are utilized, including individual work, teamwork, technology utilization, tactile/manual work, oral presentations, and data collection and processing.

See “*Essential Elements*”, page 7

More web sites for Service-Learning Resources

UCLA Service-Learning Clearinghouse Project: This web site contains information and resources focusing on faculty Issues, K-H partnerships, assessment and evaluation, training and technical assistance, and service-learning research. The site also contains links to other valuable service-learning and higher education resources.

<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/slc/research.html>

Compendium of Assessment and Research Tools (CART): CART is a database that provides information on instruments that measure attributes associated with education and youth development programs. Includes description of research instruments, tools, rubrics, and guides.

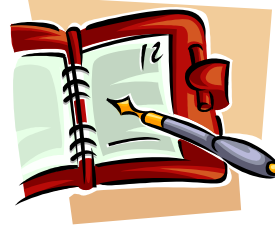
<http://cart.rmcdenver.com/>

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Essential Elements

C. Reflection is ongoing in successful projects from beginning to end as students form and test opinions, project outcomes, measure results and impacts, discuss actions and reactions, make improvements and future plans. Reflective activities include:

- Journaling
- Engaging in discussions
- Projecting/hypothesizing/measuring project impacts
- Conducting formative and summative evaluation
- Making project refinements; and/or planning for the future



D. Demonstration is another level of service-learning that involves students educating others about the issues being addressed. Demonstration takes various forms, some of which are additional service-learning, including the following:

- Teaching others about the project and its issues (through lessons or presentations)
- Performing (plays, skits, songs, puppet shows, news shows, etc.) on the issues addressed in the project
- Putting on public forums and presentations
- Conducting advocacy campaigns
- Creating films, portfolios, books, publications, web sites, works of art, etc., on issues related to the service activities

E. Recognition/Celebration. Throughout the project but especially at the end, students should be recognized for their efforts. In successful projects, participants join together to reflect on efforts and contemplate/plan future activities. The following events are great publicity opportunities:

- Involving youth in designing and implementing recognition activities.
- Rewarding young leaders with opportunities to take on more responsibility.
- Inviting all stakeholders and people/groups you may want to partner with in the future.

F. Evaluation should be designed and conducted by students as much as practicable. The following should be included in project evaluation:

- Outputs - numbers of participants (serving and served), service hours provided, projects completed, courses involved, materials produced, trainings provided, and standards addressed;
- Academic outcomes - improvement in grades/course performance, FCAT reading/math/science scores, GPA, skill mastery or meeting of standards (comparing the students with their previous performance or with other students who did not participate);
- Affective outcomes - changes in behavior/social skills across all students serving (comparing the students with their previous performance or with students who did not participate). Examples include comparing attendance or discipline referrals, collected by the school, before participating in serve-learning to attendance or discipline referrals while participating in service-learning, or pre and post surveys of attitudes in particular areas related to their project need or students' social development; and
- Service outcomes - impacts of the project for the people, sites, needs or organization that the students are serving. Effective projects will have students conduct this evaluation through surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, and reports.



Service-Learning Related to Prevention

Many current and past Florida Learn & Serve and Title IV Community Service Grant projects focusing on prevention or intervention have involved students through dropout prevention classes, pull-out programs, second-chance schools, Life Skills courses, other elective courses such as Leadership, Peer Counseling, Community Service, and school-related activities such as Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) and Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD).

Different types of projects have students practice different desirable skills and behaviors. Knowing this at the beginning can help project coordinators choose activities that will develop specific skills and behaviors over and above the anticipated academic benefits of the activities. The following list gives a sense of the many ways students can apply instruction and practice appropriate behaviors through service-learning in an ATOD or violence prevention/intervention context.

Direct Service-learning (person-to-person, face-to-face service)

- Teaching other students refusal skills, how to defuse conflict, or make smart choices
- Helping other students resolve actual conflicts
- Creating performances on ATOD or violence prevention/intervention
- Tutoring
- Modeling conflict mediation
- Working with senior citizens or children with disabilities



ties

Affective Impacts/Skills Gained: ability to work well with others, caring about others, ability to relate to people from different cultures, patience, empathy.

Indirect Service-learning (help to communities or organizations as opposed to individuals)

- Designing and conducting trainings on prevention-related issues
- Organizing to collect items (books, school supplies, clothing) for children with backgrounds that involve drug abuse or violence
- Organizing after-school sports, tutoring, or mentoring programs for children
- Engaging in environmental projects
- Conducting a community history

Affective Impacts/Skills Gained: teamwork, being part of a larger group, developing specific skills or interests, appeals to many learning styles.

See “Service”, page 9

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Service

Research Service-learning (gathering and presenting information on areas of interest and need)

- Publishing a guide on available community prevention services, translating it into foreign languages
- Sharing information from studies or surveys of student and community perceptions of issues related to ATOD and violence prevention or intervention
- Conducting an oral history that culminates in a booklet or video on local “heroes” who overcame great odds and risks to be successful
- Creating web sites, brochures, or videos for non-profit prevention organizations

Affective Impacts/Skills Gained: learning how to get information/find answers/solve problems, form hypotheses and test them, measure results, evaluate.



Advocacy Service-learning (educating others about topics of public interest)

- Planning and putting on public forums on ATOD or violence prevention
- Working with elected officials on legislation to make communities safer
- Writing and publishing a newspaper insert on prevention issues
- Conducting public information campaigns on drug and violence prevention and related topics
- Creating PSAs for radio and TV on ATOD and violence prevention

Affective Impacts/Skills Gained: learning about systems and policies, persistence, persuasion, compromise, respecting others’ opinions, feelings of efficacy.

Florida Learn & Serve Request for Proposals Information

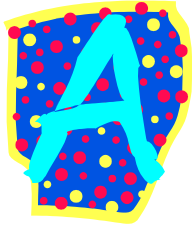


Florida Learn & Serve is a federally funded grant program that awards grants to schools and school districts to engage youth in service-learning. Florida Learn & Serve is administered by the Florida Department of Education and awards over \$700,000 each year to approximately 75 schools statewide.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) for the 2004-2005 grant cycle will be released in February 2004 and will be sent out electronically to the Superintendent and Safe & Drug-Free Schools Coordinator in every Florida school district; the RFP will also be posted on the Florida Learn & Serve web site, <http://www.fsu.edu/~flserve>.

Proposals will be due April 30, 2004. A series of application workshops will be provided around the state during the application period.

Service-Learning, Standards, and the FCAT



In the 1990s, the Florida Department of Education and most other state education agencies established and adopted education standards to cover major curricular areas in K-12 public education. Florida's standards are linked with statewide assessments in reading, writing, mathematics, and science. The statewide assessment, the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT), is a primary tool used to evaluate student and school performance.

Because of the FCAT's importance in Florida, and its linkage with standards, most teachers who engage students in service-learning also align their projects with the Sunshine State, Goal 3, or Applied Technology Standards. The hands-on and practical approaches used in service-learning projects, and the projects' interdisciplinary approach mean that service-learning is an excellent tool for meeting standards across all grade levels and subjects.

The Florida Department of Education has produced tools and resources to assist teachers in linking standards and service-learning. Two free online publications are currently available that provide examples of these linkages:

1. Detailed profiles of effective service-learning projects across subjects and grade levels, with lists of the key standards that those projects addressed. The descriptions include contact information, identification of project type, grade levels and classes, details on activities, and other information of interest to individuals considering similar projects. The reader is encouraged to contact project representatives for additional information about individual projects.
2. A table listing all the Sunshine State, Goal 3, and Applied Technology Standards, the elements of service-learning, and identifying which standards are addressed under each element/aspect of an effective service-learning project.

Both publications are at <http://www.fsu.edu/~flserve/sl/standards.html>.

A third publication is nearing completion and will be added to the above web site address by Summer 2004:

3. A table listing the standards, with ideas/suggestions of service-learning activities that match each standard.

Additional Resources

Learning In Deed: This initiative, launched in 1998 by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, aims to make service-learning part of every k-12 student's experience. Its web site has a rich array of service-learning publications and resources.

<http://learningindeed.org/index.html>

Linking Service-Learning & Title IV Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities: A free publication from RMC Research Corporation that provides details, examples, and rationale for using service-learning as a prevention and intervention strategy. Available on-line at

<http://www.rmcdenver.com/Title%20IV%20Final%20proof.pdf>

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse: A comprehensive information system that focuses on all dimensions of service-learning, covering kindergarten through higher education school-based as well as community based initiatives. They provide free information and publications. Their print materials offer a wide array of topics. Some materials include a fee, others are free. <http://www.servicelearning.org/> Search online documents from the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

<http://www.servicelearning.org/article/archive/17/>

National Service-Learning Partnership: The Partnership orchestrates a comprehensive and broad-based approach to making service-learning a standard part of students' education across the United States. As a network of grassroots and national service-learning supporters, the Partnership brings together organizational and individual members, including thousands of practitioners, administrators, community activists, policymakers, researchers, parents, young people and leaders in business and other sectors.

<http://www.service-learningpartnership.org>

The National Service Resource Center (NSRC): is a training and technical assistance provider to programs funded by the Corporation for National Service. NSRC is a one-stop shopping destination for information specific to community service programs.

<http://www.nationalserviceresources.org>

The National Youth Leadership Council's mission is to build vital, just communities with young people through service-learning. As one of America's most prominent advocates of service-learning and national service, NYLC is at the forefront of efforts to reform education and guide youth-oriented public policy. Print materials range from themed-newsletters to service-learning program design models. Videos are also available.

<http://www.nylc.org/publications.htm>

Nonprofit Risk Management Center: NRMC help nonprofit staff and volunteers control risks. Web site includes information on conferences, publications, training, and consulting.

<http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/>

The Points of Light Foundation: The POLF wants to engage more people in active volunteer service. Site includes information on how to get involved, awards programs, and training.

<http://www.pointsoflight.org/>

Service-learning: Education Beyond the Classroom: This booklet, provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, describes how students across the country are gaining hands-on awareness of waste reduction, recycling and composting through solid waste service-learning projects.

<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/general/educate/svclearn.htm>

The members of the SDDFS staff, as well as the staff of the Safe Schools Office at the Department of Education, stand ready to provide support through training and technical assistance to schools and school districts. Please encourage educators to take advantage of our services. For additional information on these resources or to find out how to access these resources, please contact Patricia Elton at (850) 414-0236 (SunCom 994-0236) or by email at elton_p@firn.edu.

Florida Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free
Schools Project

Phone: (850) 414-9976

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Website: www.unf.edu/dept/fie/sdfs

The Department of Education, through the Bureau of School Safety and School Support, funds the Florida Institute of Education's (FIE's) Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools Project. FIE is an institute of the University of North Florida. The Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools Project offers technical assistance and support in the development and implementation of drug use and violence prevention strategies. For more information, contact the FIE/SDFS Project.
