Service learning is a broad concept that allows for creativity and flexibility. It is both an educational philosophy and a pedagogy. As a philosophy, it reflects the idea that our education systems have an obligation to develop socially responsible and prepared students to be actively involved citizens. As a teaching tool, it involves blending service activities and academic course material to address real community needs and to challenge students to learn through active engagement.

**What is Service Learning?**

Purdue University North Central defines service learning as "a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience which combines community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility. Service learning courses involve students in organized community service that address local needs, while fulfilling course objectives. Through this process, students are able to develop and/or enhance their academic skills, personal values, and sense of community responsibility."

**In Practice**

Service learning is a dynamic and practical teaching method. When implemented effectively, it connects classroom content and skills to meet actual community needs.

**What can happen?**

- Students apply academic, social, and personal skills to improve the community.
- Students make decisions that have real, not hypothetical, results.
- Students grow as individuals, gain respect for peers, and become better citizens.
- Students of all abilities succeed.
- Students retain and reflect on their learning and service experience to have a greater understanding of themselves, their community, and society.
- Students develop as leaders who take initiative, solve problems, work as a team, and demonstrate their abilities while helping others.


**The DEAL Approach**

“A collaborative teaching and learning strategy designed to promote academic enhancement, personal growth, and civic engagement.”

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*Purdue North Central materials taken from [http://www.pnc.edu/csll/service_learning.html](http://www.pnc.edu/csll/service_learning.html) on 1/5/2012*
One of the most recent definitions of service learning is shown in the table below and which depicts the concept as SERVICE learning, SERVICE LEARNING, and service LEARNING. A conceptual diagram is also available below.

“As the table describes, each program type places a different amount of emphasis on service and/or learning and is defined by whether the primary intended beneficiary of the experience is the service provider or the service recipient. Having a strong emphasis on providing a ‘service,’ community service programs (SERVICE-learning) are primarily intended to benefit the recipient of the service activity…In contrast, SERVICE-LEARNING seeks to engage students in activities that both combine community service and academic learning. Because SERVICE-LEARNING programs are typically rooted in formal course (core academic, elective, vocational), the service activities are usually based on particular concepts being taught…In service based internship programs (service-LEARNING), students tend to spend time at an agency to learn about a particular career industry while applying their academic knowledge and professional skills to complete specific projects at the agency.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Intended Beneficiary</th>
<th>Community Service (SERVICE learning)</th>
<th>Service Learning (SERVICE LEARNING)</th>
<th>Service Based Internship (service LEARNING)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Focus</td>
<td>Recipient</td>
<td>Recipient AND Provider</td>
<td>Provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended Educational Purposes</td>
<td>Civic and Ethical Development</td>
<td>Academic and Civic Development</td>
<td>Career and Academic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration with Curriculum</td>
<td>Peripheral</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>Co-Curricular/Supplemental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Service Activity</td>
<td>Based on Social Cause</td>
<td>Based on Academic Discipline</td>
<td>Based on Industry or Career</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Benefits of Service Learning

To Students:

- Personal growth & development
- Social & civic development
- Awareness of societal issues
- Intellectual development & academic learning
- Career development
- Integrates theory with practice
- Develops a habit of critical reflection
- Fosters teamwork
- Brings books to life and life to books
- Promotes civic minded professionals

To Faculty:

- Enhanced student understanding
- Teaching outcomes become more process orientated
- Provides authentic assessment opportunities
- Creates new areas of research and scholarship
- Opportunities for professional recognition

To Institutions:

- Enriches and enlivens teaching & learning
- Builds partnerships with & within community
- Creates new areas of research & scholarship
- Opportunities for recognition
- Extends campus resources to the community
- Reinforces value of "scholarship of engagement"
- Supports the mission

To The Community:

- Provides human resources to meet the needs of the community
- Allows the energy & enthusiasm of college students to contribute to meeting needs
- Fosters an ethic of service & civic participation
- Creates potential for additional partnership & collaboration with the campus

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Purdue North Central materials taken from http://www.pnc.edu/csll/service_learning.html on 1/5/2012