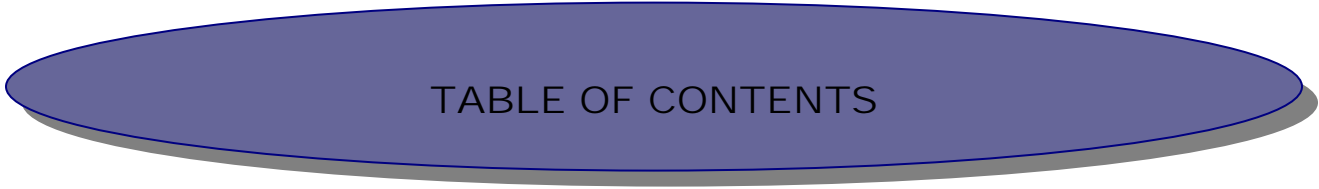




# Student Service-Learning Handbook

This handbook can also be found at  
<http://www.berea.edu/celts/servicelearning/resources.asp>



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## WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-learning has been described as “learning by doing,” and, at Berea College it is considered a form of “experiential learning” in which students participate in an organized activity that meets identified community needs. In service-learning classes, students work in the community on issues that make education relevant and exciting. Course materials such as lectures and readings improve the quality of service, and in turn, the service experience enhances the classroom dialogue, student understanding, and student learning. Service-learning may take the form of community placements, projects, or community-based research.

Some service-learning courses are *designated* service-learning courses; these courses are indicated in the Schedule of Classes. Completing a course that is a *designated* service-learning course is one way for Berea College students to fulfill the Active Learning Experience (ALE) requirement of the General Education Program. If you are not sure whether your service-learning course is a *designated* service-learning course, ask your professor.

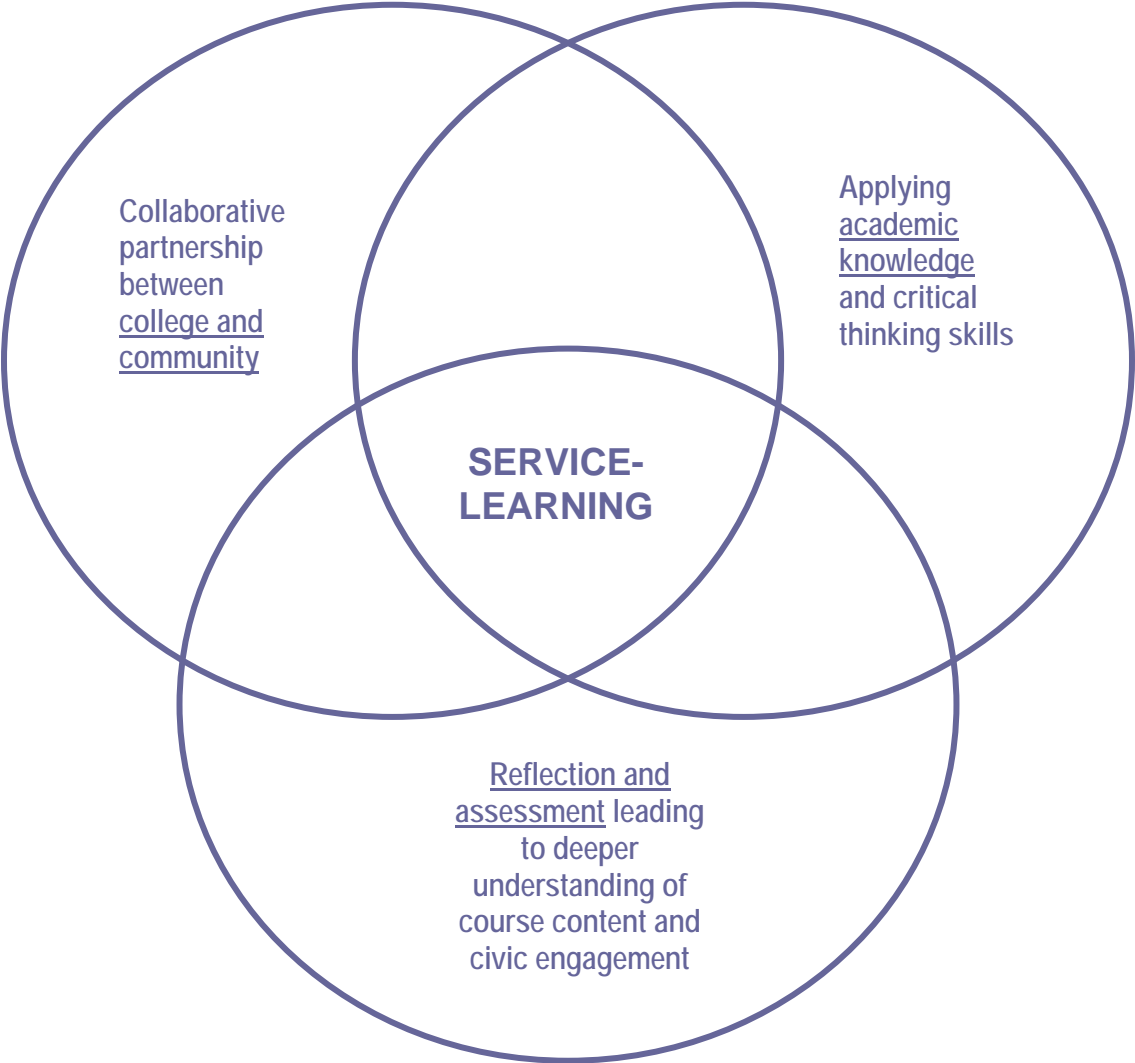
At Berea College, we use the following definition of service-learning:

*Service-learning is an educational experience based upon a collaborative partnership between college and community. Learning through service enables students to apply academic knowledge and critical thinking skills to meet genuine community needs. Through reflection and assessment, students gain deeper understanding of course content and the importance of civic engagement.*

### **An experience must include three necessary components to be considered service learning:**

1. A collaborative partnership between college and community. The community organization and the College representatives together identify a project or activity that addresses a community need or contributes to the necessary work of the organization.
2. Applying academic knowledge and critical thinking skills. The project or activity is directly related to learning goals that you, the student, are already working to achieve. The project contributes to your understanding and knowledge of academic concepts or skills.
3. Reflection and assessment leading to a deeper understanding of course content and civic engagement. Students participate in a structured reflection or assessment process which facilitates the integration of the service experience and course content. This process also helps you, the student, to identify how the issues addressed through your service are related to the “bigger picture,” in the context of your discipline or in the context of societal issues.

The diagram below illustrates how these three elements work together to create a service-learning experience:



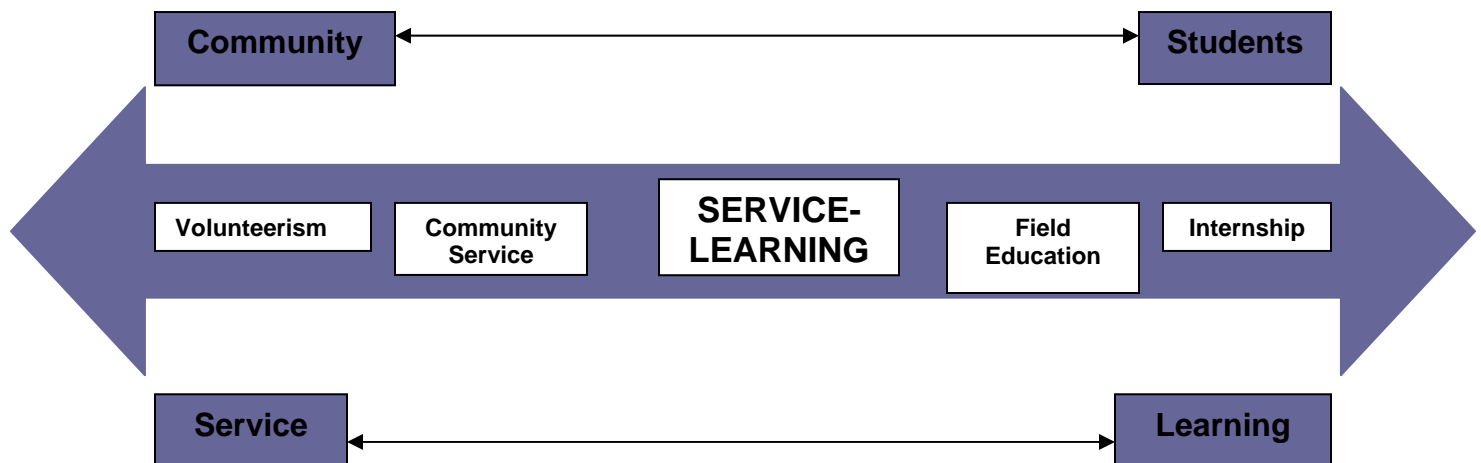
### How is service-learning different?

Service-learning is different than other community outreach and academic experiences because it attributes equal weight to both service and learning goals.

Think of community outreach activities on a continuum, as illustrated below. At one end, the focus is on the community as the beneficiary of service. On the other end of the continuum, the focus is on the student as the beneficiary of learning. Service-learning differs from:

- Volunteerism and community service, where the primary emphasis is on the service being provided and the benefit of the service activities to the community or recipients.
- Internships, which provide higher-level students with opportunities for service where they can apply concepts and skills from their major field of study, as they develop a substantial project that benefits the community, or field experiences, which provide students with co-curricular service-opportunities that are related to, but not fully integrated with their formal academic studies.

Service-learning places equal emphasis on community and student and on service and learning.



Adapted from: Furco, A. (1996). Service-learning: A balanced approach to experiential education. *Expanding Boundaries: Serving and Learning*. Washington, DC: Corporation for National Service. Reprinted in Campus Compact's (2000) *Introduction to Service-Learning Toolkit*.

# REFLECTION

Reflection is one of the critical components of service-learning. So what is it? Simply speaking, reflection is any activity that helps you to connect what you are learning in your academic program and what you are doing in your service-learning project.

Reflection can take a variety of forms. Consider these examples:

- Writing (journals, directed writings, summary reports, essays)
- Telling (end of semester presentations for your community partner, in-class presentations, class discussions)
- Multimedia (collages, photo or video essays)
- Activities (role-playing, interviewing classmates)

Your professor will probably guide you through reflection activities that have been designed to work well with your particular course and service-learning project. However, reflection is critical to maximizing the learning potential of service-learning experiences, and you should feel free to spend time reflecting on your own, as well!

Here are some questions to consider each time you visit your community partner site:

- Describe what you *did*.
- What did you see or *observe* while at your community partner site?
- How did you *feel* about the experience?
- What *connections* do you find between the experience and your course readings or lectures?
- What new *ideas* or *insights* did you gain?
- What *skills* can you use or strengthen through working with your community partner?
- What will you *apply* from this experience in your future work with your community partner?

An effective reflection activity is the *three-part journal*. These questions can also be used to guide a discussion. After visiting your community partner site, respond to the following questions. Make sure to differentiate between the three different types of responses.

1. *Describe the experience.* Make sure to include useful details, and try to leave out personal thoughts, feelings, and judgments.
2. *Connect your course readings, lectures, and discussions to the experience.* Discuss your experience in terms of concepts and themes covered in your course.
3. *Describe your personal reaction to the experience.* Include your thoughts, feelings, and judgments. Include what you can learn about yourself and your assumptions from what you did and how you reacted. How does the combination of course materials and your work in the community relate to you personally and professionally? How does it affect your understanding of the community and your role in it?

# COMMUNITY GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE-LEARNING STUDENTS

As a service-learning student, you will be working with professionals to address real and vital issues in our community. It is assumed that you will approach your service-learning project with professionalism, respect, and sincerity. Below are some guidelines to help you prepare for and engage in your service-learning partnership:

## **Learn about the community and your partner organization.**

- Seek out useful information about the community, organization, and project on which you will be working. The information you need will vary depending on your particular project, but you may consider learning about:
  - The population and/or geographic area being served by your partner organization
  - The organization's mission statement
  - The names of the organization's staff and their responsibilities and roles within the organization
  - A brief history of the organization
  - The role that volunteers play in the organization
- In service-learning, all partners – faculty, students, and community partners – are considered teachers and learners. Open yourself to learning from the community and the organization with which you are working.
- Be careful that you do not assume that you know how to solve perceived “problems.” Often problems are more complex than they initially appear.
- You may come from a very different community than the one you work with during your project. Be open to seeing things in new way. Seek out other people's viewpoints and ask questions.
- Make an effort to identify community strengths, as well as community needs.
- Work to understand the relevance of your service-learning project to your learning goals or course objectives.

## **Establish a positive working relationship.**

- Discuss the community partner's expectations and determine what you need to know to do what is expected of you.
- Be aware that non-academic settings do not work by the academic calendar.
- Understand that your community partner has other responsibilities and priorities in addition to the project on which you are working together.
- Remember that your community partner might have limits on the time they can spend on your service-learning project.
- Strive to be non-critical and non-judgmental. Approach challenges and detours in your service-learning project as opportunities to learn and grow.
- Realize that you may not already know how to do what is expected of you. Be prepared to learn from your community partner.

- Maintain regular contact with your community partner and your professor regarding your service-learning project.
- If you become concerned about any aspect of your project, let your community partner or professor know of your concerns.
- Maintain a positive and enthusiastic attitude, and keep things in perspective.
- Enjoy, celebrate, and build on small successes.

**Be accountable.**

- Think about the purpose of your service-learning project and work to generate an outcome that will contribute to the work of your community partner organization.
- Set goals that are realistic and address the needs of the organization.
- Ask questions and listen to what is being said. The people who work and live within the community can help you to become a more effective participant.
- Be clear in your communication. Set personal boundaries that are appropriate and comfortable for you.
- Keep appointments and commitments that you set with your community partner, and let your community partner know when you are not able to be present.
- Be accountable to other members of your group. Make sure that you are carrying your share of the load.
- Recognize your limits. If you are given something that you think you cannot handle, make sure you discuss the situation with your community partner and your professor.

**Be aware of your rights and responsibilities.**

- Approach your position as you would any job. Learn any policies, procedures, and expectations that you must follow while working with your community partner.
- Community partners are informed that they must abide by Berea College's Non-Discrimination Policy, found in the Berea College Student Handbook.

**Keep an open mind.**

- Enter your service-learning partnership with an open mind, show respect for differences and avoid imposing your culture and value system on others.
- Observe and respect cultural differences in language, expectations, and values.
- Expect uncertainty at first. Your level of comfort and responsibility will increase as the project progresses.
- Be flexible and adapt to changing situations!



# TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE-LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

Following is a list of specific tools, activities, and approaches that will help you, your professor, and your community partner to develop a strong and effective service-learning partnership. It may be helpful to refer back to this list throughout your service-learning experience.

## **Clarify roles and responsibilities of each person involved.**

- Make sure that you are clear about your role and responsibilities during your service-learning project.
- Make sure that you are clear about the roles and responsibilities of your community partner during your service-learning project.
- If you are working in a group, make sure that each group member has a role to play.

## **Share contact information.**

- Make sure you have appropriate contact information for your fellow group members and community partner.

## **Plan ahead, and create a timeline.**

- With your group members and community partner, create a timeline for the full project, with realistic goals that work for your schedule AND your community partner's schedule AND the course schedule.
- Follow through with scheduled appointments, and try to avoid rescheduling meetings.
- If you must change something in the timeline, inform your fellow group members and community partner as soon as possible.
- Make effective use of the time that you have with your community partner. It is helpful to bring an agenda or list of items to discuss to your meetings with your community partner.

## **Develop a service-learning contract, written agreement, or project plan.**

- Your professor may have a specific format that s/he would like you to use. The purpose of this document is to outline roles, responsibilities, timeline, and projected project outcomes, as well as any other information that is relevant to your project.
- Make sure that you, your professor, and your community partner agree on the expected final product.

## **Communicate**

- Communicate clearly and honestly.
- Develop a plan for checking in regularly with your fellow group members, your community partner and your professor throughout the semester. Your professor might have a specific plan for communication that s/he would like for you to follow.
- If problems arise, discuss them with your group, your professor, and/or your community partner. Don't let issues drag on.

## **Be prompt**

- Demonstrate that you respect your community partners and fellow group members by arriving on time to scheduled appointments and meetings.

## **Dress appropriately.**

- Clothing should always be neat, clean, and appropriate to the work you are doing. If it is not clear what is expected, ask your community partner about appropriate attire. The following items of clothing are NOT appropriate for most community settings:
  - Short skirts
  - Ripped clothing
  - Halter-tops
  - Hats (unless you are working outdoors)
  - Shorts
  - Low-cut (or high-cut) shirts
  - Flip-flops or smelly, dirty sneakers
  - Offensive t-shirts

## **Respect confidentiality of your community partner.**

- We encourage service-learners to talk about their experiences with others and to reflect upon them in journals. However, please do not use real names when discussing your experiences off-site. Simply change the names or omit names altogether.
- Depending on the nature of your service-learning project, you may be dealing with truly confidential information. Ask your community partner if there are specific confidentiality guidelines that you need to follow.

## **Be clear about costs related to your service-learning project.**

- Generally, service-learning courses have limited funds available to support expenses. If you anticipate that there will be costs related to your project, make sure that you communicate clearly with your professor and community partner about who is responsible for the costs. You may explore ways to minimize or eliminate expenses.

## SERVICE-LEARNING TRANSPORTATION

Several community partner organizations are within walking distance of campus. If you can safely walk to your community partner site, you are encouraged to do so.

For community partner sites that are not within walking distance, CELTS has limited resources available to help with transportation for service-learning courses. These resources are available for service-learning courses only if no departmental funds or other funds are available. Your professor should let you know how you should proceed if you cannot walk to your community partner site.

### **CELTS Service-Learning Mini-Van:**

**To schedule use of the CELTS Mini-Van, contact Sheila Lyons, CELTS Administrative Assistant at [Sheila\\_lyons@berea.edu](mailto:Sheila_lyons@berea.edu) or 985-3935.** Please follow these guidelines:

- Please reserve the mini-van at least one week in advance!
- Motor pool regulations for student drivers apply to use of the CELTS mini-van, so **students must complete the motor pool defensive driver training and the background check before being able to drive the CELTS mini-van.** This is a requirement of the Berea College insurance policy. Expect to be asked if you have completed both of these requirements when you reserve the CELTS mini-van. Check with motor pool for dates for the defensive driver training.
- **The mini-van holds 7 people, including the driver. You may not transport more than 7 people in the van at one time.**
- **Complete the mini-van log each time you use the mini-van.** The log asks you to document your name, your destination, and your start and end date, time and mileage.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke in the CELTS mini-van.
- If you make a mess in the CELTS mini-van, clean it up!
- If you are driving the CELTS mini-van, have your driver's license with you.
- If the gas in the mini-van is low, fill it up! If you are on a local service-learning or CELTS-related trip, you can be reimbursed for gas by CELTS. Talk with Sheila Lyons in Trades Building 205. You can also reach her at 985-3935, or [Sheila\\_lyons@berea.edu](mailto:Sheila_lyons@berea.edu).

**In the unlikely event that you are in an accident while driving the CELTS mini-van, follow these guidelines:**

- Don't panic!
- Don't move the vehicle unless directed to do so by the police.
- Call the city or state police to come to the site of the accident.
- Do not admit guilt.
- Limit communication with the others involved in the accident until the police arrive.
- The police will want to see the vehicle's registration and insurance information. This is located in the glove compartment.
- Encourage the other person not to leave the site of the accident.
- If the other person leaves the scene, get as much information as you can before they leave, including:
  - Name
  - Contact information
  - Description of their vehicle
  - License plate state and number
  - Insurance information
- Notify public safety (859-985-3333) and CELTS (Ashley Cochrane, Associate Director, 859-985-3605) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN SERVICE-LEARNING?

We are actively seeking students who are interested in becoming more involved in the service-learning program at Berea College. Student leadership opportunities in service-learning include:

- Assisting with service-learning course orientations.
- Working as a Teaching Assistant for a service-learning course.
- Speaking to faculty groups about your service-learning experience.
- Attending a service-learning workshop.
- Attending a service-learning conference.
- Becoming a member of the Service-Learning Advisory Committee.
- Working with the Service-Learning Program through a labor position.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities, or if you have ideas for the Berea College service-learning program, please contact CELTS Associate Director Ashley Cochrane (x3605 or [Ashley\\_cochrane@berea.edu](mailto:Ashley_cochrane@berea.edu)).

# CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING THROUGH SERVICE

## **What is CELTS?**

The Center for Excellence in Learning Through Service (CELTS) at Berea College coordinates and supports service and service-learning activities in the Berea and Madison County communities, throughout the Appalachian region, and beyond. CELTS programs include student-led volunteer programs and service-learning programs.

## **CELTS Mission**

The Center for Excellence in Learning Through Service (CELTS) educates students for leadership in service and social justice through promotion and coordination of academic service-learning and student-led community service.

## **CELTS Webpage**

The CELTS website contains information about service and service-learning programs, as well as links to service-learning resources.

<http://www.berea.edu/celts/default.asp>

## **CELTS Staff**

*Use CELTS, Berea College, CPO 2170, Berea, KY 40404 as the address for all CELTS Staff.*

### **Contact for Service-Learning:**

***Ashley Cochrane, Associate Director for Service-Learning and Student-Led Service***

859-985-3605

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