

Tool:	Service Learning
Category:	Classroom
Urban Specialist:	Merrie Murray
School Level:	High School
Target Audience:	Novice and In-service Teachers
References:	Coste, T & Durker, M. (Spring, 2001). Assessing the effects of incorporating service In learning: The search from a comprehensive process of service learning. Academic Exchange Quarterly, 5(1), 11-22.

Rationale: To involve students in volunteer activities

Description:

In a service learning instructional activity, students volunteer or work in the community providing a service, yet gaining a real-life skill. It may be on-going or an one time activity. In the high school setting, students can earn academic credit if the service is continual. On the other hand, the activity may be a small component of the class curriculum.

As a special educator in high school, I have utilized both styles of service learning. My resource English class made Christmas stockings, individualizing each one, for a class of special education students from an inner-city elementary school. The stockings were filled with candy and toys my students brought from home. My students loved the activity. Unfortunately, my students were unable to deliver them personally due to field trips restraints.

An example of on-going service learning instruction was my Building and Grounds Maintenance class. The students gained landscaping and janitorial skills while providing a service for the school. A specific project the students excelled in was rebuilding a flowerbed that had been neglected for several years. It required toiling, clearing, planning, purchasing, and creating a colorfully designed flowerbed. The students were very proud of their accomplishment.

Thus, service-learning projects can be as broad or specific as the instructor designs. It is an invaluable instructional tool providing real life skills for the student and a service for the community.