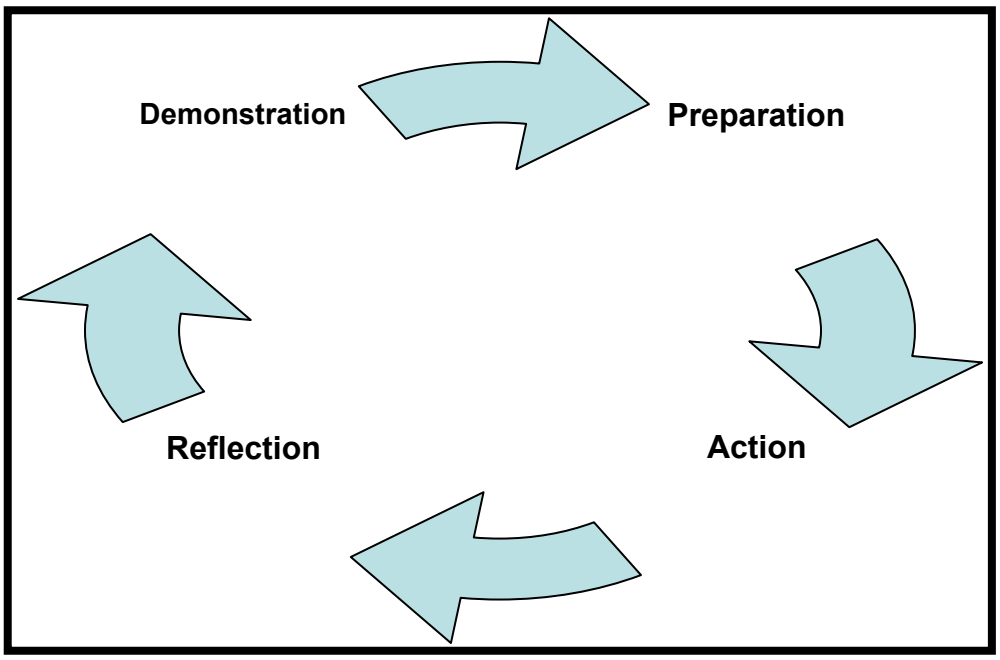
General Processes

Research has shown it is key to student effectiveness and success to follow a proven process of service-learning before engaging in any service-learning activity. When the process of service-learning is broken down, four essential and interdependent stages emerge:

- Preparation
- Action
- Reflection
- Demonstration



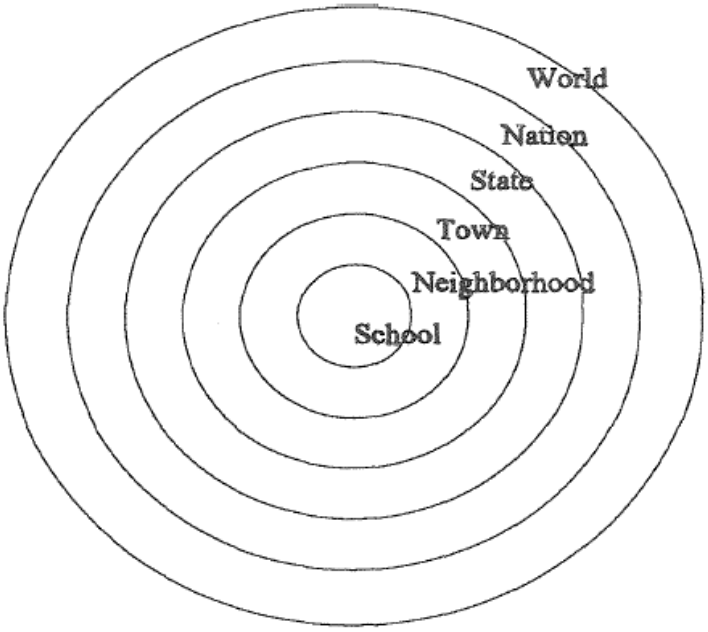
These processes are linked together and often are used simultaneously. It may help to visualize how overlays are used in an anatomy book to reveal what is occurring in the human body system by system. Each stage of service-learning in action is like one of these overlays, revealing one part of an interdependent whole.

Preparation

The first stage to any service-learning activity begins with preparation. Teachers and students work together in the preparation phase to set the stage for learning and social action. Students, with the help of their teacher, identify a real community need. Groups should use some sort of needs assessment to determine goals and strategies. A sample needs assessments, entitled "Taking Action in Our Community", is provided in Chapter 3, p. 75.

One place to start is within schools, and students often begin assessing community needs by surveying other students. Youth councils in some Idaho schools and districts have conducted numerous surveys to track ever-wider segments of the local population, and to assess changes over time.

How Do You Define Community?
It can be the...



While service projects should be based on genuine needs, an extensive needs assessment may be difficult for some school systems. Teachers and students, however, should do enough research to be confident that their project activities will be of genuine value to the school or community. For instance, at an Idaho magnet school for the arts and humanities, an environmental, science-based service-learning project was implemented to strengthen science standards. At the same time, their recycling project not only increased environmental awareness, but met a real need in their school and community.

It is at this stage that teachers need to develop collaborative partnerships with local community agencies that will become a part of their project (i.e., local shelters, retirement homes, libraries, government agencies, etc.) to support high quality meaningful service experiences. In order to sustain service-learning in your school or district, seek out collaborative partnerships with local businesses to engender support of projects through cash and material donations.

In preparation, the students research and discuss the subject using books, role plays, interviews, and the Internet. This is the time to schedule any visits, guest speakers, or field trips. As your students gain skills and experience, let your students plan these tasks. In this process of active learning and critical thinking, students grow to understand the underlying problems as well as related subject matter. Investigation, discussion and analysis lead to plans for action. The service project can also be chosen based on the skills, talents and interests of the students.

What is work for you, is a learning experience for students

Let students take responsibility for .

- **Paperwork**
- **Phone calls**
- **Checking details with administrators or staff**
- **Errands within the school and within the neighborhood**
- **Organizing materials**
- **Fundraising**
- **Research about the issue**

If you give students some guidance and enough time, they can do the job and lighten your load!

Preparation also includes the following steps:

1. Points of Entry

A logical place to start is to think about what skills, content and themes you are already teaching. To avoid service-learning becoming an "add-on", examine your current curricula and find areas that fit well with service-learning, using service-learning strategies where they make the most sense. Using the "Establishing Curricular Connections: Points of Entry" form in Chapter 3, p. 65 from *The Complete Guide to Service-learning* (C. Kaye. 2004) may be helpful because it identifies five strategies to use to generate service-learning project ideas complete with sample project ideas and literature resources.

2. Making Connections Across the Curriculum

There is often the question: “How do I come up with ideas for service-learning projects that have strong curricular connections? Service-learning differs from other forms of community service or volunteer work because the education of students and young people is always at its core. Because service-learning can be applied to almost every subject area, this naturally encourages cross-curricular integration, which can help students strengthen and broaden their learning, helping them meet academic standards. In most cases teachers naturally are looking for these connections, and ways to strengthen them during the planning phase of the service-learning activities. As with the entire service-learning process, it helps to remain flexible. Some connections can be spontaneously generated by the questions raised and needs determined during the project. Refer to the forms “Across the Curriculum” along with the sample “Elders Across the Curriculum” in Chapter 3, p.68-69 for practical ideas in incorporating cross-curricular connections in your service-learning projects.

The Learn and Serve Idaho web site at http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/learn_serve/ provides examples of lesson plans that are directly linked to the standards. Here you will find links to standards-based curriculum written by teachers from around the state and nation. Looking at what others have done is an excellent way to get new ideas and get organized for a new service-learning project. A collective effort to share high-quality curriculum helps establish service-learning’s value in meeting Idaho’s content standards.

For other service-learning resources you can use in planning your instruction, (e.g. best practice guides and examples) please refer to Chapter 3.

3. Clarify Partnerships

For sustainability of good service-learning projects, you need to seek out partnerships that will support and enhance the service-learning. Establish contact with collaborators—teachers, parents, community members, agency representatives, or others—who you want to participate. Discuss and clarify specific roles and responsibilities for all involved to avoid any confusion once the project is underway.

When you are identifying partners, remember that, while community-based organizations are often delighted to have people call and offer to help, they may at first look upon the offer as a matter of free labor. They may not have considered the importance of building learning opportunities into the service. The community partner also should provide meaningful service experiences set in a “real-life” context and meet real community needs, as well as provide opportunities for students to interact with adults and be acknowledged as positive, contributing members to society. The successful service-learning partnership will be one that strives to improve the quality of education, as it improves the quality of life in the community.

Community partners and schools exist in "radically different worlds" as stated by Mark Batenburg (1995). He emphasizes the importance of understanding these differences. "The key to smoother relations is not only to be aware of the cultural differences, but to be aware of the specific details of the clash, the daily places where misunderstandings occur and frustration mount."

The following chart identifies seven points of difference:

	Community Organization/Agency	School
Focus	The organization or agency focuses on the end ***product***; trees planted, houses built, meals prepared, students tutored, clients served.	The school focuses on the ***process***, the learning involved in the project, the acquisition of knowledge and skills.
Why Engage in Service-Learning	The organization or agency sees service-learning as an opportunity to involve youth volunteers, to meet current and future community needs.	The school sees service-learning as an effective strategy to educate students and teach civic responsibility.
Project Planning and Leadership	The community partner generally follows a template, based on prior experiences with managing volunteers to meet the goals of the organization or agency.	The school sees "youth voice" as an essential component in service-learning, with students assuming the role of planning and leading the project.
Project Scheduling	The organization or agency schedules projects based either on the needs of the constituency served, or on the availability Of adult volunteers; weekend projects are often a good option.	The school plans service-learning projects to coordinate with class schedules; ideally, the project takes place during the school day.
Access to Project Sites	The community partner usually does not assume responsibility for transporting volunteers to and from the project site.	The school must consider the added direct cost, liability and scheduling consequences if transportation to and from the project site is required.
Measure of Success	The organization or agency determines its success by the completion or provision of service, as defined by the task.	The school measures success in meeting curricular or academic benchmarks and standards.
Assessment	The community partner asks, "How did we do?" – and evaluates success based on concrete, quantifiable results such as how many trees were planted, how many acres were restored, how many clients were served.	The school sees the project as part of a continuum and asks, "What will we do differently if we do this again?" Evaluation originates from the reflection process, ongoing throughout the project.

What the school needs to communicate to the community partner

- What is service-learning?
  - Provide a definition that can be easily understood.

- What are the best practices in a service-learning program?
  - Build upon the experience the community partner has working with youth and explain the eight best practices from Chapter I.

- What are the benefits to the community of service-learning?
  - Provide the organization with evidence from the research on the positive

effects of service-learning. Help the community partner see the value of youth service as both a short- and long-term resource that can meet their needs.

- What are the academic or curricular standards to which teachers are held accountable?
  - Community partners often first encounter standards when they are told, by the school, that teachers no longer have the time to involve students in community service because of the demands of meeting rigorous new academic benchmarks and testing.

- What is "youth voice," and why is it important?
  - Help the partner understand how youth voice will enhance the results of the service opportunity, resulting in both short- and long-term benefits not only for youth, but also for the community.

(For an excellent resource on community partners, see Abravenel, Susan A. (2003*). Building Community Through Service-Learning: The Role of the Community Partner*.)

See the forms: "Community Contact Information" and "Community Response Form" in Chapter 3, p. 71-72 for additional help in working with community partners.

Community partners for service-learning are everywhere!

Find them with the help of people around you.

Talk to...

- your students
- nonprofit agencies
- parents
- local government officials
- other teachers, administrators, or staff at your school

4. Make a Plan

The next step is to Identify and write down your service idea. Sample "Planning For Service-learning" forms are provided in Chapter 3, p. 73 - 74. Include in detail the content and skills that will be taught, the cross-curricular connections you can make, the books the students will read, and the community contacts that would be helpful to find and cultivate. *The Complete Guide to Service-Learning* (C. Kaye, 2004) is an excellent resource for a comprehensive listing of literature associated with different service-learning themes that helps connect classroom learning and literacy with service to the community. Think about where your students will have their voice in the project. Be specific about your plans for preparation, action, reflection and demonstration. Again, all stakeholders should be involved and specific benchmarks and actions set against a clear timeline. Evaluation and assessment measures that examine progress toward the goals should be included in the strategic plan. The Continuum for Service-Learning Engagement (Chapter 3, p.70) is another useful tool for developing strategies for moving the various groups (youth, educators, administrators, community and policymakers) from "awareness" of service-learning to "investment' in service-learning.

PREPARATION

With guidance from their teacher, students:

- Identify a need.
- Draw upon previously required skills and knowledge.
- Acquire new information through a variety of means and methods.
- Collaborate with community partners.
- Develop a plan that encourages responsibility.
- Recognize the integration of service and learning.

Action

After preparation comes action. With solid preparation, students can proceed and confidently carry out their plan of action. Perhaps they implement an anti-bullying program at their school, grow vegetables in a garden plot to give to needy families, or perform a Reader's Theater for pre-school kids while tutoring 1st-3rd graders in reading. The possibilities are endless. The plan may be carried out over the course of an academic year, or a semester. In order for service-learning to be life impacting, activities should be of sustained or significant duration. Program experience suggests that a minimum of 40 hours over a school year is necessary to yield positive results for students and the community. It's important to be flexible as unexpected things can happen and service-learning works best when students are able to see their own ideas in action. Refer to Chapter 3, p. 75 -76, for several "Action Forms" to help you set your

action in motion.

ACTION

Students should take action that:

- Has value, purpose, and meaning.
- Uses previously learned and newly acquired academic skills and knowledge.
- Offers unique learning experiences.
- Has real life consequences.
- Is in a safe environment to learn, to make mistakes, and to succeed.

Reflection

Reflection is indispensable to the entire service-learning process, and is what weaves it all together both intellectually and emotionally for everyone involved. Reflection can connect students' experience with classroom content and studies. Through reflection, students examine the difference they made, discuss thoughts and feelings, consider project improvements and receive feedback. During reflection, teachers guide the process using various modalities, such as role play, discussion and journal writing. Reflection should occur during all stages of your service-learning experience.

Reflection means taking the time to think, talk and write about:

- What is happening during the project or program (**What**?)
- What it means and how it connects to school curricula and standards in depth (**So What**?)
- How the knowledge and skills gained through service-learning can be applied to "real" local or global issues (**Now What**?)

During preparation you can ask the students what they expect to learn and how do they expect to feel? Students can role play situations they imagine will occur to practice and prepare and also to uncover anxieties or misconceptions. Students can consider such questions as, "What will you do if the child you're tutoring won't listen to the story?"

On-the-scene reflection can occur as service is actually going on based on your observations. Students can also take the initiative by raising concerns, sharing their excitement, or posing questions. During this on-the-spot reflection, students sometimes

have insights or make recommendation that can improve their experience and the impact of their contributions right then and there.

Following service, teachers should vary methods of reflection since people naturally reflect in different ways. Methods of reflection can include art, poetry, music, role playing, journals, mime, sculpture, drama, movement and photographs. Students can develop a skit on what they experienced or a dilemma they faced. Students can represent their thoughts and feelings of their experience by drawing for ten minutes, and then have them write silently for five minutes about the experience.

REFLECTION

During systematic reflection, the teacher or student guides the process using various modalities such as role-play, discussion, and journal writing. Participating students:

- Describe what happened.
- Record the difference made.
- Discuss thoughts and feelings.
- Place experience in larger context.
- Receive feedback.
- Identify questions.

Demonstration

Demonstration of student skills, insights and outcomes takes place when students report to peers, faculty, parents, and/or community members. Other ways to spread the word of their service-learning experience:

- Students submit a feature to the local newspaper about a particular service-learning project. The story could include interviews with community members, students and teachers, and focus on what happened, its significance to the community, and what the next steps will be, based on the findings.

- Students work together in the classroom to prepare presentations to the school board and recommendations to the city council based on what they learned while conducting a project in the community.

- Students create a website that helps others to learn from the students' experiences, or create art forms, such as murals.

Celebration

Celebration of student success should also be incorporated into the demonstration process. Celebration includes taking the evidence collected earlier in the process and using it to show the progress that has been made. This helps to build momentum for continuing the project. There are many ways to celebrate students' accomplishments, including:

- Recognition at public community meetings such as school board meetings or local business meetings
- Media coverage about service-learning projects
- Celebratory awards ceremonies, breakfasts or other events that, on their own, are newsworthy events.

DEMONSTRATION

Students demonstrate mastery of skills, insights, and outcomes by, for example:

- Reporting to their peers, faculty, parents, and/or community members.
- Writing articles or letters to local newspapers regarding issues of public concern.
- Extending their experience to develop future projects benefitting the community.
- Creating a publication that helps others learn from the students' experience.
- Presentations and performances.
- Visual art forms, such as murals.

School-Level Processes

Youth Voice

One of the distinguishing features of service-learning--and one of the most difficult for many teachers--is the central role of student voice in the learning process. Service-learning is a strategy for teaching and empowering young people. For this empowerment to happen, students must be given multiple opportunities to make decisions and take leadership, and to learn from the consequences of their choices and