

How do I integrate Service learning into my courses?

This service learning development worksheet offers one model for integrating service learning into your courses. In developing a service learning course, the most common place to start is with a course that you already teach. Below are 10 questions, adapted from Edward Zlotkowski, which will help you to incorporate service learning into your courses. For additional assistance and resources, contact the Service Learning Coordinator at servlrng@austincc.edu .

- What are the learning objectives of the new service component in relation to the overall objectives of the course?
- What are some partnerships and projects that could facilitate the service-related objectives?
- What kind of service would such partnerships/projects provide to the larger community?
- What is the best format for the service component (e.g. mandatory, elective; short-term extra credit)?
- What adjustments might you want to make to the course's traditional workload and course content (e.g. less reading or fewer problem sets; fewer tests or cases)?
- What kinds of learning can the service-related work facilitate that are currently being covered in another way or that are currently being assessed in another way?
- What strategies might you use to help prepare students for their community-based work?
- What strategies can you use to help students reflect on their community-based work in the context of course concepts, concerns, and objectives? (e.g. journals, focus groups--face to face or electronic, presentations, case writing)
- What are some course-appropriate civic/public issues to which the students' community-based work might lend itself? (e.g., professional responsibility, equal opportunity/access, diversity and stereotypes, peace and justice issues, public science, public policy)
- How will you assess the goals and strategies of the course?
- What are some ways in which your community partner could be of educational assistance?

Below is a more detailed worksheet which addresses many of the questions above.

I. Course Description:

Think about your current description of the course. Would you need to change the description to include service learning as either a requirement or as an option in the course?

Your Course Description:

II. Learning objectives:

- Does service learning relate to any of the learning objectives? If so, would service learning be a method to accomplish any of the objectives?
- Should a statement about service learning be added as a learning objective?
- What would you like students to know after completing the course?
- Are there specific things students should know based on the assignments related to service learning? For example, knowledge about how to write a reflective journal or paper.
- Are there specific things about the community students should know based on their volunteer experiences? For example, the number of people who use a particular community service each year.

Your Course Learning Objectives:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

III. Knowledge objectives (what the student will know):

Skills objectives:

- What will the student be able to do upon completion of the course?
- Is the development of leadership skills part of the course?

Other objectives:

- Will self-esteem, personal efficacy, values, and/or attitudes be addressed in the course?

Your Course Knowledge Objectives:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

IV. Learning Activities:

- Learning activities—what assignments will be required of the students before credit is awarded? Volunteer work—how many hours will be required? Most service learning courses focus on thoughtful analysis of the course content as applied to the experiences at the service site. This is commonly called reflection and often takes the form of journal entries or papers. Students may be assigned research papers, projects, oral reports, portfolios, or essays. You may want to refer to the "Sample Reflection Assignments" on this website

Activities:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

V. Evaluation:

Evaluation—how will the service learning component of your course be evaluated?

- What criteria will you use to determine the grades?
- What percentage of the student's grade will be determined by their service learning efforts? A common amount is 25-30% of the total possible points, however it may be more or less depending upon how you structure your course. Another option is to require service learning for a particular grade, i.e. to earn an A in the course, students must complete a service learning assignment. Although the grade for service learning is awarded based on the learning objectives, not hours volunteered, will the volunteer activities themselves generate any points or credit? Some faculty award points per hour, others set a minimum number of hours required and give no credit unless all hours are completed, another option is to count volunteer shifts as class periods and award or deduct points as you would for attendance in the classroom.
- Examples of evaluation include assessment of written work, demonstration of a skill, agency supervisor evaluation, oral presentation, service-learning contract, and a personal interview.

Evaluation methods:

VI. Other considerations:

- Will service be mandatory or optional?
- How will you incorporate service learning experiences into the classroom?
- Do you anticipate incorporation being difficult if some of the students are not participating in service learning?
- What are some strategies for including all students?
- What is your deadline for students to select an agency and begin their volunteer work?
- Are there specific agencies or fields of interest that the students are restricted to in finding a placement?
- How will you assist the students in making the connections between their volunteer experiences and the course content?
- Will extra credit points be awarded for students who volunteer beyond the required number of hours? If an agency conducts volunteer training before allowing students to begin their volunteer work, how many hours of training count towards the number of hours volunteered?
- Celebration of accomplishment is important in any learning environment. Do you plan to include celebration and recognition of volunteer efforts as part of the course? How will this be expressed?
- Does your plan to include service learning fit within ACC's guidelines for service learning?

Class policies for Service Learning:
