

Service-Learning Tip Sheet

Diversity

Effective service-learning values diversity in its participants, practice, and outcomes. Understanding diversity and its impact on service-learning is critical for effective practice.

Diversity refers to the variety of abilities, and social and cultural heritages within a group or community. Service-learning promotes diversity by:

Reflecting Common Cultural Values

Every culture uniquely values service to others. Service-learning offers an opportunity for every student to express core cultural values.

Emphasizing Each Student's Capacities

All learners can make a contribution through service programs; all talents, skills, and experiences are valuable and necessary.

Building Capacity for Action

Working toward a common goal through service-learning enables those with varying abilities, races, religions, and cultural orientations to share a common experience that serves as a basis for developing friendships. It cultivates a capacity for cooperating, making a difference, and meeting real needs.

Enlarging Perspectives

Learning different ways to accomplish tasks and solve problems during reflection sessions builds positive relationships with peers and adults, and develops a sense of shared citizenship.

Reinforcing Positive Identity

Valuing differences reinforces self-worth and self-esteem.

Promoting Humane Values

Becoming aware of problems encountered by those who have different abilities and cultural backgrounds helps develop sensitivity to these issues. Direct interaction with the community helps dispel misconceptions.

Engaging Learners and Encouraging Educational Excellence

Interacting with others in new and unfamiliar environments reinforces the relevance of academic subjects taught in school, and allows students to build on past experiences with new learning.

Performing Valuable Service

Becoming aware of community needs leads to developing effective ways to respond to them.

Available from the NYLC Resource Center at www.nylc.org.

Adapted from "Getting Started in Service-Learning."

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