



Education Commission
of the States

Learning That Lasts:

How Service-Learning Can Become an Integral Part of Schools, States and Communities



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September 2002

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Foreword

by **Senator John Glenn**

I am pleased to share with you the strategies, lessons learned and outcomes of the Learning In Deed Policy and Practice Demonstration Project. This four-year effort was designed to build service-learning permanently into the infrastructure of K-12 schools and states – in other words, to institutionalize these efforts.

The Demonstration Project was funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and directed by the National Center for Learning and Citizenship at the Education Commission of the States. The project began in 1999 and took place in California, Maine, Minnesota, Oregon and South Carolina. The five state departments of education, as well as 36 districts and 144 schools participated in this project. Leaders at the state and local levels stepped up to the challenge of developing long-term, large-scale systems that support and sustain service-learning. Their focus on policy, high-quality practice and capacity provides a framework for policymakers, teachers, education leaders, students, parents and community partners to consider as they move service-learning to the core of schools.

Institutionalization, as you will discover as you read this document, is not an easy or linear process. It requires dedication, diverse leadership, a clear vision, and a complex and coordinated array of activities. It demands careful, ongoing planning and adequate resources. It is something that must invite people's participation, not demand it. It must be in tune with the requirements of state standards and assessments. It may encounter its share of setbacks, but by using a variety of feedback methods, it is able to change and revitalize.

There is no cookie-cutter way to institutionalize service-learning. It looks different from school to school, district to district and state to state. Yet while the research has made clear that there is no single route to institutionalization, it also says that institutionalization can only happen when leaders pay attention to all the major categories discussed in this publication – leadership, curriculum, professional development, community partnerships and continuous improvement. Within these categories, there is tremendous freedom to choose strategies that suit the needs of the school, community and state.

The following pages will hopefully provide a wealth of good ideas to everyone invested in making service-learning an integral part of education in this country. The information in this report will help service-learning advocates see the “big picture” of what service-learning can look like once it is integrated into the workings of a district or state. It also will provide details on the innumerable small steps required to make that picture come to life.

Service-learning is an instructional method that has remarkable promise. It can help our students become more informed, responsible citizens. It can cultivate compassion in our young people by giving them an active and meaningful role to play in helping others. It can engage our students in school and decrease the many serious problems, such as violence and drug abuse, that plague our communities and our country. Still, without some systematic means of integrating service-learning into the educational infrastructure of schools and states, this precious innovation could easily be discarded. Institutionalization is the only way to ensure that large numbers of students across the country will continue to benefit from service-learning. Unquestionably, institutionalization has substantial costs, both personal and financial. But as researcher Alan Melchior has pointed out, the costs of doing nothing can be much higher.

Glenn heads the John Glenn Institute for Public Service and Public Policy at Ohio State University and chairs the National Commission on Service Learning. He is a former U.S. senator from Ohio.



Executive Summary

Learning That Lasts: How Service-Learning Can Become an Integral Part of Schools, States and Communities

Featured in thousands of schools across the country and spurred by federal initiatives, state programs and foundation grants, **service-learning** is a teaching approach receiving considerable attention from policymakers and educators. Service-learning weds community service with academic curriculum, and adds opportunities for students to reflect upon their service experience, provide leadership and perform projects that meet genuine community needs. Proponents say it can be a powerful reform tool to help schools meet academic goals, teach civic responsibility and address a range of critical school climate issues.

The positive impacts of service-learning have been documented in research studies that paint a collective portrait of widespread innovation with substantial benefits, including:

- Improved academic performance
- Improved relationships with peers, parents and teachers
- Fewer behavioral problems
- Greater motivation to learn
- Increased sense of civic responsibility
- Increased student attendance
- More positive perceptions of school and students by community members (Billing, 2000).

In 1999, almost one-third of public school administrators reported that service-learning was taking place in their schools (Skinner and Chapman). Yet, in spite of its popularity and promise, service-learning remains, in the words of researcher Shelley Billig, “a fragile reform that is highly dependent on individuals to be sustained.” In many cases, it is an isolated phenomenon rather than an integrated part of a school’s vision. While its practitioners may be deeply enthusiastic and committed, and while service-learning at its best contributes to student achievement, it will not endure unless it becomes part of the infrastructure of schools and states. Advocates note that for service-learning to be sustained, it needs to be done for the long term, that is, it needs to be “institutionalized” into the school environment.

“Institutionalizing” service-learning

What would it take to make service-learning part of every student’s education experience? How does service-learning get built into the infrastructure of a school or state? Who’s involved? What resources – human and financial – are needed? What are the signposts of success, as well as the obstacles that stand in the way?

These fundamental questions about institutionalization – making service-learning an essential part of the everyday operations of schools and states and an expected part of each student’s education experience – were examined in depth over the last four years by the National Center for Learning and Citizenship, the Education Commission of the States’ (ECS) service-learning initiative. Superintendents, state policymakers, teachers, coordinators, students, researchers, community partners and others in five states were interviewed about their insights and experiences in making service-learning an integral part of schooling.

The resulting publication, **Learning That Lasts: How Service-Learning Can Become an Integral Part of Schools, States and Communities**, explores how leaders at the state and local levels have stepped up to the challenge of developing long-term, large-scale systems that support and sustain service-learning. Their focus on policy, high-quality practice and capacity provides a framework for other interested policymakers and practitioners to consider as they work to move service-learning to the core of K-12 education.

Why institutionalize service-learning?

There are a host of reasons why making service-learning part of every student's school experience is an important goal for practitioners and advocates:

- *Improved outcomes for students.* In the national study of Learn and Serve programs (Melchior, 1998), results showed that students with multiple experiences of service-learning had more significant and lasting gains across a range of measures than students who had only a single exposure.
- *Continuity over time.* Institutionalization takes service-learning out of the realm of budgetary crises, political whims or personnel changes, and places it in the center of the expected educational practice.
- *Sound practice.* Sustained service-learning efforts are characterized by systematic and ongoing evaluation efforts that help to strengthen the quality of practice.
- *Increased resources.* When service-learning is part of an organization's infrastructure, it becomes a priority for funding rather than an afterthought. Service-learning not only becomes a line item in the budget but also a regular focus of grant efforts. If service-learning is part of the institution's vision, resources from different grants can also be combined to ensure the best quality practice throughout the system.
- *Increased support for and from staff.* Professional development for service-learning is ongoing. New teachers, administrators and other staff frequently enter the system, while staff experienced with service-learning need time to enhance their skills, develop curriculum and assessments, and learn from peers. Institutionalization helps to assure that there will be continuing and structured opportunities for training, discussion, evaluation and material development.
- *Better relations with the community.* When adults in the community see young people engaged in productive and ongoing service, and when community organizations are directly involved in the conduct of the service activities, the public perception of the school and its students improves. The school comes to be viewed as a source of pride rather than a source of problems.



What institutionalization looks like

As any serious observer can attest, there is a wide continuum of efforts captured under the umbrella of “service-learning.” At one end are schools or districts that confine the combination of service and academics to a single class. A little further along the continuum are places where service-learning is employed within a handful of academic classes by a few dedicated teachers, but largely ignored by administrators and teachers alike. Further yet are districts in which service-learning is tacitly endorsed by administrators and practiced by a number of teachers and students. At the far end of the continuum are districts where most of the people affected by the school system in some way –

students, teachers, parents, administrators and community members – perceive and support service-learning as an essential component of the education process.

“Institutionalization” refers to this latter stage, in which service-learning is an integrated part of a school’s organization and culture. While there is no single formula or set of strategies that define institutionalization, and while it will look different from district to district and state to state, a number of common characteristics are apparent.

This report examines indicators and strategies that define and support institutionalization in five major areas of education: vision and leadership, curriculum, professional development, partnership and community, and continuous improvement. Each area is summarized below.

Vision and Leadership

- *A model of shared leadership.* Leadership is not the domain of a single person, or even a few people, but something shared by many people at many levels. Strong leadership at the top is crucial, but the participation of teachers, students, parents and community members is equally important. At the same time, there needs to be someone in a coordinating role who can assure a smooth flow of communication and delineation of responsibilities between all leaders and stakeholders.
- *A vision, shared by a broad cross-section of stakeholders that defines service-learning as an effective means for achieving academic standards and other broad education goals.* When persons involved agree that service-learning is an essential means for accomplishing the goals of education, then system leaders determine – and take – the steps needed to make that possible. Systemic decisions for hiring, instruction and resource allocation are guided by that vision.
- *Adequate resources to fund personnel, training and other costs.* Many service-learning efforts begin exclusively with grant funding, but do not stay that way when service-learning is institutionalized. Rather, the efforts become a budget item or in other ways are built into the state or districts’ budget. They are seen as essential to the operation of the system, with grant monies used to enhance, but not support, basic functions.
- *Open communication.* People throughout the system are kept well-informed of projects, successes, curriculum, training sessions and other matters. Problems and concerns are dealt with quickly, honestly and respectfully.
- *Alignment with other school reform initiatives.* Service-learning becomes a vehicle through which to accomplish the objectives of school improvement efforts and works in partnership with initiatives such as school-to-work, community education, migrant education and special education.

Curriculum

- *Acknowledgment as a key instructional method in policy and practice.* Administrators, curriculum directors and teachers include service-learning as a critical component of curriculum development.
- *Alignment with state and district academic standards.* Service-learning is seen as an effective teaching and learning method for students to achieve academic standards and meet graduation standards.
- *Authentic performance indicator of student learning.* Service-learning provides opportunities for students to acquire both knowledge and skills in academic areas – assisting schools to create performance indicators of success.

Professional Development

- *Ample time for planning and collaboration.* Teachers, administrators, students and community members have regular, structured time in which to design curriculum and assessments, discuss progress, structure projects and address concerns. A coordinator and/or teacher-facilitators provide training, consultation and technical assistance.
- *Regular opportunities for faculty and other employees to receive training.* Formal training opportunities, as well as one-on-one meetings and other informal methods, are used to create familiarity with and deepen knowledge of service-learning.

Partnership and Community

- *Ongoing opportunities for school and community partners to meet, discuss expectations and make necessary revisions.* Educators and community partners have adequate time to review curriculum, standards and projects, and make their expectations clear.
- *Positive outcomes expected for the community.* Educators and community partners identify and assess the impact of service-learning on the community.

Continuous Improvement

- *Training that addresses all levels of experience.* New employees are introduced to the concepts and practice of service-learning, with attention also paid to renewing and revitalizing the practice of experienced personnel.
- *Well-established feedback methods.* A variety of feedback mechanisms – from informal check-ins between individuals to questions asked at staff meetings to formal evaluations – yield helpful information to improve and strengthen efforts on a continuous basis.

Institutionalization, a term that often conjures up negative images of rigidity and involuntary confinement, is a different concept in education. The process can be likened to learning a new language. It is often difficult in the beginning to master the vocabulary and express oneself. It takes practice and effort and usually involves some degree of frustration. Once mastery has occurred, however, and when the same language is spoken by people in all parts of the system, rich and lively conversations take place and understanding occurs.

What helps and hinders institutionalization of service-learning

There is nothing automatic about the process of institutionalizing service-learning in a school, district or state. Even in places where service-learning has been well- implemented, there is no guarantee that it will become part of the infrastructure. Some researchers label education innovations as “highly perishable goods” and note that assuming they will happen by themselves “is naïve and usually self-defeating.” The research on institutionalization, as it pertains to education reform in general and service-learning in specific, sheds light on the interplay of factors that promote or prevent sustainability.

James Toole, president of Compass Institute and faculty member at the University of Minnesota School of Social Work, writes that service-learning “may be more difficult to implement than many



other innovations” because “it challenges both teachers’ beliefs about how students learn ... and about their school’s organizational features.” Toole points out that at the heart of service-learning is a change in all the relationships that make up education – relationships among students, among teachers, between students and teachers, between the school and community, and between students and their learning. The magnitude of change required by service-learning, and the disruption of the status quo, may be more than the personnel of many systems are willing to undertake.

In his research on seven schools that had used service-learning for at least four years, Toole found a high level of correlation between trust levels and institutionalization. Service-learning acted as a kind of lightning rod in the schools investigated, either tending to create greater closeness and cohesion among the staff or fostering deep and lasting divisions. Some of the factors that engendered mistrust were teachers feeling that their contributions were not as valued as those involved in service-learning; a lack of communication about the activities of instructors involved with service-learning; an inability or unwillingness to share instructional materials; and a lack of shared leadership that created an “us-and-them” mentality.

In his work on the “learning organization,” author and management expert Peter Senge similarly emphasized the importance of relationships between those facilitating the innovation and others in the system. Without carefully attending to those relationships, he said, innovators may be seen as lacking credibility or even perceived as threats to the system. He and researchers B. Nardi and Jennifer O’Day (1999) outlined some steps that can be taken to address these issues and increase the likelihood of sustainability:

- Maintaining open, frequent and straightforward communication between the innovators and others
- Respecting the reasons for people’s unwillingness to embrace the changes
- Initiating dialogues and providing mentoring to help others understand the nature of changes
- Appealing to a common sense of purpose and values.

In addition, Senge said for an organization to take the leap from implementation to institutionalization, it must have both the willingness and capacity to make the transition. It must have adequate flexibility to accommodate changes. Innovators need to express what they have learned and build networks of support. At the same time, others in the system need to possess some degree of control over how and when the innovations are adopted. Other researchers (Schneider, et al.) emphasized the centrality of relationships to sustainability efforts. They pointed to three factors that make sustainability possible: a sense of mutual trust, a stake in the decisionmaking process around the innovation and an experience of the work being challenging.

Researcher Shelley Billig (2002) examined 11 sites in New Hampshire – eight schools and three districts – funded to implement service-learning as an education reform strategy. In the one site in which service-learning activities were discontinued after two years, she encountered “a weak support system, no critical mass, a lack of leader commitment, no assessment results that showed tangible evidence that the project was impacting student achievement and no purposeful plan for expansion.” Another site, while continuing some practice, progressively declined in self-assessment scores. Teachers attributed this decline to “the ‘top-down’ nature of the adoption and implementation process” and perceived service-learning as “the superintendent’s baby.” Even the superintendent’s departure from the district did nothing to change the downward slide since instructors had already distanced themselves from the practice.

In the places where service-learning became well-established, however, Billig found “sustainability was clearly connected to continued resources, compatibility with teaching and learning philosophy, visibility of projects and evidence of success.” The resources were sometimes connected with grants, but more frequently were matching funds or line items in the budget. Visibility, she said, “came in the form of media attention, recognition ceremonies and community presentations.”

Research by Jane Kendall, executive director of the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, and others suggests that time, effort and patience are all required to establish service-learning within the system. Institutionalization occurs on two levels: on the systemic level, which is “infinitely complex,” and on the more manageable level of “small steps to strengthen service-learning within different areas of the institution.” The authors say “it is the very nature of the broader goal of institutionalizing service-learning to be slow and complex because it is reaching to the heart of academic enterprise – your school’s mission, style, curriculum, faculty expectations, quality, administrative structure and purse strings.”

The institutionalization processes and outcomes reported in this document build on these conceptual frameworks by focusing across the education dimensions of policy, high-quality practice and capacity/infrastructure.

Summary

Making service-learning a part of every students’ learning experience is not an easy or linear process. It requires a dedicated, diverse leadership, a strong vision, and a complex and coordinated array of activities. It demands careful, ongoing planning and adequate resources. It must invite the participation of people, not demand it. It must be in tune with the requirements of state standards and assessments, and use a variety of feedback methods to change and revitalize.

While service-learning looks different from school to school, district to district and state to state, research indicates it can only happen when leaders pay attention to all the major categories discussed in the *Learning That Lasts* publication – vision and leadership, curriculum, professional development, community partnerships and continuous improvement. Within those categories, there is tremendous freedom to choose strategies that suit the needs of the school, community and state.

This publication offers many examples of how service-learning advocates have worked to institutionalize service-learning. Published under the auspices of the National Center for Learning and Citizenship, ECS’ service-learning initiative, it details the findings of work in California, Maine, Minnesota, Oregon and South Carolina. The five state departments of education, as well as 36 districts and 144 schools, participated in this project, which is part of the Learning In Deed initiative’s Policy and Practice Demonstration Project. Funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and begun in 1998, Learning In Deed was designed to broaden the use of service-learning in schools and promote the institutionalization of quality service-learning practice across the country. Please see the following chapters for much more information on how service-learning can be institutionalized in America’s schools.



1. Introduction

What is service-learning?

The report of the National Commission on Service-Learning defines service-learning as “a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities.” Service-learning is used at all levels of education and in a wide range of academic disciplines.

While service-learning builds upon community service, it is clearly distinguished from community service in several important respects. Most important, service-learning includes *strong curricular connections and ongoing opportunities for students to reflect upon service experiences*. According to the National Service-Learning Cooperative, other defining characteristics of service-learning are:

- *Projects that meet genuine community needs* and have clear education goals that engage students in challenging cognitive and developmental tasks
- *Assessments* that enhance student learning and measure progress toward standards
- *Student voice* that is expressed in selecting, designing, implementing and evaluating the service project
- *Diversity* that is valued in practice and outcomes
- *Community partnerships* that provide a real-world context for student learning
- *Acknowledgment and celebration of service contributions* made by students
- *Systematic evaluation* to determine the effort's effectiveness.

Service-learning is a national phenomenon found in all 50 states. Several federal initiatives, such as the Corporation for National and Community Service's Learn and Serve America program, have allocated money explicitly for service-learning. Other large federal funding sources, such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of Title I and School-to-Work, have recognized service-learning as a viable strategy. In the National Student Service-Learning and Community Service survey, Rebecca Skinner and Christopher Chapman of the National Center for Educational Statistics found that 32% of school administrators reported that service-learning occurred in their institutions.

Policymakers at the state and national levels also have come to recognize the value of service-learning. Public figures who have declared their support include:

- *Maine Governor Angus King*, in his 2002 State-of-the-State address, stated: “Schools and college campuses are rediscovering their role in citizenship education, including through a great idea called service-learning – an approach that weaves academic study with real-world problem solving through community service. We can all join in as mentors, partners and supporters”
- *South Carolina Governor Jim Hodges*, in *Phi Delta Kappan*, describes service-learning as “a wonderful opportunity for developing those character traits necessary to become productive workers and family and community members.”
- *Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura* recently said at the Celebration of Minnesota Youth Service, “The best way to learn something is by doing something . . . you have to get involved to truly understand . . . that's the idea behind service-learning.”
- *California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin* told the American Association of School Administrators 2002 conference that in addition to academic instruction, the task of educators “is to prepare our young people to be good citizens in our democracy, to be good neighbors and good parents, to be responsible and compassionate human beings. I point to

service-learning as a teaching strategy that can do the job. It builds adept learners, capable workers and active citizens.”

- *Senator Harris Wofford*, former chief executive officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service, told Edward Fiske of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation that “many well-run service-learning projects have demonstrated their double value – for the education of students and for the community. The time is ripe to spread this low-cost, high impact idea to all schools and to all students.”

Why is institutionalization of service-learning important?

The research on service-learning is by no means comprehensive. Still, there are scores of studies that paint a collective portrait of an innovation with substantial benefits. In fact, research findings from studies of service-learning read like an educator’s most fervent wish list. Shelley Billig, vice president of RMC Research, found that service-learning’s results include:

- Improved academic performance
- Improved relationships among peers, parents and teachers
- Fewer behavioral problems
- Greater motivation to learn
- Increased sense of civic responsibility
- Increased student attendance
- More positive perceptions of school and students by community members.



In spite of its popularity and promise, service-learning remains, as Billig puts it, “a fragile reform that is highly dependent on individuals to be sustained.” It is clear that favorable results and the enthusiasms of a select group of supporters are not sufficient to establish service-learning as a widespread and accepted innovation. Without certain factors in place, service-learning will not survive, even though it is currently a prominent and well-publicized effort. The sum of those factors that assure sustainability over time is termed “institutionalization” – making service-learning part of every student’s education.

In the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s study of lasting school improvement, researchers R. Elkholtz and U.P. Trier define institutionalization as “a developmental process that appears during and after the implementation of an innovation” when it “is used in a routine manner and ... accepted by the users as something normal that is expected to continue.” Furthermore, “it is incorporated into the organizational framework and its regulations as a ‘natural’ pattern.” In other words, institutionalization happens when an innovation is integrated into the culture and operations of an organization and becomes an accepted part of the way things are done.

In terms of service-learning, there are a host of compelling reasons why practitioners and advocates believe it should be institutionalized into K-12 education, including:

- *Improved outcomes for students.* The most important reason for institutionalization is helping students realize the many benefits associated with service-learning. In the national study of Learn and

Serve programs, Brandeis University's Alan Melchior found that students with multiple service-learning experiences clearly had more significant and lasting gains across a range of measures than did students who only had a single exposure. Where service-learning is part of the district's infrastructure, students will typically experience service-learning once in every grade or grade span.

- *Continuity over time.* Institutionalization takes service-learning out of the realm of budgetary crises, political whims or personnel changes, and places it in the center of expected educational practice.
- *Sound practice.* Systematic and ongoing evaluation efforts that help to strengthen the quality of practice are characteristic of sustained service-learning efforts.
- *Increased resources.* When service-learning is part of an organization's infrastructure, it becomes a priority for funding rather than an afterthought. Service-learning not only becomes a line item in the budget, but also a regular focus of grant efforts. If service-learning is part of an institution's vision, then resources from different grants can also be combined to ensure the best-quality practice throughout the system.
- *Increased support for and from staff.* Professional development for service-learning can never be a one-time occurrence. New teachers, administrators and other staff frequently enter the system; staff experienced with service-learning need time to enhance their skills, develop curriculum and assessments, and learn from peers. Institutionalization helps assure there will be ongoing and structured opportunities for training, discussion, evaluation and material development. When staff needs are being recognized and addressed, staff members are more likely to support the innovation they are being asked to undertake.
- *Better relations with the community.* When adults in the community see young people engaged in productive and ongoing service, and when community organizations are directly involved in the service activities, there is a shift in public perceptions of the school and its students. The school and students come to be viewed as a source of pride rather than problems.

What is Learning In Deed?

A major effort to institutionalize service-learning is being carried out through Learning In Deed, a \$13 million initiative launched in 1998 by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Its underlying purpose is to broaden the use of service-learning in school districts and promote quality service-learning practice across the country. One component of the initiative is the Policy and Practice Demonstration Project, which is working in five states – California, Maine, Minnesota, Oregon and South Carolina – to do the following:

- Fully integrate quality service-learning practice into the academic curriculum of K-12 schools
- Reduce barriers to integrating service-learning into the classroom
- Implement policies that support and encourage service-learning at the state, district and school levels.

This publication distills the five Demonstration Project states' efforts to make service-learning a part of every student's educational experience. It is based upon a review of documents and extensive interviews with a range of individuals – students, teachers, program coordinators, school administrators, state department of education personnel, state policymakers and others – who have been closely connected with the Learning In Deed initiative.

The Policy and Practice Demonstration Project is managed by the National Center for Learning and Citizenship (NCLC), the service-learning initiative of the Education Commission of the States (ECS). Through training sessions, publications and technical assistance, NCLC is distributing the lessons learned about what it takes to institutionalize service-learning.

Other parts of the Learning In Deed initiative include:

- The National Commission on Service-Learning, chaired by Senator John Glenn and including a diverse membership representing K-12 and higher education, business, government, citizen action and youth leadership. The commission just issued *The Commission Report: Learning In Deed*, which reflects a year of studying the relevance and impact of service-learning at the national level.
- The Service-Learning Research Network, which promotes research and evaluation of service-learning and widespread dissemination of findings. The network is directed by Billig.
- The National Service-Learning Partnership, a national membership organization that brings together practitioners, administrators, policymakers, researchers, community leaders, parents and young people to support K-12 service-learning. Sponsored by the Academy for Educational Development, the partnership serves as a national leadership hub for more than 2,000 individuals and organizations committed to raising the visibility and enhancing the quality of service-learning in schools and communities across the country.

What's in this report?

The first sections of this report (chapters 2 and 3) describe why service-learning is important and useful, and explain the process of institutionalizing it. Chapters 4-8 address five facets of successful institutionalization: vision and leadership, curriculum, professional development, partnership and community, and continuous improvement. The final sections of the report (chapters 9-11) address questions about how to make institutionalization a reality and provide a variety of resources to help along the way.

Different readers come to this publication with different needs. Some may be focused on understanding the theoretical and research underpinnings of making service-learning part of every K-12 student's education. Some readers will be more interested in practical strategies to move their efforts forward. Others may be most interested in strategies from a particular state or in a specific topic area. This publication is designed to have something for all these groups. Here are a few general guidelines:

- Research pertinent to service-learning and institutionalization issues is covered in chapters 1, 2 and 3.
- Basic concepts of the institutionalization process are addressed in these same three introductory chapters plus chapters 9 and 10.
- Indicators and strategies associated with institutionalizing service-learning appear in chapters 4-8. Five strategy sections cover a particular topic – vision and leadership, curriculum, professional development, partnership and community, and continuous improvement. Each section is broken into two basic areas – indicators and strategies at the school and district levels, and those at the state level.
- Information from the five Learning In Deed states (California, Maine, Minnesota, Oregon, South Carolina) can be found in the five strategy chapters. In the case of school and district strategies, the specific site is also indicated.

- Examples of strategies related to policy, practice or capacity appear in the five strategy chapters. For an explanation of these terms, see the insert before chapter 4.
- Information on how service-learning helps specific stakeholder groups is in chapter 2 – “I’m Already Overloaded ... How Can I Do Service-Learning?” This section has information for students, teachers, school administrators, community members and state policymakers. Representatives from each group have been interviewed for this publication, and their words are woven throughout these sections.
- Contact information on any of the sites mentioned in this publication can be found under Resources and Acknowledgments in Chapter 11.
- Readers interested in a more complete understanding of specific strategies or approaches may contact Learning In Deed representatives (again, see the Resources and Acknowledgments sections).

This publication also is available on the ECS Web site at www.ecs.org/clc.

Who will find this publication useful?

This publication is intended for diverse audiences who have an interest in seeing service-learning become part of the infrastructure of schools, districts, communities and states. These audiences include:

- *State policymakers* who perceive service-learning as an effective vehicle for education reform and civic engagement
- *School board members* who want to understand how the process of service-learning is sustained throughout the system
- *District and school administrators* who want service-learning to become a more established facet of education policy and practice
- *Teachers and service-learning coordinators* who wish to see service-learning become more widely accepted and practiced among their colleagues
- *Students* who want to see service-learning become an accessible practice for peers and students at all levels of education
- *Parents* who have witnessed positive changes in their own and other children and want to see more frequent opportunities for students to engage in service-learning
- *Community partners and other community members* who are involved in service-learning and who have observed the way it promotes connections between schools and communities.

How can various audiences use this report?

Readers can use this report’s information in several distinct ways. They can use it to:

- Gain a better understanding of the process of institutionalization and how it applies specifically to service-learning
- Learn from the hard-earned experience of five states and dozens of sites that have grappled with the challenging and sometimes difficult issues of institutionalization
- Identify both strengths and gaps in their own efforts to build service-learning into their organization’s infrastructure
- Find appropriate strategies to help them move their service-learning efforts further along the continuum of institutionalization
- Form the basis of a presentation or training on the topic of institutionalization.

2. “I’m Already Overloaded... How Can I Do Service-Learning”?

Before delving into the intricacies of how to institutionalize service-learning into education, it is important to ask a fundamental question: *Is service-learning worth the effort?* Or is it another promising but ephemeral phenomenon?

To consider service-learning as a viable strategy, educators and policymakers alike must see something with substantial benefits that outweigh the costs. Every innovation has its costs, and service-learning is no exception. There are monetary costs associated with training, personnel, transportation and curriculum development. There are substantial costs of time, energy and commitment required for attending professional development opportunities, going to meetings, creating or adapting curriculum, writing assessments, working with students in new ways and attending to community partnerships. Educators are already so overburdened with the demands of standards and testing that most are unwilling to take on anything that does not help them achieve their fundamental teaching objectives.

Proponents of service-learning point to four ways in which service-learning delivers benefits that can indeed make adoption, implementation and institutionalization worth the costs:

1. Service-learning has the potential for systemic change. Done right, service-learning, advocates say, can provide a framework upon which to refine teaching practice, engage students more meaningfully in their education, and invite the collaboration and respect of community members. It can be used with all students, not just with select groups. Michael Fullan, an expert on educational change processes, notes that education does not so much suffer from a lack of innovation as a surfeit of it. The problem, he writes, is “the presence of too many innovations mandated or adopted uncritically and superficially on an ad hoc fragmented basis.” Unless an innovation fosters “deeper change in thinking and skills” throughout the system, he says, there will be little or no lasting impact.

Roger Rada, a superintendent from Oregon, points out that service-learning can do just that, saying it is “a very fundamental way to affect and improve the entire educational process.”

2. Service-learning can simultaneously address a range of critical education issues. Schools today are struggling with an unprecedented number of serious challenges. Schools have to contend not only with mandates for standards and testing, but also with serious behavioral issues, including high absenteeism, violence, substance abuse and premature sexual activity. Many school districts suffer from tense relationships with parents and other community members. Students and teachers alike are often demoralized and disaffected.

While service-learning is not a panacea, high-quality efforts have been associated with benefits touching upon all the areas mentioned above. Researcher Shelley Billig has defined as “high quality” efforts that:

- Link community service to classroom instruction
- Provide carefully organized service experiences that meet genuine community needs
- Contain structured time in which to reflect upon experiences
- Give students the opportunity to make decisions and plan activities with community members.

Billig has reviewed dozens of research studies on service-learning and found that it can be instrumental in increasing social competence, decreasing destructive behaviors, improving academic performance and fostering a sense of civic responsibility. It can foster essential changes in the relationships among teachers, students, administrators and community members. Because



service-learning affects the structure of education and the very nature of students' experiences, changes in academics and behavior tend to occur in tandem with one another rather than in isolation, she says.

3. Service-learning has the flexibility to fit the specific needs of a school, district or state. Service-learning is not a one-size-fits-all approach. In fact, it can only operate successfully when it is tailored to the needs of a particular place. While the basic principles remain the same from site to site and state to state, service-learning can be easily adapted to take advantage of student interests, staff capabilities and service opportunities in a specific community. Literally hundreds of viable models for service-learning have emerged in the last 20 years, and new ones that are being developed all the time.

4. Service-learning brings benefits for all education stakeholders. Everyone involved in education has a right to know not only how an innovation will affect the system as a whole, but how it will affect them as individuals. Service-learning, proponents say, can offer benefits for all groups, as detailed below.

What's in it for students?

Melissa Simones, a senior at Leavitt Area High School in Turner, Maine, believes that “too often, students' minds are like computer disks. They save the information in their heads, open the file when needed and put information on the test. Then they delete the information when the section is over.” She says that service-learning is important to her and other students because it helps them feel like an active part of their education, not passive recipients of information. Students who have participated in service-learning projects not only remember what they learned after the test, but more important, are able to go out into the community and provide needed and valued service. “When there are practical applications, students don't need to ask endlessly why they are doing this. Service-learning is not made for just the scholars or special needs students -- it is meaningful education for everyone,” Simones says.

Her observations are borne out in the research. In their research on the brain and learning, Renate and Geoffrey Caine found that students learn best when they are involved in consequential experiences and have an active and significant role. Other research shows that students who participate in service-learning:

- See themselves as being more socially competent (Scales and Blyth, 1997; O'Bannon, 1999; Morgan and Streb, 1999)
- Display increases in measures of personal and social responsibility (Weiler et al., 1998)
- Are more accepting of cultural diversity (Melchior, 1999; Berkas, 1997)
- Experience increased trust in peers and adults (Stephens, 1995; Morgan and Streb, 1999)
- Are more likely to act responsibly and feel comfortable in helping others (Stephens, 1995; Loesch-Griffin et al., 1995).

Simones' comments and the research also speak to the crucial importance of youth voice. Youth voice – the inclusion of young people in the creation, planning and implementation of service opportunities – is a centerpiece of the service-learning experience. According to a California Department of Education publication, “Educators using service-learning have been amazed by young

people's capacity to take an active role in community issues. Students make valuable contributions when they have a voice in planning, implementing and evaluating service activities." Researcher Robert Bhaerman and his colleagues found that when students have a role in determining what they learn and how they learn it, they are more open to and enthusiastic about new experiences, and become more competent problem solvers.

What's in it for teachers?

Teachers report feelings of isolation and being unappreciated. They have mandates for curriculum and standards imposed on them and may feel their creativity and passion are curtailed by having to "teach to the test."

"Before the potential for student voice and ownership can be realized," writes Nancy P. Kraft, instructor at the University of Kansas-Lawrence, "teachers must first be empowered to have voice." Looking at an analysis of the failure of school reform initiatives and restructuring efforts, Kraft concludes that "we will not be able to foster and support quality learning for students until those same conditions exist for adults in schools."

The structure of service-learning supports teacher voice, as well as student voice. Teachers typically serve on leadership teams and direct efforts along with administrators, community members and sometimes students. Because projects can touch on a number of academic areas simultaneously, service-learning is particularly well-suited to interdisciplinary approaches. Teachers are encouraged to meet on a regular basis and share insights and lessons learned. They report that they feel revitalized when they see the interest, maturity and enthusiasm of students inside the classroom and at service sites. In their large-scale study of service-learning in California, Daniel Weiler and his colleagues reported an increase in mutual respect between teachers and students, better relationships among teachers and a decrease in teacher turnover.

A big attraction for teachers is that service-learning can help students improve academically and meet standards. A study of Florida Learn and Serve sites found a general improvement in students' grade point averages. A number of other studies found similar results (Shumer, 1994; Shaffer, 1993; Dean and Murdock, 1992; O'Bannon, 1999). Students who participated in service-learning also scored higher on the state test of basic skills (Anderson, et al., 1991) and were likely to come to class on time, finish classroom tasks and ask questions (Loesch-Griffin et al., 1995).

Interview

*Lucy K. Vaughan, 5th-6th grade teacher,
Drowne Road School, Cumberland, Maine*

*The Cumberland
area school district,
in which Vaughan
teaches, uses the
KIDS model of
service-learning.*

Service-learning enhances everything I do as a teacher. It increases student achievement, creates a student voice, makes the curriculum more meaningful and increases parent involvement. One of the most important ways service-learning has changed my experience as a teacher is that I know I can "reach" every student in my class. I have seen the most reluctant students become totally engaged in school because the learning becomes more meaningful. These students have a reason to demonstrate their knowledge when the process is connected to a real-life situation. It is magical!

Service-learning makes your classroom have a much more active role in the community.

Parents are involved and support the students as they work on the different projects. The school becomes the center of academic activity linked to community and social goals. I have developed close relationships with parents and community members that would not have been possible without the service-learning projects we have been involved in. Your school becomes a more active part of the community and in turn, the community sees teaching and learning become more valid as they see students actively participating in solving real-life problems.

Teachers who may be reluctant to embrace service-learning would benefit from visiting schools and talking with students who participate in these projects. They will see students who are excited and engaged. All students have something to offer, and they can contribute in ways that are meaningful to them. It is important for teachers to understand that service-learning is not one more thing to add to an already endless list. Service-learning is the vehicle you use to drive the curriculum. For instance, last year our students put on a circus that involved demonstrating their knowledge of Canadian history, economics, people and geography. The proceeds of the circus benefited the Maine Children's Cancer Fund. The day of the performance there was a snowstorm and school was canceled. Still, our students came to school so that the show could go on.

What's in it for school administrators?

Administrators are deeply concerned about student academic progress, as well as the many aspects of school climate. Again, evidence shows service-learning can make a difference for schools and students, including improving school climate because students feel more connected to their school (Billig and Conrad, 1997; Weiler et al., 1998).

Studies also show that destructive behaviors, such as those leading to pregnancy or arrest, are decreased in students engaged in service-learning (Melchior, 1999; Allen et al., 1994; Shaffer, 1993). Students involved in service-learning are less likely to be referred for disciplinary reasons (Follman, 1998), display fewer behavioral problems (Yates and Youniss, 1998) and have better attendance records (Follman, 1998, O'Bannon, 1999). According to a study of resiliency research by Bonnie Benard of the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, young people exposed to significant adversity can still lead healthy, stable lives if exposed to "protective factors," which include caring relationships, high expectations and opportunities for meaningful participation. All of these can be key elements of high-quality service-learning programs.

Sandy Bernstein, superintendent in Ft. Kent, Maine, notes: "I have a keen interest in service-learning because it seems to be effective in reaching kids who are typically disenfranchised by the school system. They have been able to contribute and participate and feel good about themselves as learners. Of course, service-learning provides benefits to all students, but especially seems to tap into the potential of kids who otherwise don't do well in their classes. In the last few months, we've had lots of things happen in the world and community that have helped our students to understand their role in being good citizens and taking care of themselves and the planet."

What's in it for community members?

In too many communities, young people are viewed in a largely negative light, as a source of problems, and a drain on community resources and energies. Yet studies show that people who partner with schools in establishing service-learning projects see just the opposite: they view youth as important resources and positive contributors to the health of the community (Billig and Conrad, 1997; Weiler et al., 1998; Melchior, 1999).

In service-learning, the classroom is no longer confined within four walls; rather, the community becomes the classroom. Service-learning is consequently built upon carefully constructed partnerships with a variety of community organizations. Community members are involved in service-learning in various roles as supervisors, collaborators, recipients, observers and participants.

Community members, including parents, benefit by having young people who develop an ethic of service and commit themselves to being active, valuable contributors to society. According to the KIDS Consortium, young people “can apply their knowledge, skills and energy to local and regional challenges. Students can work successfully with local institutions and professionals to design products and services with lasting benefits.” Students, in turn, gain practical experience, academic knowledge and a variety of skills for decisionmaking, conflict resolution, communication and civic participation. Neither the young people nor their community see them as something separate and alienated from the world around them. Instead, young people are perceived as community members and are valued and honored for their contributions.



What's in it for state policymakers?

State policymakers are interested in seeing students become productive and responsible members of society. They want to see good test scores, but realize that academic achievement is not an end in itself but rather a means to help students secure their education and find their place in this world as workers, family members and responsible citizens.

By doing what KIDS Consortium founder Marvin Rosenblum calls “the real work of the real world,” students have opportunities to explore different career paths and better understand their own skills and interests. Several studies have shown that students become more knowledgeable about career options and develop competencies related to work situations. For example, the California statewide study of service-learning found students developed both attitudes and skills necessary for employment. Students themselves reported that service-learning helped them gain career skills and knowledge of the process of career exploration (Berkas, 1997; Billig et al., 1999).

One of the most extensively documented aspects of service-learning is its capacity to generate interest in civic participation and community activism. Several long-term studies of students involved in service-learning showed that years later, young people are more likely to be part of community organizations and to vote than peers who were not involved in service-learning (Youniss, McClellan and Yates, 1997; Yates and Youniss, 1997). Another study showed that students developed a greater sense of civic responsibility and commitment to service (Stephens, 1995). In speaking about service-learning, Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura expressed the hope that “if students get more involved in their communities, maybe they'll get more involved in government.”

Interview

Inez Tenenbaum, state superintendent of education, South Carolina

Tenenbaum has been an outspoken advocate of service-learning in South Carolina and instrumental in forging partnerships at the state level to support and sustain it.

prepared to be leaders for tomorrow.

Just last night, I spoke to a group of students. When I looked out at the faces, it's the first time that I really connected to the fact that this generation will be moving up and will someday make decisions that will directly affect my life and all of our lives. I want these students to have a big heart for leadership so that they make wise and compassionate decisions when they assume positions of responsibility.

People have to give back to the community. If we're teaching students to do service, we can change the whole culture of this country. We have too many people who don't do service, who don't make charitable contributions, who live very insulated lives. If we look around the world, we can see many countries that don't inculcate service in their culture; the result is that they experience misery. In this country, we have long had a culture of giving. It's important to who we are as Americans.

I am surprised that more states haven't endorsed service-learning. It is such an effective way for students to apply real-world knowledge and be

3. Institutionalization: When Service-Learning Is Established in the School, District and State

Institutionalization, a term that often conjures up negative images of rigidity and involuntary confinement, is a very different concept in the education area. The process can be likened to learning a new language. It is often difficult in the beginning to master the vocabulary and express oneself. It takes practice and effort and often involves some degree of frustration. Once that mastery has occurred and the language becomes second nature, there is the freedom to hold conversations and forge deeper understanding between people. When the same language is spoken fluently by people in all parts of the system, rich and lively conversations take place.

As any serious observer can attest, there is a wide continuum of efforts captured under the umbrella of “service-learning.” At one end are schools or districts that confine the combination of service and academics to a single class. A little further along the continuum are places where service-learning is employed within a handful of academic classes by a few dedicated teachers, but largely ignored by administrators and teachers alike. Further yet are districts in which service-learning is tacitly endorsed by administrators and practiced by a number of teachers and students. At the far end of the continuum are districts where most of those who are affected by the school system in some way – students, teachers, parents, administrators and community members – perceive and support service-learning as an essential component of the education process.

The term “institutionalization” refers to this most sophisticated stage, where service-learning is part of the fabric of the education process in much the same way that English and math are expected to be part of every student’s education. Service-learning is an integrated part of the organization and culture. There is not one set formula or set of strategies that define institutionalization. Yet, thanks to the efforts of practitioners and researchers, there is a great deal of information about the things that facilitate, as well as hinder the process. While institutionalization will look different from district to district and state to state, there are a number of common characteristics.

What institutionalization looks like

The many indicators of institutionalization are discussed in detail in the next five chapters. But in general, service-learning institutionalization is characterized by the following:

- *A model of shared leadership.* Leadership in service-learning typically comes from a variety of people throughout the system. Researcher Dorothy Aguilera writes, “Because service-learning requires collaboration to be successful, shared leadership is a much more effective model for building support because it involves giving all relevant stakeholders, most notably students, teachers, parents, families, community members, program directors and coordinators of public and private organizations, input and voice.”
- *A vision, shared by a broad cross-section of stakeholders, that defines service-learning as an effective means for achieving broad education goals.* When service-learning becomes an essential tool for accomplishing education goals, then system leaders determine – and take – the steps needed to make that possible. Systemic decisions for hiring, instruction and resource allocation are guided by that vision.
- *Adequate resources to fund personnel, training and other costs.* While many service-learning efforts begin exclusively with grant funding, they don’t stay that way in institutionalized settings. Rather, they become a line item or are in other ways built into the budget of the state or district. Service-learning is seen as essential to the system’s operation, and grant monies are used to enhance, but not support, basic functions.

- *Ample time for planning and collaboration.* Teachers, administrators, students and community members have regular, structured time in which to design curriculum and assessments, discuss progress, structure projects and address concerns. Coordinators and/or teacher-facilitators provide training, consultation and technical assistance.
- *Training that addresses all levels of experience.* Successful service-learning efforts recognize it is not enough to introduce new employees to the concepts and practice of service-learning. Places that have institutionalized service-learning also pay attention to renewing and revitalizing the practice of experienced personnel.
- *Open communication.* People throughout the system are kept well-informed of projects, successes, curriculum, trainings and other matters. Problems and concerns are dealt with quickly, honestly and respectfully.
- *Well-established feedback methods.* Participants in service-learning efforts use a variety of feedback mechanisms – from informal check-ins between individuals to questions asked at staff meetings to formal evaluations – to continually improve and strengthen their work.
- *A pervasive sense of shared purpose and trust.* When education is invested with meaning and students see the connection between what they do in their classes, who they are as people and what they want to accomplish in the world, then school has more meaning for them. Service-learning can alter the structure of education and change relationships between people in a positive way.



What helps and hinders institutionalization

There is nothing automatic about the process of institutionalization.

Even in places where service-learning has been well-implemented, there is no guarantee that it will progress along the continuum and become part of the infrastructure. Researchers Michael Huberman and D.P. Crandall label

education innovations as “highly perishable goods,” noting that “taking institutionalization for granted – assuming somewhat magically that it will happen by itself, or will necessarily result from a technically mastered, demonstrably effective project – is naïve and usually self-defeating.”

The research on institutionalization, as it pertains to education reform in general and service-learning in specific, sheds light on the interplay of factors that promote or prevent sustainability.

James Toole, president of Compass Institute and faculty member at the University of Minnesota School of Social Work, writes that service-learning “may be more difficult to implement than many other innovations” because “it challenges both teachers’ beliefs about how students learn ... and about their school’s organizational features.” Toole points out that at the heart of service-learning is a change in all the relationships that education comprises – relationships among students, among teachers, between students and teachers, between the school and community, and between students and their learning. The magnitude of change required by service-learning, and the disruption of the status quo, may be more than the personnel of many systems are willing to undertake.

In his research on seven schools that had used service-learning for at least four years, Toole found there was a high level of correlation between levels of trust and institutionalization. Service-learning acted as a kind of lightning rod in the schools he investigated, either tending to create greater close-

ness and cohesion among the staff or fostering deep and lasting divisions. Some of the factors that engendered mistrust were:

- Teachers feeling that their contributions were not as valued as those involved in service-learning
- Lack of communication about the activities of instructors involved with service-learning
- An inability or unwillingness to share instructional materials
- Lack of shared leadership that created an “us-and-them” mentality.

Toole contends that to fulfill service-learning’s mission as a strategy that fosters social capital and a civil society, the school must itself become a civil society. If the school is filled with teachers who are mistrustful and angry, then “a mismatch develops between the stated goals of service-learning ... and the organization itself.” Service-learning cannot be sustained in such an environment, he says.

In his work on the “learning organization,” best-selling author Peter Senge similarly emphasized the importance of relationships between those facilitating the innovation and others in the system. Without carefully attending to those relationships, he said, innovators may be seen as lacking credibility or even perceived as threats to the system. He and Researchers Bonnie Nardi and Jennifer O’Day (1999) outlined some steps that can be taken to address these issues and increase the likelihood that an innovation can be sustained:

- Maintaining open, frequent and straightforward communication between the innovators and others
- Respecting the reasons some people are unwilling to embrace the changes
- Initiating dialogues and providing mentoring to help others understand the nature of changes
- Appealing to a common sense of purpose and values.

In addition, Senge says that for an organization to take the leap from implementation to institutionalization, it must have both the willingness and capacity to make the transition. It must have adequate flexibility to accommodate changes. Innovators need to express what they have learned and build networks of support. At the same time, others in the system need to possess some degree of control over how and when the innovations are adopted. University of Maryland psychology professor Benjamin Schneider and his colleagues also emphasized the centrality of relationships to sustainability efforts. They pointed to three factors that make sustainability possible: a sense of mutual trust, a stake in the decisionmaking process around the innovation and an experience of the work being challenging.

Researcher Shelley Billig examined 11 sites in New Hampshire – eight schools and three districts – funded to implement service-learning as an education reform strategy. In the one site in which service-learning activities were discontinued after two years, she encountered “a weak support system, no critical mass, a lack of leader commitment, no assessment results that showed tangible evidence that the project was impacting student achievement and no purposeful plan for expansion.” Another site, while continuing some practice, progressively declined in self-assessment scores. Teachers attributed this decline to “the ‘top-down’ nature of the adoption and implementation process” and perceived service-learning as “the superintendent’s baby.” Even the superintendent’s departure from the district did nothing to change the downward slide since instructors had already distanced themselves from the practice.

In the places where service-learning became well-established, Billig found that “sustainability was clearly connected to continued resources, compatibility with teaching and learning philosophy,

visibility of projects and evidence of success.” The resources were sometimes connected with grants, but more frequently were matching funds or line items in the budget. Visibility, she said, “came in the form of media attention, recognition ceremonies and community presentations.” The schools and districts defined success based on testimonials from teachers, students and community members, as well as quality assessments and student achievement measures. Not surprisingly, the more formal measures had greater credibility among stakeholders than did the anecdotal information.

Billig concluded that sustaining service-learning in those schools and districts was associated with:

- *A strong and visionary leadership.* Leadership did not necessarily come from the top but was always supported by the top. It “stimulated the development of a shared vision, encouraged action and allegiance to the project, and provided continuity and growth through development and implementation of systemic succession plans.”
- *Cultural norms and organizational expectations compatible with service-learning.* These included “two-way communication systems, appropriate human and fiscal management, feedback loops for identifying and understanding needs, and ways to improve continuously, enduring partnerships ... [as well as] mechanisms for problem solving and strategies for professional growth.”
- *Incentives that attracted people to service-learning and encouraged their continuing involvement.* Incentives included people being recognized for their contributions, participants seeing the results of their work in meeting genuine community needs, and “feelings of efficacy and potency.”
- *Visibility.* Communication was such that individuals “could easily learn about the service-learning project, understand its purposes and benefits, and support activities.”
- *Availability of adequate financial resources.* Funds generally came from a variety of sources and were not dependent upon a single funder.

Billig cautions that institutionalization efforts also need to demonstrate they can affect student achievement and be aligned with other desired student outcomes such as character education and career preparation.

Jane Kendall, executive director of the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, and her colleagues suggest that time, effort and patience are all required to establish service-learning within the education system. Institutionalization occurs on two levels: systemic, which is “infinitely complex,” and on the more manageable level of “small steps to strengthen service-learning within different areas of the institution.” The authors say “it is the very nature of the broader goal of institutionalizing service-learning to be slow and complex because it is reaching to the heart of the academic enterprise – your school’s mission, style, curriculum, faculty expectations, quality, administrative structure and purse strings.” They say that both the long-range vision and the incremental steps are necessary to achieve institutionalization and that efforts to do so are worthwhile because service-learning “will strengthen [the] institution’s capacity to fulfill its multiple missions.”

Interview

Alan Melchior, deputy director, Center for Youth and Communities, and senior research associate, Brandeis University

Melchior has directed evaluations of three national service-learning programs: Serve-America, Learn and Serve, and Active Citizenship Today (ACT). He is overseeing the evaluation of the Learning In Deed initiative.

state-level people have picked and chosen from dozens of strategies and utilized the ones that reflect their strengths and interests. You can't simply tell someone to use X, Y and Z strategies; all strategies have to be thoughtfully selected so that they fit into the overall context of priorities, capabilities and resources.

While specific strategies can vary a great deal from site to site, there is one constant in places that have achieved or are approaching institutionalization: they pay attention to all the major domains of activity. All these domains are important; no one category contains a magic bullet. If, for example, you focus on policy but not on practice, or on community partnerships but not professional development, you will only have a piece of the puzzle. All the pieces have to fit together to create the whole entity of institutionalization.

Successful efforts at institutionalization also require a steady focus on that goal; it's not enough to look at good practice. For example, I'm working on an evaluation of a program that is geared to getting youth into college. At one school, the goal had been getting students to graduate. When staff realized that the goal had changed, everything shifted. Suddenly, staff had to set up labs for math and science; they had to make certain that students were taking the right courses. The new goal required a whole different set of objectives and activities. It's the same thing with service-learning. If the goal is to get as many teachers as possible to practice service-learning, it's a good goal but very different than saying that service-learning is going to be built into the infrastructure of the district. If something is not a goal, you don't pay attention to it.

The idea of setting up systems to move service-learning toward institutionalization hasn't been high on the priority list for schools, districts or states. The contributions of Learning In Deed are in drawing national attention to this very crucial but often overlooked piece of business around institutionalization and showing that institutionalization is in fact doable. The five states that worked on it received relatively moderate sums of money. Through this initiative, service-learning has become embedded in the cultures of many sites and moved up on the policy agenda in all of those states.

Institutionalization isn't something that's easy to pin down. As I look at the variety of information from the research, it's clear that there is not a single route to get there. All of the coordinators and

What service-learning proponents can do to help

Everyone with a stake in service-learning has a role to play in institutionalization efforts:

- *Students* are the most effective advocates for service-learning. They can direct efforts at the school, district and state levels and help design and present training sessions to others. They can help evaluate efforts and share with administrators, school board members and others the impact that service-learning has had on them and their peers.
- *Parents* who have witnessed firsthand the benefits of service-learning can encourage its adoption with local policymakers. They can explain service-learning to other parents and encourage teachers to use this strategy. They can serve as volunteers in classes and help facilitate activities.

- *Teachers* have a central and pivotal role as the ones who implement service-learning efforts in their classes. Their willingness to invest time and professionalism in their efforts translates into a sound curriculum related to that supports standards and projects that address community needs, and engages students in the learning process.
- *Administrators* are often the ones who hold the vision for institutionalization and ensure the entire system is moving towards this end. Their visible support for service-learning and allotment of appropriate resources sends a signal to the entire school community of the importance of service-learning. Their willingness to create a model of shared leadership establishes the basis of successful long-term efforts.
- *School board members* develop policies that give direction and support to local efforts.
- *State policymakers* can create resources for service-learning through the passage of legislation that mentions service-learning as a means of achieving school reform and other desirable student outcomes. The endorsement of state policymakers can mean increased visibility and credibility for service-learning among all constituents.

Each of the constituents mentioned above can serve on a service-learning advisory group at either the local or state level.



Overview of Chapters 4-8

The following five chapters describe numerous approaches successfully used in various Learning In Deed sites throughout five states – California, Maine, Minnesota, Oregon and South Carolina. In the case of school and district strategies, the specific site is also indicated. These chapters include general indicators of successful institutionalization and specific strategies different places have used to achieve them. In other words, if service-learning is institutionalized, it will have the attributes described in the following chapters.

The chapters address five components of institutionalization:

- *Vision and leadership*: How a diverse leadership comprising key stakeholders supports service-learning
- *Curriculum*: How the pedagogy of service-learning is developed, practiced and supported
- *Professional development*: How a variety of training opportunities are created and presented, and how staff members are given time to share their learning and insights
- *Partnership and community*: How schools and community organizations, each with specific needs and expectations, can collaborate in the development of quality service-learning efforts
- *Continuous improvement*: Ways in which districts and states have used evaluation and advanced trainings to boost both the quality and quantity of practice.

There is, unavoidably, a certain amount of overlap between the categories. Professional development, for example, spans every aspect of service-learning, as do leadership and continuous improvement. Still, the overlap does not erase the need for discrete categories, which help to make sense of a large subject and help the reader see how deeply interconnected and interdependent these categories are.

Within each category are several *indicators* of success, *strategies* for how to achieve that indicator and *commentaries* from persons involved in service-learning in the location cited.

The strategies are classified as *policy, practice or capacity*. A brief explanation of those categories follows:

Policy in its fullest and richest form:

- Gives permission for programs to develop and expand
- Provides resources to help programs develop and expand
- Improves program sustainability
- Stimulates resource support from other sources
- Lends credibility and legitimacy to programs.

The goal of policy is to develop and align education policy and service-learning so that it is an expected and supported element of each student's education.

Practice refers to strategies that create an understanding and further the implementation of service-learning. Practice is characterized by strategies that:

- Meet a real community need
- Align with the curriculum
- Assess applicable standards
- Include reflection
- Provide opportunities for civic development
- Engage the community.

The goal of practice is to increase the prevalence of high-quality service-learning in schools through all grades and systems.

Capacity and infrastructure are the systems within schools and communities that support service-learning integration. They include:

- Designated staff
- Professional development
- Networks of support
- Reward systems.

The goal of capacity is to ensure sufficient school and community support so that service-learning is an expected component of education and community partnerships.

These chapters are not meant to be viewed as a collection of assorted ideas. Rather, the strategies need to be seen as individual threads woven together to create a rich and complex tapestry of institutionalization. No one place is using all these strategies or employing all the indicators. Rather, the places that are furthest along the continuum of institutionalization are using a number of strategies and indicators across all of the five categories. As researcher Alan Melchior suggests, successful systems integrate service-learning by keeping focused on the overall goal of institutionalization and not getting immersed in the individual pieces of practice, as interesting and important as they may be.

4. Vision and Leadership

Most service-learning efforts begin with one person – an administrator, teacher, curriculum director or counselor – who is passionately committed to the idea and helps to initiate, organize and coordinate activities. That person – or in some instances, a small group of people – has a clear vision of what service-learning can become in the school or district and inspires others to become involved. No service-learning endeavor can exist without such a person. Yet, if the leadership is confined to one person's enthusiasms, service-learning will not last. That person can easily leave the school or district or agency, be reassigned or retire. At best, one individual's legacy will be what Beverlee Jackson, consultant to the Constitutional Rights Foundation, labels as "pockets of great service-learning ... [that] will never become integrated throughout the system."

While organizational details may vary from site to site, one clear pattern distinguishes places that have integrated service-learning into the workings of the system. At those sites, leadership is not the exclusive domain of one person, or even a few people, but something shared by many people at many levels. Typically, superintendents and principals, as well as significant numbers of teachers, students, parents and other community members all contribute meaningfully to the leadership picture. Furthermore, these multilevel leadership efforts are characterized by a well-understood plan, clear and consistent communication among and between different groups, and a pervasive sense that service-learning is not just an option, but an essential part of the way that things are done. As administrator Nancy Cunningham of California's Encinitas Union School District expressed it, "Service-learning is very labor intensive. Teachers face a lot of pressure with all the accountability measures. Yet in our district, we see service-learning as a necessity. We believe in educating the whole child and see service-learning as crucial to this effort."

Leadership at the top is a necessary component if service-learning is to be made of every student's experience. Douglas DeVore, superintendent of the Encinitas Union School District, says, "You have to have support from the top down. If you don't have that, you can't institutionalize anything." Steve Hefner, superintendent of Richland School District Two in South Carolina, adds: "A district has to have vision for how service-learning fits into the organization; that vision can only be carried out by strong leadership. And once implemented, the efforts have to be extremely well-managed."

At the same time, leadership at the top is not always a prerequisite for the establishment of service-learning, but often comes later. With the widespread reality of frequent administrative changes, many service-learning leaders have no choice but to gain support after efforts are well under way. Administrative changes do not necessarily derail efforts to embed service-learning within the infrastructure, but they can slow the process considerably. In rural Crook County, Oregon, where the middle school saw a procession of four principals within six years, service-learning coordinator Christine Kasberger notes, "Every time we get a new administration, it sets us back – we have to spend time getting the new administrators on board."

Many education systems have administrators who view service-learning as an add-on or another questionable reform effort, although they sometimes had changes of heart when they witnessed students' excitement and accomplishments and teachers' commitment. Nonetheless, without the support of top administrators, there will be a lack of vision, coordination and resources needed to institutionalize service-learning.

No less important than top administration is the leadership of coordinators, students, teachers and others at the school and district. Coordinators provide organization, training, support and focus. Teachers instruct, coach and inspire other teachers. Students not only participate in service-learning but also make important decisions about the content and conduct of their classes. Parents and other community members publicly support service-learning. When all these are present, they add up to a strong indicator that service-learning will stay in the system. As DeVore says, "Implementation has to

occur from the classroom up. Leadership for an initiative has to be strong at the site level, as well as the top. Everyone at each level has to be part of the dialogue.” Leadership, ownership and expectation shared by many people and spread throughout the layers can help a system weather the inevitable and difficult impacts of budget cuts, key personnel leaving and other changes, proponents say.

When leadership is not diverse, it has predictable consequences. Evan Goldberg, service-learning coordinator for the Bay-Area Alameda County Office of Education in California, reports that “with no position paid at the district level and the coordinator located at the county level, there’s a kind of ‘ordering out’ complex at the district. People in the district often don’t see service-learning as something that is theirs. If you’re creating something yourself, it’s only natural that you invest more time than in something that’s being formed elsewhere.” His office is attempting to address this situation by sponsoring a trainer-of-trainers program so that there will be more committed teachers within the three districts overseen by his staff.

Naturally, institutionalization efforts are not constructed overnight. They take years of planning, meetings and training sessions. They require their share of mistakes, frustrations and retrenchments. Marilyn Walster, education program specialist for the Oregon Department of Education, says that “it really takes five to 10 years to ground something like service-learning in the essential workings of the district.” Given administrative turnover and other changes that bombard districts, the only way to institutionalize, she believes, is to have a broad base of good practice. “Policy is helpful, but it’s never enough by itself. Anything that lasts has to be grounded in practice.”

Vision and leadership in schools and districts

Indicator: A broad-based leadership team and a respected coordinator oversee service-learning efforts.

Practice strategy, Richland School District, South Carolina: The service-learning coordinator for the district is a high-ranking administrator, the director of community relations, who works directly for the superintendent.

The greatest barriers have arisen when districts chose to hire someone from the outside, rather than getting a teacher or administrator to become the service-learning coordinator. The service-learning coordinator has to have credibility in the eyes of the professional staff, which usually means having had teaching experience so that instructors perceive that person as understanding the way that classrooms operate. A person lacking teaching and/or administrative credentials will have a more difficult time getting accepted in the district; people don’t want to listen to someone who hasn’t been in their place.

– Marilyn Walster, education program specialist, Oregon Department of Education

Practice strategy, Duluth Public Schools, Minnesota: All service-learning activities are guided by a committee comprising community partners, high school students, district teachers and administrators and students and faculty from a nearby university.

Capacity strategy, Encinitas Union School District, California: Leadership exists at all levels of the district. The superintendent is a very active advocate. Each school has a teacher-leader who helps to train and support other teachers. Two principals have districtwide responsibility for service-learning policy and implementation, and oversee Title I and VISTA grants that support service-learning. Other teachers serve as coaches for new teachers in the district, as well as teachers in neighboring districts.

The key to institutionalization has been the building up of leadership at all levels. Service-learning isn't just in the hands of one person; it's a responsibility that belongs to a number of people.

– Nancy Cunningham, director of administrative support services

Capacity strategy, School Administrative District 27, Ft. Kent, Maine: The superintendent developed a long-term plan for service-learning in the district with input from administrators and a team of teachers who had used service-learning and were knowledgeable about how it fit into school reform and could be used as an assessment tool.

Interview

Sandy Bernstein, superintendent, School Administrative District 27, Ft. Kent, Maine

Bernstein's district has a total of 1,225 students and 90 teachers in four elementary schools and a high school. The district is located in a large rural area where school buses collectively cover 800 miles a day.

Leadership is critical. If you don't have a leader at the system or building level who is supportive, you don't have much chance of having the program institutionalized. There also need to be "cheerleaders" in the system – teachers who have been successful and who can share their knowledge and enthusiasm with others.

The other ingredient is public recognition and praise for teachers and students – that energizes students and parents around a particular activity. If you have established activities that you can do at a certain grade, then that builds positive expectations among students, who look forward to doing that activity when they enter that grade level.

You have to have a plan to do service-learning with input from staff at all levels; you can't just expect things to fall into place. Teachers are so busy with standards that unless you can make the case that this will assist them in things that they have to do, they won't be interested. Our plan evolved with a core team of teachers and administrative staff. Team members had worked with Learning In Deed; all had done a project themselves and knew how to integrate service-learning with state standards. That team had good knowledge of overall professional development and school restructuring work. They saw how service-learning fit into the big picture of school reform and how it could be used as an assessment tool.

The planning team decided that every student will have a service-learning experience at least once in every grade cluster – K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12. They recognized that not every teacher is comfortable with this approach, and teachers can make the decision about how it will happen among their peers. The core group has identified projects that can be used in each of the grade clusters.

The group also identified existing activities that could, with a bit of tweaking, become service-learning. For example, teachers take a group of students every year for an overnight trip to talk about some of the plants and animals in the forest. That trip will now be done in conjunction with the Forest Service, and students can assist in some reforestation projects tied to classroom learning. So this group is always asking, "What is already going on that we can build upon?"

There are 12 teachers drawn from all the schools who serve on the core group. They meet regularly, and, when needed, we get substitute teachers for them so that they can plan trainings and other activities together. We also support travel to coordinators' meetings around the state and pay the teachers through the professional development budget.

Indicator: Knowledge of service-learning is a factor in the hiring process and in orientation for new staff

Policy strategy, Encinitas Union School District, California: Principals ask service-learning questions during interview process for prospective employees.

It is one of the questions that is asked in teacher interviews. While our district wouldn't pass up a qualified teacher without service-learning experience, it certainly would be the deciding factor between two qualified candidates if one possessed that experience and the other didn't.

– Nancy Cunningham, director of administrative support services

Practice strategy, Duluth, St. Peter and Moorhead Public Schools, Minnesota: The district provides a service-learning orientation to curriculum advisory committees and accountability committees that advise and inform the school board.

Practice strategy, Marion School District Seven, South Carolina: Service-learning is part of every principal's professional growth plan.

In our district, every principal has a professional growth plan; they share a draft of three to five things that they plan to accomplish. When needed, I will edit that list so service-learning always appears.

– Milt Marley, associate superintendent

Capacity strategy, Nestucca Valley School District, Oregon: New district administrators are selected based upon background in and commitment to service-learning.

Indicator: Service-learning is aligned with other school reform initiatives being implemented.

Capacity strategy, Canby School District, Oregon: Service-learning is overseen by the director of research and development, who also supervises school-to-work, school volunteers, the 21st Century Learning grant and community education.

Interview

Ed Armstrong, director of research and development, Canby School District, Oregon

Canby School District, with seven schools and 5,285 students, is located in the Willamette Valley between Portland and Salem.

The superintendent of the district, Deborah Sommer, urged her school board several years ago to establish five- to seven-year goals to support their vision for the district. I think that was a wise decision, because as a former school board member, I often saw goals shift constantly, like “flavors of the week.”

Service-learning was aligned with the three major goals – to develop student achievement, build school and community partnerships, and encourage a community of learners among both staff and students.

My position was created to align service-learning with other school improvement initiatives. I supervise four other positions: the coordinators for school-to-work, volunteers, the 21st Century Learning Grant and community education. Each one of these positions helps to integrate service-learning in the school. For example, the volunteer coordinator has placed 50 high school students in the elementary school to help 1st-, 2nd- and 3rd-grade students achieve the English and math standards. At the 4th- and 5th-grade levels,

our 21st Century Learning Grant focuses on after-school enrichment, and we've hired instructors to conduct service-learning projects with the students.

When I first began at the district, I spent days just interviewing people – school administrators, teachers, community members – about their hopes and dreams for education. I didn't really talk to them about service-learning at that point; I wanted to understand their greatest desires for the education process, and then consider showing them how service-learning could help them achieve their vision. Once I was able to go back to these individuals and show them that service-learning could further their own personal goals, they were very attentive. My job is to help people see service-learning in the larger framework of their hopes and vision.

When I begin inservice trainings with teachers, I first ask them about what they want their students to know. For the teachers, it's not about testing; it's about working as a team; having relevant, compelling projects; working in and with the community; and having students excited about learning. I show them that service-learning can help them achieve those goals, as well as assist with standards and testing. I tell them that they don't need to do service-learning every day. They can do it when it fits well with their curriculum, when it reinforces what they are teaching, when it strikes the right connections.

To me, the definition of sustainability is that service-learning becomes part of who people are, how they interact with students and how they live their lives. Money is valuable, but it can't be the driving force. And service-learning has to be more than a series of interesting projects. Now, because it's part of the way people think, teachers ask each other questions that help to improve their practice. For example, teachers review each other's projects and ask questions such as, "How do you think you might support student voice?" or "Have you considered expanding the reflection piece?" Those kinds of conversations occur naturally, without any prompting from me.

At the beginning, I invited in the 15 teachers and 15 community members who had the greatest interest and commitment to service-learning, as well as an administrator from each of our seven schools. I asked them to consider projects – who would be involved, what the project might look like. Now each school has a team of five to 12 teachers who invite in community members as needed. The team members support one another and help to train teachers and develop new projects. Sustainability can only happen when staff feel it's their idea, not mine or someone else's.

It's important not to push service-learning to the point where people perceive you as obnoxious. Timing is everything. Sometimes, while talking to instructors, you don't even call it service-learning. Just observe what the teachers are doing and say, "Have you thought about doing community partnerships?" Take people where they are. You have to accept that service-learning comes naturally for some people, but not for others.

It can be advantageous to have an administrator as the service-learning coordinator. That person will tend to command respect from teachers and other administrators. Classified positions have no power to begin with; that power is either given by the superintendent or earned rapidly within a few months. A person can't establish credibility over three years; it has to be there from the beginning to succeed. Our office, for example, has brought in almost \$5 million in grants; that also commands a great deal of respect throughout the district.

Capacity strategy, Eureka City Schools, California: Service-learning is integrated into many programs, including Academic Mentoring, School-to-Career, EAST (Environmental and Spatial Technology), Community Learning Center, Cesar Chavez Program, HealthPath, Community Challenge Grant and classroom activities.

Capacity strategy, School Administrative District 51, Cumberland, Maine: The service-learning coordinator is part of both the administrative team and the district design team in charge of implementing the Maine Learning Results.

Indicator: Students assume leadership roles.

Practice strategy, School Administrative District 20, Ft. Fairfield, Maine: Students frequently update school board members on service-learning projects, which builds ongoing support for service-learning as an instructional strategy.

Practice strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: The high school has a core group of students who not only are personally committed to service-learning, but also travel across the state to present training sessions to others as part of a Youth Consultant Program. Their usual audiences are teachers, with whom they share the value of service-learning from a student perspective.

Interview

Joanna Specter, student, University of Vermont; graduate, Spring Valley High School, South Carolina

I never knew what service-learning was until my junior year in high school. Then I became part of the Youth Consultant Program – people were nominated for this by teachers and students – and I spent a lot

of time reading and learning as much as I could. My senior year, I and another student, Jamaal Young, were in charge of the Youth Consultant Program. We had about 15 students working with us; usually, four or five students would go to any particular training.

Even though the school gave minimal funding for this program, we were able to do amazing things. We expanded the program; almost every weekend we went somewhere else. We gave keynotes at state and national conferences. We served on a committee that helped to get the Learning In Deed grant. We helped Spring Valley become one of the country's "leader schools" in service-learning. A team of educators in England came to visit us. They were so impressed by what we had done that they invited Jamaal and me to come to England and help them train their students and teachers in service-learning.

We worked with many different people as youth consultants. We went to schools around the state; we spoke at teacher education conferences; we conducted teacher certification courses; we did trainings for students in how to get service-learning in their schools. The other youth consultants and I formulated all the training materials and activities. We had a saying in our school: "If a student can do it, a teacher shouldn't."

I don't think we ever had a problem speaking to teachers. They generally had very little knowledge of service-learning, while we had a lot, both from our research and from experience. When we moved into national work, we were always respected as youth.

Service-learning has motivated me academically – it is something that I really care about and want to pursue. It has really helped me to develop leadership skills and understand what I am capable of doing. It has given me so many opportunities that I would never have had otherwise.



Practice strategy, School Administrative District 51, Cumberland, Maine:

A variety of stakeholders, including young people, are involved in establishing a vision that includes service-learning as a critical component of district education.

Students are partners in everything that we do, in every aspect of district planning. As part of the district's Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Committee, students join the superintendent, other administrators and teachers in coordinating all activities dealing with instruction, curriculum and professional development. Students serve on the Curriculum Design Team, which looks at the application of the Maine Learning Results.

When we put together a referendum for a larger building and renovation project, students started to attend the planning meetings. They put together a PowerPoint presentation and skillfully facilitated three community forums, which included some contentious discussions. They created virtual tours of the planned facilities and put a great deal of information on the district Web site. The referendum passed by a three-to-one margin, and we all attribute this success to the student leadership.

– Melissa Skahan, director of volunteer services

Capacity strategy, Eureka City Schools, California: Youth take initiative in planning service-learning activities.

More and more, our students see service as being a regular and expected part of their school experience. For example, when the tragic events of September 11th occurred, I was attending a meeting in Sacramento. The superintendent called me to say that I should do something in the schools in response to these events. But when I came back to school, I found out that plans had already been made ... by the students. The students, at every level, had created the activities that they felt were important. At the high school, students planned a series of fundraisers to provide money to the Red Cross. Students at the middle school organized an assembly and sponsored a blood drive and some sales to raise money for the families of victims. Even the elementary students helped with fundraisers. I literally didn't have to plan anything, because the students had done it all.

– Marge Crichton, special projects counselor

Capacity strategy, Crook County School District, Oregon: Students are beginning to come to teachers with suggestions for projects. In addition, teachers are motivated to try service-learning because of the encouragement and enthusiasm of students.

Capacity strategy, Tillamook County School District, Oregon: Youth receive training that prepares them to become leaders in the school and community.

We've really worked on creating opportunities for youth to serve in leadership positions. We invited two students for each grade from 6-11 from each school in the district. We talked about how students can serve on boards, participate in meetings. We want to have a youth governing board for service-learning. Students now serve on the city council, county commissioners and the Futures Council, an environmental agency. Each student will have a mentor on the board who will teach facilitator skills and team-building as part of the training and mentoring process.

– Marta Brooks, service-learning coordinator

Indicator: District and board goals, policies and strategic plans provide permission and resources for service-learning.

Policy strategy, Canby School District, Oregon: Service-learning goals are aligned with school board goals. District and building policies support service-learning.

Example

Policy Example: Canby, Oregon

District mission statement: “Rigorous and relevant education produces motivated, caring, able and productive citizens for life.”

Board priorities:

1. Ensure high expectations for student achievement
2. Create positive school-community relationships that support student learning
3. Respect all students and staff as valued members of a community of learners.

Service-learning goals:

1. As part of education experiences in Canby School District, every student will have multiple opportunities (K-12) to have service-learning experiences.
2. All staff in Canby School District will understand that service-learning is a strategy to reach student achievement. Further, staff will understand that service-learning is not an add-on project or a separate program.
3. Communities that surround our schools will be active participants and supporters of service-learning. These community partners will be active participants in service-learning and will encourage their employees to be involved with local school projects.

Policy strategy, San Francisco Unified School District, California: The superintendent released a five-year strategic plan, Excellence for All, which focuses on equity issues. The plan identifies service-learning, in conjunction with school-to-career, as a key instructional strategy “to increase the academic achievement ... and narrow the existing academic achievement gap between students of different races, ethnicities and English-language-learner status.”

Indicator: There is consistent and clear communication between the service-learning leaders and key stakeholders.

Practice strategy, Duluth Public Schools, Minnesota: The service-learning coordinator sends out a newsletter three times a year to all teachers in the district. The newsletter profiles service-learning projects and addresses crucial questions, such as the use of service-learning in meeting state standards.

We’ve found, that for groups like the school board and faculty, we have to talk and talk again to keep service-learning in everyone’s awareness. I believe that constant communication helps; now people are starting to call me instead of my having to make all the calls.

– Kathy Bartsias, service-learning coordinator

Practice strategy, Encinitas Union School District, California: Service-learning is integrated into all management team meetings with the superintendent and different principals. Administrators provide reports of how service-learning is progressing in the district.

Practice strategy, Encinitas Union School District, California: District leaderships deals with potential problems quickly and openly.

We have built a system for communicating with stakeholders and we do it well. If there is a controversy, we speak to it immediately. Our role is to say: “Now this is what we’ve heard. Let us show you what we believe and what we’ve experienced.” Not dealing with problems undermines people’s ability to deal with issues; they start to believe, quite accurately, that they can’t get their jobs done.

– Douglas DeVore, superintendent

Practice strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: The district informs parents about the content of service-learning classes.

At one of the high schools, a Spanish instructor used service-learning methodology and involved his students in assisting Spanish-speaking migrant workers in the community. While academic outcomes were virtually identical to other classes, some other unanticipated outcomes caused great concern for the district and eventually resulted in some valuable lessons. Students and parents had received no information and no choice about which language class they were enrolled in. While some students and families were quite pleased by the experience, other families were offended by activities that they felt infringed on some of their religious, social and/or political beliefs. Some fundamentalist Christian families were uncomfortable with their children working with a predominantly Catholic population. Others objected to the presence of the migrants, whom they suspected not only of being illegal immigrants but also of taking jobs away from local residents.

While we want to encourage service-learning wherever possible, we need to do a better job of telling people up-front about the activities. We need to say to them, "This is the way that service-learning works in this class; this is what you can expect." They need to make an informed decision as to whether or not to participate.

– Steve Hefner, superintendent

Capacity strategy, Encinitas Union School District, California: The superintendent and other administrators meet monthly with the PTA presidents' council. At least three or four times a year, they give user-friendly presentations about service-learning, in which they express appreciation for the support that parents share.

One of my mottoes is, "A day without a meeting is like a day without sunshine." I think it's important to utilize every possible opportunity to communicate with others – principals, parents, teachers, students, community members, because if we don't tell the story about service-learning, then someone else will. And it won't be the story that we want to share. With service-learning, all of our PTA presidents are very supportive; they help us to send out the story that it is something very positive for the district.

– Douglas DeVore, superintendent

Indicator: Ongoing efforts solicit and use funding to enhance service-learning.

Practice strategy, Alameda County Office of Education, California: Between 10-20% of coordinator time is devoted to the grants process – either writing grants or maintaining relationships that support grants.

Practice strategy, St. Peter Public Schools, Minnesota: The school's higher education partner collaborated on a number of grants that support service-learning in the district. These grants included the Community, Higher Education and School Partnership grant through Learn and Serve America.

A school district representative and higher education representative co-direct the program in a way that fosters sharing, collaborative response to problems and unified thinking about K-16 education. Other related activities include shared professional development, collaborative response to new populations of St. Peter residents, collaborative service-learning projects, supported educational innovation and reciprocal support for innovation. Teacher education students, as well as general college students, also volunteer and support the district with numerous projects and programs outside of class structures and requirements, serving to increase the capacity of the district.

– Mike Miller, chairman, Education Department, Gustavus Adolphus College

Capacity strategy, Encinitas Union School District, California: Grants are in line with overall district goals for student support and school improvement.

You have to provide resources to get things done; on the other hand, you don't necessarily need to spend a lot of money on service-learning once it becomes part of the system. The question is, how do you go forward? It's a focus issue; if you're focused on the fact that you have money, it's the wrong focus. The focus has to be on what's good for kids, and then you find a way to support it. If you send the message that it's only going to happen under a grant, you don't get buy-in.

– Douglas DeVore, superintendent

Capacity strategy, Encinitas Union School District, California: Grants that target various academic areas are used in part to underwrite the integration of service-learning in those areas.

In terms of resources, you have to make your own luck. We're always looking to support service-learning through grants targeted at various academic areas. For example, we received more than \$500,000 through a private foundation and the California Arts Council, and have used service-learning as the anchor for that program. Some of the students worked with the Make a Wish Foundation and presented plays in the community as a way of raising monies for the families. Likewise, for Cesar Chavez Day, which is a state holiday in California, students developed a theater piece for the community that described his life. For this event, students have also written essays and designed posters.

– Nancy Cunningham, director of administrative support services

Capacity strategy, Eureka City Schools, California: With the assistance of a local foundation, the district will begin developing an endowment fund for the support of service-learning.

The Eureka Schools are collaborating with the Humboldt Area Foundation to establish an endowment fund for the support of service-learning. It still is in the planning stages, and the foundation itself will not provide funds, only coordination services. The hope is over time to raise money from district graduates and from local businesses. It is a long-term process that will hopefully generate enough money to support such basic functions as a coordinator position, stipends for the site coordinators and other needs.

– Marge Crichton, special projects counselor

Vision and leadership at the state level

Indicator: Service-learning is aligned with other school reform initiatives.

Policy strategy, South Carolina: State legislation, the School-to-Work Act (1994), mentions service-learning and structured work-based learning as a way teachers can help prepare students for the world of work. Another piece of state legislation, the 1994 Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance Act, asks for service-learning to be included in every school's renewal plan and every district's strategic plan.

Practice strategy, Minnesota: The Minnesota Committee to Advance Service-Learning, a state-level advisory group established under the Learning In Deed initiative, has worked to develop legislative proposals to increase state funding. While the initial bill was defeated, the group is working to refashion the proposal and have it resubmitted.

Practice strategy, Maine: A state delegation appointed by the commissioner is working to articulate a K-16 partnership for civic education. The group is drafting a "white paper" in the state around civic education, with a key component being service-learning.

Practice strategy, South Carolina: The State Department of Education, the South Carolina Commission on National and Community Service, and the South Carolina Association of School Administrators became partners to promote the Schools of Promise Initiative, which now involves about half the schools in the state. All partner organizations endorse service-learning as the means to achieve several initiative goals.

We have asked administrators to include Schools of Promise concepts in all school renewal and strategic plans. The concepts include forging an ongoing relationship with a caring adult, providing a good education and marketable skills, and creating opportunities to give back to the community through service. We have really connected service-learning to this initiative ... we feel that it is the way to get students involved in service. Besides the fact that service-learning is a very good method of imparting knowledge, academic and otherwise, it also helps connects our schools in a very positive way with the 75% of people in communities who do not have school-age children.

– Robert Scarborough, executive director, South Carolina Association of School Administrators

Indicator: The leadership and departments of the state education agency actively collaborate to support service-learning.

Practice strategy, Oregon: The superintendent of public instruction supports and understands service-learning as it connects with school reform and issues of civic engagement. He uses the term service-learning and incorporates the concept into speeches, conversations and written documents.

Practice strategy, Oregon: Service-learning is not viewed as the purview of a single department; it frequently appears on the agendas of offices throughout the agency, and specialists throughout the agency design, support and attend the service-learning institute. Those offices represent other major initiatives, including Title I, School-to-Work, Alternative Education, Small Learning Communities, Eisenhower and New Century Schools.

Capacity strategy, Oregon: The superintendent of public instruction makes service-learning a state education department priority.

Capacity strategy, Oregon: The budget for service-learning comes from more than one source and includes multiple federal programs and/or state general funds.

Indicator: Young people have leadership roles in training and policy development.

Practice strategy, Minnesota: The Youth Advisory Council works with the commissioner of education.

The commissioner has been very supportive of service-learning, perhaps in part because the Youth Advisory Council has many members who know and understand service-learning. During a recent press conference, the commissioner declared that “this is just the beginning of service-learning and graduation standards being tied together.”

– Michelle Kamenov, service-learning specialist, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Practice strategy, Maine: High school students serve along with adults on the State Policy Panel, which guides the integration of service-learning in school districts. The group presented recommendations to state-level policymakers and is active in moving the recommendations forward.

My involvement with service-learning began officially during my sophomore year, when I was selected to bring student voice to the State Policy Panel, which is funded through Learning In Deed. A total of eight students was recruited for the panel. In the beginning, we attended meetings and began speaking about the benefits of service-learning. Over the past three years, our group has presented to our school's faculty, at workshops, the Coalition of Essential Schools in Providence and Seattle, the governor, commissioner of education and other legislative higher-ups.

I feel that service-learning has opened so many doors for me personally. I have come to realize through service-learning that education is my way of giving back to the community and am going for my bachelor's degree in education at Bates College. I want to become a middle school teacher and eventually a college professor. Through all my service-learning experiences, I have been able to develop my speaking skills and contribute effectively to a group. I have traveled and met some unforgettable people.

– Melissa Simones, student, Leavitt Area High School



5. Curriculum

“Unless you align service-learning with school reform and standards,” cautions a district curriculum coordinator, “it’s going to disappear.” With school reform, standards and testing being pervasive features in virtually every state and district, no one doubts that blunt message. The long-term presence of service-learning depends upon a well-crafted curriculum combined with assessments and aligned with state standards.

Service-learning advocates need to enlist the support of all those involved in curriculum if they are to succeed in making it an integral part of studies. In addition to teachers, who are the first line of support, curriculum directors, if convinced of the capacity for service-learning to address standards, can be close allies. They can urge instructors to consider using service-learning methodology and can advise teachers on developing curricula in conjunction with standards. “Curriculum directors are quite crucial,” says Beverlee Jackson, consultant to the Constitutional Rights Foundation and former service-learning specialist for the Oregon Department of Education. “They need to be brought in from the beginning.”

Students can be another ally. Throughout the Learning In Deed states, there are many examples of students who have helped their teachers develop curriculum, not only high school students, but also middle school and even elementary students. In Maine, where the KIDS model is used in all grantee sites, students at all levels are expected, encouraged and guided to assist teachers in developing service-learning projects and curriculum. In Maine’s School Administrative District 51, based in Cumberland, students contribute to curriculum in their classes and serve on the districtwide committee that governs curriculum, instruction and professional development. High school students, working alongside teachers, are also developing a senior exhibition based on service-learning that will meet state graduation requirements.

Because curriculum writing requires time, that most precious of school resources, administrative support for individual or group planning periods is essential. With administrative blessing, some districts sponsor inservice training sessions or classes in which time is provided for researching and writing curriculum and developing assessments; other districts designate planning time, during or after school, for this purpose.

States have assumed different ways to assist districts in this complex work. In Minnesota, regional workshops jointly sponsored by the Department of Children, Families and Learning, and the Minnesota Effectiveness Education Program provide time and guidance for teachers to write service-learning curriculum attuned to standards. In Maine, most districts use a mini-grant process that helps teachers tie service-learning curriculum to standards, assessments, youth involvement and community partnerships. In California and South Carolina, state agencies have created extensive guides with sample curricula and projects that detail the connection to standards.

Curriculum in schools and districts

Indicator: Service-learning is tied to curriculum and academic standards.

Policy strategy, School Administrative District 51, Cumberland, Maine: Service-learning forms an integral part of the district’s comprehensive assessment system, which measures student achievement of state education standards.

In Maine, with the single-minded state focus on assessment, service-learning will survive only if it can be viewed as a type of performance assessment. Many of the district curriculum people are receptive to using service-learning in this context, though some just want something quick and simple, like a standardized test. We need to learn how to conduct service-learning assessment in a valid and reliable way.

– Barbara Kaufman, education consultant, KIDS Consortium

Policy strategy, Encinitas Union School District, California: The district wrote service-learning into the 3rd-grade social studies curriculum and published it in the Social Studies/History Standards booklet that goes home with every student.

Practice strategy, School Administrative District 19, Lubec, Maine: Districts use a mini-grant application that requires teachers to connect service-learning projects to standards, list aligned assessment measures, and assure student ownership and community partnerships. A service-learning advisory team, which includes the principal, several teachers and sometimes students, reviews the applications and approves funding.

Practice strategy, Palo Alto Unified School District, California: The service-learning coordinator maintains continued communication with district curriculum leaders in both elementary and secondary education. This includes sharing information about grant opportunities, service-learning conferences and new resources available.

Practice strategy, Crook County School District, Oregon: High school curricula were restructured to meet state standards through incorporating service-learning and addressing community needs.

When the requirements for state standards were being introduced, the district received a small grant so that high school teachers could align local requirements with those of the state. The teachers strongly endorsed service-learning as the means for students to achieve high academic standards and subsequently took the initiative to recruit community partners for service-learning projects. Some curricula in the school were completely restructured as a consequence. For example, in the health occupations, classes teach students how to take vital signs and conduct hearing and vision tests, as well as other health screenings. The classes regularly collaborate with the local Lions Club to present community health fairs.

– Christine Kasberger, service-learning coordinator

Practice strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: District curriculum and assessment staff help teachers align service-learning projects with academic standards, encourage interdisciplinary work and authentic performance assessment of student learning.

Practice strategy, Eugene School District, Oregon: A Small Learning Community model ties service-learning, rigorous curriculum and standards.

At Churchill High School, there are six Small Learning Communities with the common features of service-learning, community involvement and interaction, and a rigorous curriculum. The communities comprise small groups of students and teachers who focus on a common interest and work together for four years.

In one of the Small Learning Communities, which is focused on business and law, students received a list of nonprofits, which they have to research, as well as spend 10-20 hours volunteering with them. Each Small Learning Community involves 60-80 students. In 9th and 10th grades, all students will experience at least one Small Learning Community.

– Cindy Donley, service-learning coordinator

Practice strategy, Duluth Public Schools, Minnesota: Service-learning classes are aligned with graduation requirements.

We have graduation standards liaisons at all the schools. They are good sounding boards for us and are also helpful to the teachers who are implementing service-learning. Our district will soon be hosting a graduation standards showcase for the public, and we will have tables representing service-learning. Students will show some of their projects, and we will even have a couple of demonstrations to show how service-learning works.

– Kathy Bartsias, service-learning coordinator

Indicator: Students are involved in the planning and design of service-learning curriculum.

Practice strategy, School Administrative District 51, Cumberland, Maine: Students, along with the superintendent, all administrators and teachers from each school, serve on the districtwide Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Committee. The committee coordinates everything in the district related to instruction, curriculum and professional development, and assessment systems. This group meets once a month for two hours and is composed of several working groups.

Practice strategy, St. Peter Public Schools, Minnesota: In conjunction with the local historical society, 8th-grade students designed and built gardens that reflect Native American and European approaches.

One of the 8th-grade teachers who was committed to service-learning took a graduate class at Mankato State University from a professor who had gathered seeds from Native American gardens in North Dakota. He then approached the historical society in St. Peter about the idea of creating a Native American and a European garden to show the difference between the two cultures. The historical society agreed, and the students decided that they wanted to work on this project.

The students not only created the gardens, but also decided to pursue a number of other activities. They made Native American tools, such as a shovel made from the shoulder blade of a deer, wrote brochures to describe the different gardens, and created a display case. The gardens are now maintained by a group of young students from Somalia, who with their families, had come to St. Peter as refugees a few years earlier. They agreed to take on the garden as part of a summer learning program.

– Marcia Applen, service-learning coordinator

Practice strategy, Marion School District Seven, South Carolina: Projects are student-driven and address a real need.

Practice strategy, Crook County School District, Oregon: Technology students in the high school design workshops, create lesson plans and adapt instruction for senior citizens who want to use computers.

Interview

Christine Kasberger, service-learning coordinator, Crook County School District, Oregon

Rural Crook County, Oregon, is located in the geographical heart of the state.

Centered in the city of Prineville, the district has 3,200 students in a high school, a middle school and five elementary schools. The district benefits from the closeness and connectedness of a small community, but also suffered economic and population loss in the last few years when several lumber mills closed.

Most of his students were senior citizens who were having a hard time grasping the basic concepts. The teacher went to his high school students and asked for their help in working with the seniors; the students responded by developing a curriculum and then working one-on-one with the seniors with three different programs: PowerPoint, Excel and Microsoft Word. The same students also observed that many of their peers had inadequate typing skills to use a computer keyboard effectively, so they decided to develop a curriculum to teach elementary students to type.

Another instructor at the high school who teaches advanced drafting was approached by the police and fire departments about the possibility of using his classes to remap the county so the 911 emergency response system could become more effective. The students not only learned a new and complex drafting system for this project, but also were able to complete it successfully and present it to the police and fire departments. Now the school district has asked the same students to work on more efficient routes for the school bus system.

In general, service-learning is becoming more student-driven. Students not only are beginning to come to teachers with suggestions for projects, but also are asking other teachers who do not use service-learning to consider using it.

Capacity strategy, School Administrative District 51, Cumberland, Maine: At the high school, a student-driven committee is developing a senior exhibition to meet the Maine Learning Results. Students and teachers are working together to use service-learning as the vehicle to achieve the senior exhibition required by state standards.

Capacity strategy, Canby School District, Oregon: A group of middle school students designed a Nobel Peace Prize for young people and are involving students from throughout the state in their efforts.

A group of students is working on the idea of a Nobel Peace Prize for students. Several students gave the keynote at the district's last inservice training and spoke about the importance of integrating both peace and service-learning into the curriculum. They received a standing ovation. The students created a video, visited with the Dalai Lama when he came to Portland, and now they're planning to give the first statewide award in May or June. Several of the students are speaking at different schools around the state, describing this project and how students can assist with this.

– Ed Armstrong, director of research and development

Indicator: Service-learning is acknowledged as a key instructional strategy in policy and practice.

Policy strategy, Nestucca Valley School District, Oregon: District policy cites service-learning as a key instructional strategy.

Example

Policy Example: Nestucca Valley School District, Oregon

The Nestucca Valley School District supports and encourages the use of service-learning as a teaching strategy by giving it priority status in the use of transportation resources; providing staff development and teacher release time; publicly recognizing service-learning projects; and providing financial support for service-learning projects.

The school district envisions service-learning being embedded in the culture of the district. That will occur when K-12 students have opportunities to engage in service-learning activities, and when all teachers are versed in the use of service-learning and include it in their teaching repertoire.

The district recognizes service-learning's ability to effectively deliver curriculum and sees service-learning as a dynamic tool in meeting the goals set out in Oregon's 21st Century Schools legislation. Service-learning, proponents say, can assist students in meeting requirements for the Certificate of Initial Mastery and can be an effective way for the district to give students opportunities to meet requirements for the Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM). Further, the district recognizes the power of service-learning to transform the student-teacher relationship and promotes it as a school reform process.

Policy strategy, Nestucca Valley School District, Oregon: The district authorizes use of district buses for service-learning activities.

Practice strategy, Linn Benton Lincoln School District, Oregon: The curriculum director includes service-learning as a critical component of curriculum development.

Capacity strategy, Marion School District Seven, South Carolina: The district requires flexible scheduling of the school day and adequate transportation to accommodate all service-learning projects.

Curriculum at the state level

Indicator: Service-learning is aligned with state standards and assessments.

Policy strategy, Maine: The six guiding principles for the state standards (Maine Learning Results) specify the expectation that students will be responsible and involved citizens.

We have at the state level tried to take a serious, long-term approach rather than have short-term reactions to problems. We try to look at the nature of causes, and ask ourselves what we can do to change

the climate to effect solutions. As a consequence, the guiding documents around standards and accountability have kept the issues of citizenship and youth involvement central. One of the strengths that Maine has is that we have state standards that are broad and inclusive enough to keep character education and civic involvement as the heart. Many states have gone the opposite direction, testing only a narrow range of skills.

– Yellow Breen, director of special and external affairs, Maine Department of Education

Policy strategy, Oregon: Graduating high school seniors can choose to earn a Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM), which, among other requirements, says students must “connect classroom learning with real-life experiences in the workplace, community or school” and “apply academic and career knowledge and skills in new and complex situations.” Additionally, Oregon's State Board of Education passed a policy that students receiving a diploma in 2007 must meet this same requirement. The CAM and new diploma requirements are written to support the kinds of experiences and knowledge gained through service-learning.

Practice strategy, Maine: The education department organized a statewide assessment group to develop models for using service-learning as part of the local assessment process.

Practice strategy, California: State staff members included service-learning language and examples in state curriculum standards guides.

Practice strategy, South Carolina: State staff developed curriculum guides to help local educators create curriculum tied to state standards.

Indicator: State-sponsored training sessions provide opportunities for writing service-learning curriculum that addresses standards.

Practice strategy, Minnesota: State education agency staff and the Minnesota Effectiveness Education Program (MEEP) coordinators held regional workshops for teachers that focused on writing curriculum and meeting graduation standards.

Service-learning projects in Minnesota are viewed as excellent performance assessments. The Department of Children, Families and Learning trains all of the regional school representatives in performance task writing and always includes examples of service-learning. Fulfilling Minnesota standards through service-learning honors local control of curriculum and breaks down the walls between school and community.

– Diane Cirksena, MEEP coordinator



6. Professional Development

Professional development is the lifeblood of service-learning. Whether personnel are novices or experienced practitioners, they need structured times to learn new skills, explore possible projects, share insights with colleagues, and develop curriculum and assessments.

Professional development can be found in different forms. Most districts involved in Learning In Deed have sponsored “Service-Learning 101” for new practitioners. Some, such as Minnesota’s St. Peter Public Schools, offer a more advanced course designed to assist experienced teachers in creating and scoring assessments. Other districts, such as South Carolina’s Richland Two, provide graduate credit as well as coursework for professional certification. Much professional development takes place on a one-to-one basis, when coordinators or faculty coaches work with teachers to establish or improve their practice. What practitioners often prize above all is simply the time to meet with colleagues, reflect upon practice, learn about other projects and develop needed materials.

Some sites have found innovative ways of creating common planning time for teachers. One of the most unusual is in School Administrative District 51 in Cumberland, Maine, where the superintendent created an early-release program once a week so all K-12 teachers can meet to plan curriculum and assessments for service-learning. In Canby, Oregon, thanks to a partnership with a local university, teams of supervised student teachers who have been trained in service-learning will lead several high school classes, giving instructors time to meet. In the Duluth (Minnesota) Public Schools, the Learning In Deed grant has allowed the district to pay for substitute teachers, as well as reimburse teachers for after-school time.

Many districts employ a train-the-trainer model. In San Francisco, for example, the service-learning staff annually trains 30 teachers throughout the school year to sustain and develop service-learning. They in turn will train people at their schools and get service-learning written into the site plans. Various called site advocates, peer coaches and peer trainers, these individuals play a significant role in bringing knowledge of service-learning directly to the people who need the information. In other places, it is teams of teachers, or teams comprising students, teachers and administrators, who lead staff development. Typically, the school-based trainers meet regularly with the service-learning coordinator to plan training activities and discuss insights and issues.

Administrative support is essential for professional development; it helps to secure the necessary time and resources. Lacking that support, it’s difficult to access teachers, much less hold a training session. In Eugene, Oregon, Service-Learning Coordinator Cindy Donley reports “a very difficult time getting opportunities to present to the staff. There has been tremendous financial pressure on the district, which may lose as much as \$13 million next year. With the mandates for state standards, principals are very protective of their staff members.”

Unless administrators see service-learning as essential to the district’s goals, they will not, in a time of shrinking resources and increasing demands for standards and assessments, make room for inservice training opportunities.

State education agencies have been instrumental in establishing professional development in far-reaching ways. States such as South Carolina and Oregon have collaborated with major state education organizations, such as the School Boards Association and School Administrators Association, to have service-learning included in their respective conference and training agendas. All of the states have forged collaborations with higher education institutions to have service-learning woven into teacher education requirements and/or to have colleges and universities provide staff development to districts. In many cases, higher education institutions offer courses for graduate credit.

In Minnesota, the state Learning In Deed staff have formed a close and successful partnership with the Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Program coordinators, all of whom are trained in service-learning and help every state district with issues of standards and assessments. The state infrastructure for professional development has obvious and powerful impact on activities at the local level.

Professional development in schools and districts

Indicator: Districts provide regular opportunities for faculty and other employees to receive service-learning training.

Practice strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: Teachers include service-learning as part of their professional development goals.

Practice strategy, Alameda County Office of Education, California: Monthly check-ins with service-learning teachers allow for troubleshooting, presenting new material and reflection.

Practice strategy, School Administrative District 27, Fort Kent, Maine: All new staff are required to take part in a core practices seminar, which includes service-learning, so they can quickly become involved. Both new and continuing teachers can use sample projects that have been developed by experienced practitioners in the district.

Practice strategy, Crook County School District, Oregon: The service-learning coordinator developed a manual that contains information on documentation, reflection, projects and celebration. All teachers received manuals during presentations at faculty meetings and inservice days.

Capacity strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: All principals attend service-learning training sessions. They, in turn, encourage teachers to attend professional development.

You have to bring the principals on board. They can't support what they don't understand; they need to see the kind of teaching and learning that they can expect.

– Julia Boyd, director of community relations

Capacity strategy, Nestucca Valley School District, Oregon: Students, educators and school board members work together to provide professional development to different stakeholder groups.

Capacity strategy, Eureka City Schools, California: Each school has a service-learning site advocate. The advocates, who are all teachers, attend inservice training sessions, participate in quarterly meetings with the service-learning coordinator and provide assistance to other staff members at their schools. They also are responsible for creating service-learning portfolios that document, through writing and photographs, the different projects undertaken at that school.

Capacity strategy, St. Peter Public Schools, Minnesota: The district uses a peer-coaching model. Peer coaches – all members of the faculty – lead “Service-Learning 101” classes and provide individualized assistance when needed.

Interview

*Marcia Applen, service-learning coordinator,
St. Peter Public Schools, Minnesota*

*St. Peter is located
60 miles southwest
of Minneapolis.
The district has
three buildings –
for K-3, 4-6 and
7-12 – and also
operates the
Hoffman Learning
Center, a rehabilita-
tion facility for
male sex offenders.*

We've used a peer-coaching model. We don't believe in getting people all fired up with a charismatic, out-of-town speaker and then leaving teachers to figure something out on their own. It just doesn't work. We sent our staff out to be trained, and they each came back as experts. Now we have a coach in each of the buildings and three at the high school. These coaches, all teachers, are experienced in service-learning and are willing to teach others in our Service-Learning 101 class.

Teachers who take the training can either get a "lane-change" credit or a stipend if they're already at the top. Teachers get paid for conducting the trainings and participants can receive mini-grants for developing curricula. We're now offering Service-Learning 201, which helps teachers create and score assessments for service-learning. Our coaches not only teach the classes, but also are available to answer any questions as they arise.

To help establish service-learning, I interviewed all teachers in the district to find out about their needs for staff development and assessment. I naturally found a great deal of skepticism. Because so many school reform initiatives had come and gone, many teachers viewed service-learning as "the flavor of the month" that would quickly be replaced by something else. It takes time to change the school culture, in which more than a few teachers are mainly concerned about raising ACT and SAT scores. Coaches at each of the schools have joined key committees, such as discipline policy and academic achievement, to show how teachers could do more than just "doing to" students – that there are ways to raise academic achievement and improve discipline while getting students interested and involved with service opportunities.

Capacity strategy, Alameda County Office of Education, California: A train-the-trainer program allows teachers to lead graduate-level courses on service-learning at their sites.

We've created a training-of-trainers program that is going extremely well. The training will allow teachers to do three things: use coursework toward their credential requirements; give out college credit to participants, since the trainers will be considered college instructors; and allow the trainings to take place within the districts. With this structure, teachers don't need to leave their building to gain in-depth knowledge about service-learning.

– Evan Goldberg, service-learning coordinator

Capacity strategy, Duluth Public Schools, Minnesota: One elementary school, in which every teacher has embraced service-learning, is now partnering with two other schools to assist their teachers in utilizing service-learning.

Indicator: Districts provide incentives to involve faculty in professional development for service-learning.

Policy strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: The district includes service-learning training as a way for teachers to move toward advanced licensure and advance on district pay scale.

Policy strategy, St. Peter Public Schools, Minnesota: Teachers can receive graduate credit or college extension units for participating in service-learning workshops, and can advance on the district pay scale.

Policy strategy, Alameda County Office of Education, California: Teachers can receive professional development units for participating in the Service-Learning Leadership Development Program, a yearlong professional development program.

Policy strategy, Alameda County Office of Education, California: Detailed memoranda of understanding outline the district's role in supporting teachers in staff development efforts related to service-learning, including financial obligations.

Practice strategy, Duluth Public Schools, Minnesota: Through a grant, the district provided financial resources so teachers could develop curriculum and assessments for the graduation standards.

Many teachers had recognized the value of service-learning; a number were even employing this method before we had the Kellogg grant. But as a district, we hadn't done a good job in using it as an assessment. The grant has helped us to develop curriculum and assessments for the graduation standards so that teachers now view service-learning as an efficient use of their time. Since service-learning requires a considerable up-front time commitment, we can offer to hire substitutes and provide people resources to help with development, or pay teachers for working after regular school hours. Teachers need the time to develop their thinking about service-learning; without that extra time, it's virtually impossible.

– Kathy Bartsias, service-learning coordinator

Practice strategy, School Administrative District 17, Oxford, Maine: Teachers are offered a free graduate-level course in summer in which they learn and experience service-learning.

Practice strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: Each semester, the district provides a course that can be used for graduate credit, as well as toward certification.

Practice strategy, Tillamook County, Oregon: Eisenhower funds, school improvement funds and Kellogg funds were used to assist with professional development. The funds bought time for teachers to meet and design curriculum. One of the results is that service-learning is now on every curriculum council, administrative meeting and staff meeting agenda.

Indicator: Districts create partnerships with higher education institutions to provide high-quality staff development opportunities.

Policy strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: A district/university partnership on student teaching includes service-learning methodology in preservice and continuing licensure work.

Practice strategy, Canby School District, Oregon: Student teachers from a nearby university, familiar with service-learning from their own coursework, come to the high school to work, under guidance from their supervisor, in small teams with other student teachers to lead classes. This allows high school teachers to meet and develop curriculum and assessments for the state standards.

One of the things that's been powerful is a connection to higher education. This semester, we're going to bring a class of 12-15 student teachers in from nearby George Fox University. Rather than having one student teacher in a classroom, we're going to have two or three student teachers per class. The student teachers are learning about service-learning in their college classes and will be learning more and helping to facilitate classes at the high school. Their professor from the university will also be present at the high school and will sit in on classes. Later, the student teachers will lead the classes at the high school and will allow key teachers to get together and work on graduation requirements. This is helping us with one of our greatest obstacles, which is simply finding time for teachers to get together.

– Ed Armstrong, director of research and development

Capacity strategy, Alameda County Office of Education and California State University,

California: A course at California State University-Hayward develops service-learning trainers and also educates masters' candidates in district and site-based leadership roles in service-learning. The university also uses service-learning as a teaching practice and mandates its use for teachers in their courses.

Capacity strategy, Pickens School District, South Carolina: The district has a partnership with Furman University for teacher education/staff development in service-learning. Through grants written by the district, Furman has been able to sponsor workshops and graduate courses on its campus, as well as workshops for district teachers.

Professional development at the state level

Indicator: Multiple individuals and offices within the state education agency, including top leadership, perceive and act upon service-learning as a critical education strategy.

Practice strategy, Oregon: The state education agency encourages education specialists to attend service-learning conferences and workshops.

Practice strategy, Oregon: Offices within the state education agency have service-learning on their meeting agendas. Specialists throughout the agency design, support and attend the service-learning institute.

Practice strategy, Oregon: All state conferences include service-learning workshops.

Practice strategy, Oregon: Service-learning is included as a teaching strategy whenever there is a forum for school reform.

Capacity strategy, Oregon: Different offices within the state education agency are capable of giving service-learning workshops that fit with their differing missions.

Indicator: The state education agency creates networks and collaborates with other statewide education organizations to promote service-learning.

Policy strategy, South Carolina: State associations (for example, school boards, administrators) voice support for service-learning via policy, forums and workshops.

Practice strategy, Minnesota: The state education agency organizes quarterly meetings for service-learning coordinators from different sites.

We still sometimes feel like an island here in the northeast part of the state. It's invaluable to attend grantee meetings and service-learning retreats, where we can interact with our counterparts who are coordinating service-learning in other parts of the state.

– Kathy Bartsias, service-learning coordinator, Duluth Public Schools

Capacity strategy, Oregon: All associations include service-learning as part of statewide conferences and have members who are capable and willing to provide leadership for those workshops.

Capacity strategy, Minnesota: State-sponsored specialists on curriculum, standards and assessment incorporate information on service-learning in technical assistance and training to all districts.

At the state level, one of the best things is the connection with the Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Program (MEEP) coordinators; their help has generated a lot of momentum for service-learning. The 15 MEEP coordinators have all undergone training in service-learning and some have attended the national service-learning conference. They meet with the graduation standards technicians in every district to help implement the graduation standards and develop assessments. Every spring, they conduct workshops across the state designed to connect service-learning and graduation standards. At these workshops, teachers are assisted in writing assessment tasks for service-learning. Many of these assessments have been posted on the Minnesota Electronic Curriculum Repository, so they are accessible to teachers across the state.

– Michelle Kamenov, service-learning specialist, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Capacity strategy, Minnesota: The state education agency sponsors peer consultants who provide training and technical assistance to schools and districts.

We regularly use peer consultants who come from grantee sites. They conduct quite a bit of training for the school districts and also work with individual teachers to create or strengthen efforts. The peer consultant program was originally based at the University of Minnesota and funded by a Kellogg initiative. It is currently funded with Learning In Deed and Learn and Serve dollars and coordinated through the Department of Children, Families and Learning. Each peer consultant – there are currently around 50 of them – agrees to provide up to 25 hours of consultation, though in truth they all do more than that. Many of the peer consultants do this on a volunteer basis; about 20 receive stipends.

– Michelle Kamenov, service-learning specialist, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Indicator: The state education agency fosters partnership agreements at the state level to provide professional development for community partners.

Policy strategy, Oregon: Partnership agreements were made at the state level between the state education department and statewide nonprofits to deliver staff development for community partners.

Practice strategy, Oregon: Partnership agencies and organizations receive staff development from agency representatives who have experience and understanding of service-learning and child and adolescent development.

Capacity strategy, Oregon: A cadre of agency representatives works with educators and students to develop and provide assistance to community partners.

Indicator: The state education agency uses distance education technology to deliver service-learning ideas and activities throughout the state.

Policy strategy, Oregon: State policy recognizes that sharing service-learning activities and issues is a valuable and legitimate use of distance education technology.

Practice strategy, Oregon: Training teams use technology (distance education, interactive video, Web sites, list serves) to assist others throughout the district and state.

Capacity strategy, Oregon: Distance education systems are located in every high school or nearby within community colleges or universities. Schools have access to Internet resources for Web development.

Indicator: State education agencies foster partnerships with higher education to ensure service-learning is part of teacher education and that higher education institutions provide service-learning professional development to districts.

Capacity strategy, South Carolina: The state requires all of its Learning In Deed grantee districts to partner with a local college or university. Higher education partners provide graduate and certification courses for district personnel. District training opportunities include teams composed of district and higher education personnel.

Capacity strategy, California: CalServe staff worked with representatives from the state college system to develop benchmarks for integrating service-learning into teacher education.

Capacity strategy, Oregon: Service-learning is being incorporated into teacher training curriculum at most colleges and universities within the state.

Capacity strategy, Maine: State staff work with Campus Compact (the college-level service-learning organization) to include service-learning in teacher education curriculum.



7. Partnership and Community

Community partnerships serve a multiplicity of functions. They host needed projects for service-learning. They provide instruction and guidance for students. They give the “real-world” context that students crave in their learning. They provide valuable resources for the school in the form of money or goods or staff time. Through the structured activities these partnerships offer, they can help students achieve academic standards and provide vision and leadership for service-learning efforts in their school or district.

Community partners need to be carefully nurtured by the school district, since most are initially unfamiliar with service-learning and such concepts as youth voice and service tied to curriculum. Susan Abravanel, education coordinator for the statewide nonprofit SOLV in Oregon, points out that “community partners aren’t trained in the language of service-learning. In fact, service-learning is not on their agenda. If youth are involved at all with these organizations, their role usually is as volunteers for particular projects, where they are told what to do and how to do it.” Abravanel says community partners need to understand that in service-learning students are more than volunteers; they are learners who need to acquire specific knowledge and skills from their experiences.

At the same time, community partners have needs that must be understood and acknowledged by school staff. They need to know what financial and personnel resources are being asked of them and what liability they assume. They have expectations for productivity, reliability and timeliness. They need to understand how their supervisory responsibilities mesh with those of the school. Both schools and community partners want some kind of evaluation process that lets them know if the partnership is successful from all perspectives – from their own, as well as from those of clients, students and parents.

Community partnerships are frequently initiated by a teacher who sees a fit between what students need to learn and what that agency or organization has to offer. Service-learning coordinators often play a pivotal role in identifying community partners and making initial contact, trying to match community partner profiles and school needs. Occasionally, a community partner approaches a school about collaborating on a project. However it occurs, school personnel and partners need time together to review the curriculum, standards and projects, and make mutual expectations clear.

Most schools and community organizations develop contracts or memoranda of understanding that specify the roles and responsibilities of each partner. There needs to be a good fit between the school and the organization. Steven Hefner of Richland School District Two in South Carolina says, “Service-learning has to represent a perfect marriage between the culture of the organization and the school; each activity has to be a good match for both entities.”

Sometimes, partnerships are formed in the aftermath of natural or manmade disasters. In St. Peter, Minnesota, a group of high school students in an ecology class conducted a survey to see how citizens wanted to reorganize the community to support the river, which had been badly damaged by pollution. When much of the city was destroyed by a tornado in March 1998, the students were the ones with the data about citizens’ feelings about rebuilding the community. Students from the district’s higher education partner, Gustavus Adolphus College, helped their high school counterparts computerize the data so it could be sorted by respondent age and gender. The students presented their recommendations to the city council, which accepted many of the recommendations and used them as the basis for rebuilding plans.

Community partnerships can also win support for the school. When community members see young people providing meaningful service and acting in helpful, responsible ways, they are far more likely

to perceive the schools and students in positive ways. While improved public relations is not the primary goal of service-learning, it is a byproduct. Cindy Donley, service-learning coordinator in Eugene, Oregon, says “the grant has allowed us to build on our strengths and really embrace the community. In this community, 70% of the people do not have students in the district, so we need to educate the people to see the valuable contributions that young people can make.” In Eugene, every student working toward the state graduation requirements is linked with a nonprofit or for-profit business.

In many rural communities, partnerships between the school and community are not only a long established tradition, but also an everyday necessity. Superintendent Bill Gehling of Oregon’s Powers School District, who describes his district as “remote, rural and economically depressed,” says “things only happen here when kids and community members make them happen.” He described how students suggested a tree-planting day and worked with the Forest Service to make it a K-12 project. “Being in such a small community,” says Gehling, “the school has always been viewed as a resource.” The district has long-standing partnerships with the Lions Club and Forest Service. Some high school students already work as emergency medical technicians, serve on firefighting crews with the forest service or are part of the local fire department. While community partnerships are a fixture in this community, Gehling credits the Learning In Deed grant with helping his district integrate service with academic work.

However they work, community partnerships are instrumental in institutionalizing service-learning. They provide needed resources and ground service-learning in the genuine community needs. They create an expectation, both inside and outside the school, that service-learning is part of the way that high-quality education is accomplished.

Partnership and community in schools and districts

Indicator: The district and its partners have developed policies and practices that govern the operation of school/community partnerships.

Policy strategy, School Administrative District 51, Cumberland, Maine: The district has developed policies directly enhancing community-school relationships.

Example

Policy Example: Cumberland School District

School and Community Service

District leaders are committed to preparing its students for active participation in the community and believe that one way to foster the values and personal qualities that lead to such participation is through service-learning; they believe service to fellow students and the community encourages a sense of responsibility for self and for others. The district supports and encourages age-appropriate school and community service consistent with district resources. The district’s approach is that service programs are most effective when the following considerations are taken into account:

1. Student service opportunities should be preceded by training and support so the students involved will be prepared to offer useful service and derive the greatest benefit from their involvement in the program.
2. Service opportunities should be cooperative in nature, with an emphasis on group problem solving and team building.
3. School faculty and other adult supervisors should help ensure that service experiences are well-organized and that logistical concerns do not interfere with the goals of the experience.
4. Youth-service programs should build constructive links between the community and the schools and, whenever practicable, involve community members in planning, implementation and evaluation of such programs.
5. Youth service should be integrated whenever possible with opportunities for reflection, discussion and evaluation.

Offsite Learning

The district recognizes that offsite-learning activities can be useful in exposing students to information and offering perspectives often unavailable within the classroom. Such activities, therefore, are supported by the district when they are integral to student instruction and assessment, and when they are consistent with district resources. To the extent possible, offsite-learning opportunities should be available to all students in the district on a fair and equitable basis. The following considerations and procedures shall apply in approving and structuring offsite-learning opportunities:

- *Approval requirements.* Offsite trips of one day's duration or less are subject to principal approval. Extended trips – those requiring overnight accommodation – require the superintendent's approval.
- *Absences.* Every effort should be made to minimize absences from the regular school program.
- *Approval considerations.* Each request will be reviewed and permission granted or denied on its individual merit within budgetary limitations. Items to be considered include importance to the school program, amount of school missed by students and teachers, effect on other school programs and cost of the trip.
- *Parent information and approval.* Teachers will provide parents or guardians with written information concerning the purpose and details of the trip – destination, times, etc. Signed permission slips must be obtained for each student participating in a trip. These authorizations can be for a single trip or on a blanket basis.
- *Supervision.* The teacher(s) in charge will determine the number of adult supervisors required. The names of adults selected must be submitted by the teachers in advance to the principal for approval. The teacher(s) are responsible for assigning specific duties and responsibilities to the adult supervisors.
- *Behavior.* Teacher(s) in charge are responsible for the behavior of the group at all times, including on the bus.

Policy strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: An active and diverse planning and advisory committee with representatives from a broad spectrum of stakeholders – students, parents, business and community members, school and district administrators, teachers, representatives

from government and private agencies – provides leadership for the service-learning program. The committee evolves over time to reflect new and expanded partnerships.

Policy strategy, Alameda County Office of Education, California: A memorandum of understanding identifies how service-learning projects seek support for their institutionalization from the district and partner organizations.

Policy strategy, Tillamook School District, Oregon: The district includes partnership development in its annual report to the community.

Practice strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: Schools make community partners aware of student and teacher expectations and are in turn made aware of the agency's needs and expectations. Partnerships have clear agreements on objectives and outcomes.

Capacity strategy, Tillamook School District, Oregon: The district/community partner advisory group is charged with formulating plans for service-learning institutionalization.

I work with three school districts in Tillamook County. Two years ago, we started a Kellogg Advisory Committee, which met mostly to plan for institutionalization. The advisory committee is composed of administrators, principals, school board members and teachers. Eventually, it was opened to community partners. This year, we have had more than 40 partners, including a state representative, a city mayor, a city councilman, and educators and representatives from community agencies. It was a way to discuss what was going on regarding service-learning and keep the communication open between schools and partners. Everyone, especially the schools, is looking at ways to increase social capital and increase resources. It's been a poor community, so people have to maximize resources.

The advisory committee has come up with four main strategies: (1) create a youth development training that helps young people to take leadership roles; (2) utilize partner training, which is a one-hour traveling show that discusses what schools and partners need; (3) continue administrator and teacher trainings; and (4) have response teams of administrators, teachers and community partners who can give presentations on service-learning and help schools and districts with beginning efforts.

– Marta Brooks, service-learning coordinator

Capacity strategy, Duluth Public Schools, Minnesota: Service-learning activities are guided by a committee composed of community partners, district administrators, teachers and students.

The service-learning committee is a diverse group of people. They represent our community partnerships, including the university extension service and an advertising firm, a school board member, students and faculty from the education department of the University of Minnesota at Duluth, high school students, and teachers and administrators. Recently, the committee met for a whole day to forge a mission and vision statement now that our efforts have been going for a while and we have some sense of perspective. We established that service-learning is larger than the school district; it needs to be institutionalized throughout the community. It's a part of what Duluth is. We are in the process of bringing in others from the community, including local grant funders and other partners. Any time we have students working in the community, they are using what they learn in the classroom to support community activities.

– Kathy Bartsias, service-learning coordinator

Capacity strategy, Alameda County Office of Education, California: The County Waste Management Authority dedicates staff time to coordination of service-learning initiative. This is included in the project manager's work plan and appears in the office's annual reports.

Indicator: School and community partners have ongoing opportunities to meet, discuss expectations and when necessary revise the operations of service-learning activities.

Practice strategy, Encinitas Union School District, California: Meetings with community partners occur frequently and feature structured time for reflection and clarification of expectations.

As the Learning In Deed facilitator, I send the community partners a form to fill out before the meeting in which they interact with teachers. They are asked about service opportunities, appropriate age levels and learning opportunities associated with a potential project. During the meeting, teachers and agencies have time to work together and come up with concrete projects and then share their ideas with the whole group.

– Nancy Cunningham, director of administrative support services

Practice strategy, Duluth Public Schools, Minnesota: Community agencies made presentations at a district service-learning workshop, giving an opportunity for teachers and agencies to discover how they could work together and benefit one another.

Practice strategy, Alameda County Office of Education, California: Community partnership meetings occur frequently with structured time for reflection and clarification of experiences.

Capacity strategy, Encinitas Union School District, California: Information about grants, service-learning opportunities and recognition for high-quality projects is shared at advisory group meetings. Members include representatives from local government, higher education, community agencies, parents and other service organizations. They provide opportunities for sustainability and meeting community needs.

Indicator: Mechanisms are in place to evaluate the impact of the partnership and the viability of service-learning activities.

Capacity strategy, School Administrative District 58, Kingfield, Maine: Districts routinely conduct surveys of community partners. Results reflect the high value partners place on relationships with the schools.

Capacity strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: An assessment process measures the impact of partnership activities on both students and community.

Indicator: Districts and community partners share trainings and other resources.

Capacity strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: Members of the partnership open their staff development activities to one another and may share meeting facilities.

Capacity strategy, Duluth Public Schools, Minnesota: District representatives and community partners attend training sessions and state meetings together.

Capacity strategy, Encinitas Union School District, California: Local chambers of commerce have instituted a mini-grant program for the schools, so teachers and principals can apply for funds to support service-learning projects.

Partnership and community at the state level

Indicator: Partnerships are constructed at the state level in support of service-learning.

Capacity strategy, South Carolina: A planning/advisory committee meets with leadership of both the local school district and community partners to plan for growth, financial sustainability and institutionalization of service-learning.

Capacity strategy, South Carolina: The state-level advisory council, which includes representation from the state School Boards Association and Association of School Administrators, as well as the Governor's Division of Education, assisted the School Boards Association in making service-learning one of its state legislative priorities. The School Boards Association also featured a sample district-level service-learning policy in its annual policy manual.

Capacity strategy, Maine: Learning In Deed staff have provided education and outreach activities to organizations throughout the state. They met with the Maine School Management Association to create district policy that supports service-learning and gave other presentations to the Maine Leadership Consortium, Maine Commission for Community Service and state board of education.

Capacity strategy, Oregon: State Learning In Deed staff formed a close working relationship with the state School Boards Association. The association has made sample policies on service-learning available for statewide distribution.

Capacity strategy, Oregon: State Learning In Deed staff formed a partnership with SOLV, a statewide nonprofit environmental and education organization, to provide trainings and develop community partnerships at the local level.

Interview

Susan Abravanel, education coordinator, SOLV

SOLV is a nonprofit agency founded in 1969 by a former Oregon governor. A state partner for the Learning In Deed initiative, SOLV works to engage schools and community organizations in beautification and enhancement efforts to preserve Oregon's environment.

If you visualize service-learning as a partnership between the community and school, you have to look at them as intersecting circles, each with pieces to contribute to the puzzle. Each partner comes to the endeavor with different cultures, goals and methods of operation. If we build capacity in community partners, to some degree we are building capacity in schools. Not only do we double the impact, we increase the potential for that impact to last.

SOLV helps to facilitate many school-community partnership agreements. In Portland, for example, the volunteer coordinator for the city's Parks and Recreation Department approached SOLV about getting student volunteers to help with the parks. "We want students to do things like pick up trash, rake leaves and clear debris that our equipment cannot easily retrieve," he said. I replied that teachers are very reluctant to let students out of class for something like this that isn't related to standards. At the same time, I explained, there were possible activities that could provide the basis for some wonderful service-learning opportunities.

This initial conversation resulted in my meeting with several dozen Parks and Recreation employees. I began by outlining our state standards and the accountability measures that are required of teachers. Then I asked, "What could students learn at your park?"

Employees suggested a series of projects that would clearly address student learning in such areas as planting, birds and butterflies, streams and ponds, construction and facilities usage. This became a successful Adopt-a-Park program that has been designed as K-12 and now involves 28 classrooms in 13 schools.

SOLV developed the curriculum, prepared the alignments to state benchmarks and standards, and designed a four-hour introductory training to the program. SOLV also recruited the teachers, matched them with Parks and Recreation personnel, and brought them all together at the training. An hour was set aside for a teacher and a park employee to work together and design a first lesson based on both teacher needs and park capacity. Teachers left the training with a new curriculum aligned to benchmarks, a park community partner and a lesson ready to go. SOLV follows up every couple of weeks with each site to smooth out any difficulties or delays.

In this example, it was important for both service-learning teachers and Parks and Recreation personnel to come together and say what they both needed from the partnership. Each side got to hear what the other side needed and then they had time to work through concerns and issues. Often teachers are trained in service-learning, but they don't know whom to contact in the community. If teachers know whom to approach, then service-learning is more likely to happen. But often, someone needs to provide the broker function.

It is a challenge to get someone from the world of community organizations who can understand the needs of the school, and it is an equal challenge to find people from the school who can understand the needs of the organization. Both partners have specific goals that need to be met and understood by the other. Organizations need to know that schools need to meet quantifiable and specific learning benchmarks. Schools need to know that organizations have their own goals that also need to be met through the service-learning relationship. If you have a service-learning educator, that is only part of the equation. There also needs to be a number of people who have connections to the community and know how to access and work with organizations.



8. Continuous Improvement

In schools and districts that embrace institutionalization of service-learning, personnel continually review their efforts and look at ways to improve and enrich all aspects. Staff are committed to a process of ongoing reflection and revitalization.

To encourage this process, some schools and districts have created structured opportunities for practitioners to meet and review their activities. Some places do this weekly; others do it monthly. While the timing and composition of these meetings vary greatly from school to school and district to district, practitioners agree on one thing: without some sort of structure, these meetings do not happen.

Information for evaluation is typically gathered in a variety of ways, through formal and informal channels. Beverly Hiott, service-learning coordinator at Richland School District Two in South Carolina, says that with assessment, “you have to look at multiple indicators. If we’re getting what the government wants, it’s pure numbers. Other people are more interested in hearing the stories of student projects and successes. You have to have both – the numbers and the stories.”

Some information is obtained through one-on-one interviews with teachers, students, administrators and community partners. Other information is collected in evaluation surveys to key stakeholder groups. Many district service-learning coordinators use regular meetings with site contacts as a means to assess progress and problems, and brainstorm needed changes. Minor modifications as well as major changes are made as needed.

Don Hill, co-director of the Pacific Region of the National Service-Learning Exchange and coordinator of the National Service-Learning Teacher Education Partnership for the Southwest Region, points out that “most service-learning programs that are really good actually start off being mediocre. They change because they have effective feedback mechanisms. The evaluation is something that gets done, and it’s something people can use. Teachers need to have a sense of what a high-quality service-learning program looks like, and have strong support in identifying the weak elements in their practice and making changes to strengthen it. The ability to move from where you are to a higher standard requires ways of measuring your progress. It’s how you move things along.”

Evaluation activities do not focus just on the quality of structure and working relationships, but on student outcomes as well. Service-learning has to demonstrate its effectiveness in stimulating positive growth in educational, social, civic and psychological arenas. Some of this information may be available in existing school records, such as attendance reports, results of standardized tests and disciplinary records. Other results require more sophisticated kinds of research that may be outside of the time and expertise of school personnel. This is one area in which a higher education partner may lend invaluable help.

Evaluation efforts do not need to be expensive and complicated. They can, in many cases, be tailored to the needs and interests of faculty members. Don Hill endorses an uncomplicated evaluation process. “In terms of evaluation,” he maintains, “teachers in schools are caught between two difficult situations: people talking in weird, complicated language that has no relevance for their world and the knowledge that the things they want to find out they can’t get at because of limited resources and time. The best evaluation process is one that helps teachers to focus on one or two questions that they’re passionately interested in. While this type of evaluation may not fit exacting standards, it can allow teachers to get feedback that informs them, students, colleagues and administrators.”

Students can also be invaluable allies in the evaluation process. They can design surveys, conduct interviews and tabulate data. High school students in South Carolina’s Richland School District Two

have, for example, not only conducted evaluations at their own school, but also taught students and teachers at other schools how to manage this process. Student educators at the district's higher education partner, the University of South Carolina, as part of their training, conducted evaluations that yielded important baseline data for the district.

Admittedly, the downturn in the national economy is making it difficult to maintain efforts at current funding levels, much less assess, grow and enrich them. Enormous budget cuts are threatening the education infrastructure in many states, and service-learning is being deeply affected. Michelle Kamenov, service-learning specialist for the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, says "the biggest obstacle is going to be the impending budget cuts. Many districts have provided time for teachers to be service-learning coordinators and have given time for other teachers to write curriculum. But next year, that will become a luxury that most districts won't be able to afford. There won't be money for substitutes except for emergency situations."

The stark budgetary realities make evaluation and assessment efforts even more imperative. When administrators are forced to slash budgets, only those efforts that have an established track record of success will survive. Administrators, teachers and parents will not support service-learning unless it demonstrates success in achieving academic standards and other desired outcomes.

Continuous improvement in schools and districts

Indicator: The district provides ongoing opportunities for experienced service-learning practitioners to improve their skills and share information with others.

Policy strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: District policy recognizes that common planning time and teacher release time are critical for innovative, effective teaching.

Practice strategy, Tillamook County, Oregon: Professional development is offered both to people new to service-learning, as well as to experienced practitioners. Those who are already actively involved in service-learning have opportunities to develop new teaching methods and projects.

Practice strategy, School Administrative District 51, Cumberland, Maine: An early release program every Wednesday allows teachers in the district to meet and create curriculum, share projects and formulate assessments on a weekly basis.

Practice strategy, Marion School District Seven, South Carolina: Administrators use formal and informal channels to emphasize the importance of service-learning to teachers and students.

Recognition and support are essential to continuous improvement. Administrators here continually repeat the message that service-learning is an instructional method that works; it's a vehicle to achieve state standards. Students and teachers are frequently recognized at board meetings. The superintendent and I praise teachers at faculty meetings. Students give presentations at departmental meetings. In a variety of ways – from casual comments in the hallway to purchase orders that get processed quickly to formal presentations – we are constantly emphasizing that this is one of the most important things that we are doing for the growth and development of young people. The budget is always a problem, but if someone has a good idea related to service-learning, we'll find a way to get some kind of grant and support it.

– Milt Marley, associate superintendent

Practice strategy, Alameda County Office of Education, California: Monthly meetings have built in time for practitioners to raise issues and work on program improvement.

Practice strategy, Alameda County Office of Education, California: Service-learning projects are refined and then placed on the Internet for other interested teachers.

Practice strategy, Alameda County Office of Education, California: The district funds teachers who take on leadership roles in the district's service-learning development.

Capacity strategy, School Administrative District 52, Turner, Maine: Teachers are given a small stipend for documenting projects, including student/teacher reflections and lessons learned.

Capacity strategy, St. Peter Public Schools, Minnesota: The district's higher education partner writes grants, sets up computer programs and identifies community partners.

Our higher education partner, Gustavus Adolphus College, has written a number of grants with us. Their students tutor middle school students and offer a Great Books program for K-3. They also work with us when we need any kind of help setting up computer programs. College staff helps us to identify community needs, and did asset mapping with us to help us identify who has the kinds of expertise that we wanted in community partners. A communications instructor at Gustavus did a communications audit for the district, which was presented to the school board and district administrators and which became the basis for a technology grant.

– Marcia Applen, service-learning coordinator

Capacity strategy, Alameda County Office of Education, California: Teams of teacher practitioners are provided structured time to examine the quality of their programs and share ideas for improvement.

Capacity strategy, Alameda County Office of Education, California: Service-learning coaches are trained and authorized to engage other teachers in college-level staff development opportunities.

Capacity strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: The district and its higher education partner meet regularly to analyze the workings of the partnership and look for ways to expand and improve it.

Interview

Kevin Swick, professor of early childhood education, University of South Carolina

The University of South Carolina (USC) has had some history with service-learning. In the early '90s, there was a lot of community service going

on in classes related to community development. Later, we developed a one-hour required community service course for those who planned to be teachers. Eventually that course required service-learning. We naturally connected with our area schools around service-learning, particularly around teacher education.

When the Kellogg funding came, we had already been at work on several service-learning projects together. It made sense for us to become formal partners for this grant. In South Carolina, every district in Learning In Deed is required to have a higher education partner. About eight to 10 faculty at the university have been involved with our partner-

ship. We've served on Richland School District Two's advisory committee for service-learning; personnel from the district sit on our advisory committee. University faculty and district representatives meet once a month to coordinate and collaborate.

There are four big things that we have considered essential for continuous improvement. First is the education of district teachers. At USC, we've offered free classes that are open to all districts' teachers; the cost has been subsidized by the Learning In Deed grant. The classes, which have been offered in summer and fall, guide participants through the process of planning, developing and carrying out service-learning activities.

The second piece is refashioning the teacher education curriculum. At USC, all undergraduates in teacher education are required to take a three-semester-hour course in service-learning. The course is required at the same time that students are taking professional methodology and doing their internships, so that they can immediately apply these concepts in their student teaching.

The third aspect is to meet regularly and plan curriculum. There has to be time to meet and develop curricular models that integrate service-learning into the classroom. Finally, there have to be changes in policy to support service-learning. Richland Two will be the first district in the state to highlight service-learning in board policy.

There certainly are challenges down the road. We're at a point where we need to train and educate another group of faculty. It can't just be the same few people doing it year after year – there have to be new people who are enthusiastic and committed. We have engaged some younger colleagues, which is helping to diversify the leadership. At the same time, there has to be a large-scale effort to engage and educate administrative groups. There needs to be more shared ownership; it has to be woven into the fabric and culture of what we're doing.

We have to find the resources to develop this next generation of leaders. There has to be funding for mini-grants and trainings – a little bit of money goes a long way. Teachers will do a lot, but they need to have validation that their efforts are worthwhile. There have to be resources so that people can devote time to service-learning. I always say that there has to be “planned latency time” – opportunities for people to reflect upon their experiences and renew themselves.

What we do in service-learning, both on the campus and in terms of the partnership, has to be revisited every two to three years. It's important to remember that you're either moving forward or moving backward; you're never standing still.

Indicator: Service-learning is included in school or district improvement plans.

Policy strategy, Churchill High School, Oregon: Service-learning is included in the school improvement plan.

Policy strategy, Auburn School District, Maine: With assistance from numerous community stakeholders, the district is writing a new vision statement that centers around connecting student learning to “real-world situations.”

Policy strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: Service-learning is included in many district request for proposals and grant processes.

Indicator: There are continual efforts to evaluate the impact of service-learning and to make modifications as needed.

Policy strategy, School Administrative District 58, Kingfield, Maine: Service-learning is included in teachers' annual performance evaluation.

Practice strategy, Marion School District Seven and Richland School District Two, South Carolina: Students are involved in evaluating the impact of service-learning.

Several years ago, I agreed to evaluate a program that had around 600 kids in a service-learning program. When I realized how hard it was going to be, I did something out of desperation. I met with one student from each class and trained them in interview skills. Then they interviewed students and teachers in focus groups. In truth, the student focus group was more insightful than the faculty group. Students were learning good things and they were interested in the work.

From that experience, I learned that students can have an important role to play in evaluation. They can conduct interviews, collect data, make charts and learn a lot of valuable skills in the process. When we talk about student voice, we always urge that students be valuable resources for evaluation. Students can be involved in a way that's appropriate for their age.

– Don Hill, co-director, Pacific Region of the National Service-Learning Exchange and Coordinator, National Service-Learning Teacher Education Partnership for the Southwest Region

Interview

*Beverly Hiott, service-learning coordinator,
Spring Valley High School, South Carolina*

This year, our Richland Two district began a Freshman Mentor Program; I'm the coordinator for our high school. We use students from our

Service-Based Leadership classes to serve as mentors. Each of our 450 freshmen meets in a group of 15-30 students several days a week with two student mentors and an adult advisor. The purpose of the program is twofold: to help freshmen make the transition from middle to high school by understanding academic and student life, and to promote leadership, character, civic responsibility and student achievement.

The student mentors have been very involved in the evaluation of this program. Students suggested questions that were used in the surveys and administered surveys in each of the 15 mentoring teams. Some students helped analyze and interpret the data. A freshman student helped put all the data into charts. We conducted a survey in December and will conduct another one in the spring. We've not only shared the evaluation information with our own mentors, but with administrators, the School Improvement Council, and with students and coordinators from the two other high schools in the district using this program.

Throughout the school year, I have been meeting with the mentors to discuss the progress of the mentoring program. Based on their experiences as well as the results of the surveys, students have been suggesting a number of changes and improvements. One area that is being revised is the curriculum used in the mentoring sessions. Another area that is being redesigned is the training of the mentors.

It's important to consider how evaluation results are presented to the students, and do it in a way that's thoughtful and encouraging. We've been careful to code answers when we

present the information on charts. We want to be honest, but at the same time we don't want the mentors to feel threatened or disheartened by the feedback. We want the students to see evaluation as something positive, as something that will make the program better for all involved.

Practice strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: The district plans to use its annual survey of graduating seniors to gather information relevant to service-learning experiences.

Practice strategy, Duluth Public Schools, Minnesota: The district has the assistance of two VISTA workers as the result of a grant. One of the VISTA workers is involved in surveying the extent of service-learning in the district, the types of projects being used and the ties to curriculum and/or graduation standards.

The challenge that I had, especially in a district this large, was to keep talking to the new folks while monitoring and assisting the contacts that I already had. As only one person, I just couldn't do it all. The solution was to write a grant that allowed us to get two VISTA workers. One is a retired social studies curriculum person, while the other is housed at a middle school that is embedding service-learning in its homeroom time.

We are gathering baseline data on student achievement, starting in five elementary schools. We have to prove that we're making a difference. One of the VISTA workers is gathering the information. He's in the process of interviewing administrators and teachers, and has found out that a lot of people are doing service-learning without knowing that they are doing it.

– Kathy Bartsias, service-learning coordinator

Practice strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: The partnership with the university's teacher education program has resulted in student teachers conducting evaluations for the school district.

We purchased a graduate course on service-learning from the School of Education at the University of South Carolina. When we offered it in summer, we had 25 teachers attend from our district and two from neighboring districts. As part of the coursework, teachers had to work in teams to conduct site assessments at different schools and make recommendations based upon those site assessments. As a consequence, we've developed some good baseline data that will help us with continuous improvement.

– Beverly Hiott, service-learning coordinator

Indicator: Significant accomplishments are publicly acknowledged and celebrated.

Practice strategy, Eugene School District, Oregon: A K-12 service-learning recognition fair takes place prior to the school board meeting and showcases students and projects.

Capacity strategy, Palo Alto Unified School District, California: Service-learning teachers and students are recognized and celebrated at the Youth Community Service annual celebration.

Practice strategy, Encinitas Union School District, California: Local chambers of commerce put on a big awards program that is broadcast on local television and honors innovative teaching approaches, especially in service-learning.

Capacity strategy, Richland School District Two, South Carolina: Students and teachers are recognized for service-learning efforts that exemplify district policy and best practices.

Celebration is an extension of the action, of the service project itself. In celebration, all parties join in a recognition of the intrinsic joy or good that results from the service rendered. Celebration should be viewed as an outward affirmation of an inward revelation. Celebration is the recognition of not only participants' successes but also of their vision, effort and growth.

– Marianna McKeown, student activities director, Ridge View High School

Continuous improvement at the state level

Indicator: There are state-level efforts to evaluate service-learning efforts.

Practice strategy, Minnesota: The state education agency conducts a survey to assess the nature and extent of service-learning efforts.

The purpose of this survey is to collect information about the policies and support for service-learning in Minnesota K-12 schools. We hope to learn about the types and quality of service-learning programs. For example, we try to find out if service-learning is integrated into the classroom or offered as a stand-alone course; if it is done primarily after school hours, and/or if it is a teaching method or an approach to learning. This was to be a statewide endeavor, but due to budget cuts, we will focus our initial information gathering with Learn and Serve and Learning In Deed grantees only.

– Michelle Kamenov, service-learning specialist, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Capacity strategy, South Carolina: A partnership with Clemson University and the University of South Carolina, the state's two research institutions, resulted in a process designed to help local educators reflect upon and improve their service-learning practice.

*We are doing a "portraiture" process, based upon the work described by Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Davis in the book *The Art and Science of Portraiture*. This process is an inclusive methodology that focuses on what went right. We are creating in-depth portraits of these programs that capture the essence of change as well as the challenges. We've done a lot of training around this process, particularly at the summer institute at Clemson University. We're trying to capture everyone's voice – teachers, students, parents and community members – as well as the key events that have defined the work.*

Some of our partnership money, separate from the Kellogg grant, has been used for mini-grants to district teachers. Teachers could apply with a one-page application; at the end of their projects, they had to give a one-page report about the work of the grants. These reports have been instructive in this process – they've helped to create a lively, informative set of portraits. We're in the midst of putting together a book of portraits; each one will be 20-25 pages long. The book is Kellogg funded and distributed nationally.

– Kevin Swick, professor of early childhood education, University of South Carolina

Capacity strategy, California: Service-learning project plans require alignment with state standards and prompt teachers for ways they can improve their practice.

Indicator: There are repositories of information from different sites that can be accessed by interested practitioners.

Capacity strategy, Oregon: Oregon has a service-learning Web site that contains descriptions of projects and sample curricula gathered from sites around the state. The Web site also features an interactive listserv so that practitioners can share information and ideas.

Capacity strategy, Minnesota: The state has a service-learning Web site that contains examples of resources, curriculum and other materials.

Indicator: The state fosters prekindergarten through grade 16 experiences for service-learning so students can participate at every level of education.

Capacity strategy, South Carolina: Students making the transitions between elementary, middle school, high school and college can expect to continue their involvement in service-learning.

Integrating service-learning from pre-K through grade 16 is necessary. Education really occurs in a kind of circle; teachers teach the students who become the teachers who in turn teach the students. Anyone who can't see that circle doesn't understand how to improve education. We've collaborated with Clemson University, the University of South Carolina and other institutions to integrate service-learning into their teacher education curriculum. Janet Mason, at the University of South Carolina, developed distance-learning materials that can be used by teachers throughout the state to become competent in service-learning. Here in South Carolina, we have one of the highest percentages of teachers who are [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards] certified. A few years ago, we had 71 teachers who were certified; now we have 1,291 certified teachers. Part of the national board certification process includes a component called community outreach. In our state, we've identified that component with service-learning.

– Inez Tenenbaum, state superintendent of education

There are a number of ideas that help continuous improvement. One of those is a “cascading leadership” model. If you have programs in which high school students work with middle school students, and middle school students work with older elementary students, and older elementary students work with younger ones, that creates an informal support structure. When students move up through the grades, they and their parents look for service-learning experiences. Or when a teacher education program works with a school district, and when graduates go to work in those schools, those interactions between a campus and a school district gradually develop an infrastructure that's personal, informal but also organizational. That will keep service-learning going.

– Don Hill, co-director, Pacific Region of the National Service-Learning Exchange and coordinator, National Service-Learning Teacher Education Partnership for the Southwest Region



9. Getting from Here to There

Taking steps toward institutionalization

Everyone involved in service-learning is somewhere on the continuum of change. If the goal is to move toward institutionalization, it is important to understand where a given effort falls on the continuum and how to proceed to the next level. Each stage of the process presents opportunities, as well as challenges.

The KIDS Consortium and Maine Department of Education, with the assistance of about 30 districts, have created a “systemic continuum” model that shows the progression toward institutionalization. The model explains in great detail what schools can expect when service-learning is a fairly new effort, when it becomes a more regular feature of the system and when it is woven into the infrastructure. It is used with all grantees to help them see the steps they need to take to develop more comprehensive efforts.

The model includes five major categories – (1) leadership and vision, (2) curriculum, instruction and assessment, (3) professional development, (4) administrative policy and support, and (5) community involvement. Each category is divided into the three basic stages of development – exploring, transitioning and transforming. Below are excerpts from this document. Readers who wish to order a copy of the entire model can contact the KIDS Consortium at 207.784.0956 or by e-mail at kap@kidsconsortium.org. There is a small copying and mailing fee for this document.

Exploring: The district is beginning to use service-learning

Leadership and vision

- A few people at the classroom level are doing effective service-learning projects, developing goals, experimenting and communicating with others who share their enthusiasm.
- Students informally advocate for service-learning as a result of participation in KIDS’ projects.

Curriculum, instruction and assessment

- The district establishes curriculum committees to align service-learning projects with standards.
- Some community partners are engaged in student work.

Professional development

- Interested individual teachers and/or administrators take courses and/or workshops in service-learning.
- Teachers devote individual planning time to develop service-learning classroom projects.

Administrative policy and support

- There is passive administrative support for resources, but teachers are responsible for accessing those resources.
- Administrators support individual teachers/teams in experimenting with changes to schedule and structure to accommodate applied learning.
- A self-selected leadership group has secured an initial grant for service-learning.
- Support for service-learning is based on anecdotal evidence. Some data is collected to evaluate programs.

Community involvement

- Volunteers, community organizations and families informally learn about service-learning through individual projects.

- Community organizations and other experts occasionally work with some students to share knowledge and skills.

Transitioning: The district is implementing service-learning as an important education strategy

Leadership and vision

- More people throughout the district and community are involved. Regular channels of communication have been established, and key people are involved in creating goals for service-learning, including the school board, community partners and students.
- A leadership team responsible for service-learning makes connections to the district's curriculum, assessment and other school improvement initiatives. The team is actively engaged in self-assessment and planning, and individual roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The team receives and allocates various resources for service-learning.
- A service-learning coordinator is designated.
- Strong administrative support exists for the leadership team.
- Students are identified and trained to participate in the leadership team and to advocate for service-learning.

Curriculum, instruction and assessment

- District curriculum and assessment committees/staff help teachers align service-learning projects with standards and include authentic performance assessments of student learning.
- Some community partners are engaged in student work and value the contribution made by the service-learning project.

Professional development

- Teachers and students trained in service-learning recruit others and act as role models.
- Motivated teachers formally meet to discuss service-learning topics, examine student work, design curriculum and assessment and give feedback on instructional practices.

Administrative policy and support

- The district provides structures that facilitate student and teacher access to resources.
- The district leadership team seeks a variety of funding sources for service-learning.
- The district provides resources to teachers to document and share service-learning best practices.
- A formal district plan for action research and program evaluation is in place.

Community involvement

- Community organizations, higher education institutions and other experts work with a majority of students to share expertise.
- Volunteers are trained to provide effective support to teachers and are matched according to their interests.

Transforming: Service-learning is an integral part of the way the district operates

Leadership and vision

- District leaders explicitly endorse service-learning as a powerful strategy to implement the district's vision statement and revise written policies accordingly.
- District administrators clearly demonstrate a commitment to service-learning and ensure that it is integrated into organizational structures.

- Based on the district’s vision, a school-community leadership team is empowered to create an annual action plan that sets goals, allocates money and human resources, and evaluates progress.
- The leadership team is responsible for connecting service-learning with other school reform initiatives in the district.
- The district has a process to ensure students are effective members of the leadership team, have opportunities to network with peers regionally and nationally, and are involved in school committees and community organizations.

Curriculum, instruction and assessment

- Service-learning is a performance assessment used to meet districtwide, grade-level benchmarks.
- All projects are aligned with state and local standards, and assess student learning.
- Teachers are facilitators and coaches, adept at motivating students and connecting projects, standards and assessments. Students work in teams and are actively engaged in identifying and researching community issues and needs, and implementing their ideas.

Professional development

- Teachers in every building are identified as peer mentors who recruit and coach colleagues new to the service-learning process.
- The district has a structure to support ongoing dialogue about teaching and learning that integrates service-learning as part of the discussion. The dialogue is based upon data from students, teachers and community members.
- Administrators make time available during the school day for teaching teams to meet.

Administrative policy and support

- Teachers and students have easy access to training on resources for service-learning projects.
- The district creates job descriptions and teacher evaluation tools that encourage teachers to use service-learning as an instructional strategy.
- Data related to service-learning are integrated into the district’s overall evaluation plan and is used to support continuous improvement.

Community involvement

- All students have opportunities to work with community experts. Experts seek student involvement in solving community problems and needs.
- Through service-learning experiences, volunteers are integrated as coaches and learners into the school-community partnership.

Readers might find it useful to create their own continuum, based upon the KIDS’ model and adding the pieces that are relevant to their district. The indicators and strategies cited in the previous five chapters of this paper can serve as references. Once personnel in the district have agreed upon a goal of institutionalization, they can use a continuum model to pinpoint the specific activities needed to reach that goal.

Institutionalization comprises both the larger vision and the innumerable small steps that support everyday practice. Both sides of the equation are equally important. Vision without an array of coordinated transformational efforts is simply empty rhetoric. Efforts unsupported by vision remain stagnant or deteriorate over time.

Interview

*Barbara Kaufman, education consultant,
KIDS Consortium*

Kaufman was one of the developers of the systemic continuum model and uses it extensively in trainings with Learning In Deed and Learn and Serve grantees in Maine.

through the systemic continuum model. We tell them that experience shows that without service-learning becoming part of the school culture, it will disappear when the cheerleaders go. There have to be safeguards and processes for continuous improvement.

We have developed a structure and a process to make sure that self-assessment occurs and is used to formulate future plans. Integral to each district's efforts and stipulated in all service-learning grants is the formation of a leadership team [see "Leadership and Vision" section on the continuum]. By the end of the school year, each leadership team has had to put together a portfolio that is based on the district's annual action plan for service-learning. The portfolio provides evidence of the progress that they've made throughout the year in the major categories of the continuum.

Every summer we hold a large conference and invite leadership teams from all of our districts to come together for several days for professional development and action planning. District representatives bring three copies of the portfolio with them. We hold a portfolio review session during which each participant analyzes four different district portfolios. We make sure everyone presents a portfolio and everyone critiques portfolios from other districts. That way, people not only receive constructive feedback on their efforts but get an opportunity to learn from others.

After people have seen each other's portfolio, they meet with members of their team. The conference ends with several hours of planning time in which team members discuss what they've heard, what they've learned and what they need to do to move forward.

The portfolios take a considerable amount of time and effort to put together. Most of the work will tend to fall on the shoulders of the service-learning coordinator. Some of them get into it willingly; others do it kicking and screaming. Once completed, however, all teams view the portfolios as a great affirmation of the work they have done. This portfolio process is essential to continuous improvement, so we make it a condition of future funding.

The portfolios provide documentation of district process and progress. We also suggest that some type of assessment and documentation takes place at the classroom level as well. For example, most districts use a mini-grant process to ensure funding of high-quality projects. At the end of each project, student and teacher reflections inform future undertakings. This is also a system for continuous improvement and should be documented in the district portfolio.

Finding assistance

A number of valuable resources are available for planning, support and training. Sometimes, priceless sources of assistance – coordinators, teachers, administrators and students from schools or districts where service-learning has been well-integrated into the system – are close by. They are often willing to provide training sessions or technical assistance. They can also help design a continuum model, make concrete suggestions for enlarging service-learning efforts and enlisting broader support, and suggest constructive ways to deal with problems or concerns.

Here are a few other sources of help:

- Many states have regional and/or statewide associations of practitioners. These groups often provide regular training sessions, conferences and electronic access to other members. The Learn and Serve coordinator at the state department of education can provide contact information for these groups.
- Learning In Deed coordinators, at both the local and state levels, have a wealth of practical information about institutionalization issues. Their contact information is provided in the “Resources and Acknowledgments” section of this publication.
- There are a number of national organizations that provide an array of publications, training opportunities and other resources related to service-learning. Their contact information is also provided in the “Resources and Acknowledgments” section of this publication.
- The CenterPoint Institute in New Lenox, Illinois (phone: 815.463.1300; e-mail duj@CenterPointInstitute.org) released a retrospective study of K-12 service-learning projects funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. This study reviews the work of 30 service-learning projects over a 10-year period. This information is instructive to service-learning advocates and practitioners who are interested in understanding the progression from adoption to implementation to institutionalization. There is no charge for copies.
- Finally, and most important, there are human resources in every school and community. The teachers, students, parents, administrators and community members can and must guide the process of institutionalization. People are always more apt to support something that they have a hand in creating. Once they understand the importance of directing efforts towards this end, they can guide the process and work through obstacles.



Interview

Shelley Billig, vice president, RMC Research Corporation, Denver

Billig is well known for her extensive research work on service-learning. She has just completed a 10-year retrospective study on adoption, implementation and institutionalization processes in 30 service-learning organizations. The study will be released through the CenterPoint Institute (see ordering information on page 75).

Q: You have written that, "...it took different skills and messages to envision and stimulate the adoption and implementation of service-learning

than to sustain service-learning." Did you tend to see different leaders emerge to help with institutionalization? Or was it generally the same leaders who had guided efforts through the earlier stages of adoption and implementation, and who then managed to enlarge their repertoire of skills?

A: This was one of the results from the retrospective study, and I think it is an interesting one. The results show it took different skills, and often the leader who was most skilled at bringing service-learning to a site was not the best one to keep it going over time. To sustain any innovative practice over time, it must become part of the culture of the organization and a normative part of life. Often this means that leadership skills related to management, rather than to leading through change, are the skills that become more important. This type of leadership emphasizes quality and consistency of practice, use of data for improvement, development of maintenance systems and partnerships, and other systems-oriented maintenance skills.

This is very different than the leadership skills needed to envision change, establish a vision, motivate people to adopt new practices and establish a critical mass of support, sufficient resources and so on. Sometimes individuals have skills to lead through each phase of a change process, but often leaders delegate this type of work to project directors, coordinators or managers. The leaders may maintain their supervisory roles, but our research shows that often they do not get as involved in operations or improvement of quality.

Q: What do you think are the greatest mistakes organizations made when trying to move from implementation to institutionalization?

A: I think the mistakes are in not giving the practice the attention it needs and not engaging in enough continuous improvement. Typically, as I said previously, the greatest needs at this stage are, first, inculcating the practice into the norms of the organization (school, district, community organization) so that the practice is a part of the culture of the organization, and, second, increasing the quality of practice so that the desired outcomes are achieved consistently.

Another issue many schools and organizations face is motivating the remaining teachers to adopt service-learning. Once critical mass is achieved, the practice can be sustained, but it is sustained most easily when it is a schoolwide practice. Getting the last few teachers on board is often difficult, and takes a different set of messages and motivations. Sometimes that need is not recognized.

Another mistake that has huge consequences is the lack of assessment of results. Approaches, philosophies and programs – however service-learning is defined – need to prove their worth to be sustained. If the context of the practice demands results in the area of academic achievement, the approach needs to show results in that area; if the context is civic engagement, then it needs to show results there and so on. It is important to have evidence of success if a practice is to be institutionalized in schools.

Institutionalization outside of the school day is a different story and does not require the same accountability.

Q: Can schools or organizations get to sustainability without the help of substantial outside funding?

A: Absolutely. I am a strong proponent of service-learning becoming a line item in a budget, something that requires no additional funding. Without that, it is too easily cut if the outside funder goes away. In my opinion, a practice is not truly institutionalized if it is dependent on outside funding.

Funding considerations

With institutionalization, funding becomes part of the district budget. It can either be a line item or allocated as part of the budget for instructional activities. While the start-up costs can be substantial, service-learning should not require a disproportionate amount of resources once it has become part of the structure of an organization.

Most systems, even those that have reached the place of sustainability, continue to look for additional resources to grow efforts. Such resources can be used to create advanced training opportunities, pay for conferences and travel, create mini-grants or other incentives for teachers, develop new activities or publications, or purchase materials. Often, higher education institutions are important partners in identifying and writing grants.

One of the best sources of funding comes from alignment with other state and federal reform initiatives. It makes both organizational and economic sense for service-learning to become an integral part of these other efforts. Service-learning is an allowable strategy for school-to-work, character education, Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities, migrant education, special education and the No Child Left Behind Act.

The Corporation for National and Community Service, through its Learn and Serve America program, continues to be the largest funder of service-learning initiatives. It may be advisable to contact local and regional foundations, since they have an interest in community improvement and youth development. Community partners need to share in the cost of service-learning. Students, teachers, parents and community members can also assist with fundraising.

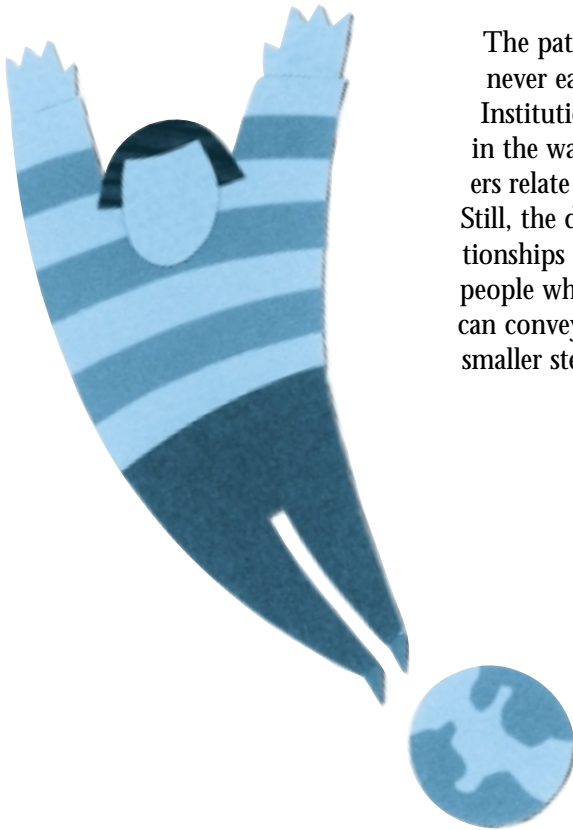
Funding, like all the other aspects of institutionalization, should be part of the strategic plan developed by the leadership/advisory committee. It has to be tied to specific objectives and in tune with the district's overall plans for improving the quality of education.

Becoming an advocate for institutionalization

It is not a great leap of intention to go from being a service-learning advocate to being an advocate for institutionalization. Institutionalization simply represents a richer, fuller, more comprehensive and more permanent portrait of service-learning. Being an advocate primarily requires an understanding of the “big picture” of what service-learning is capable of becoming – and what already exists in a number of places.

Advocates can help others see that with institutionalization, service-learning has the attention of all and not just a few, and is present across the grades, in every school in the district. With institutionalization of service-learning, students enjoy a continuity of service-learning experience, and teachers, whatever their level of experience with service-learning, have opportunities for professional growth and support. Institutionalization means there is time to do the needed work of service-learning – whether that is developing curriculum, creating assessments or sharing projects. It means that leadership is in the hands of many and that benefits for students in the academic, social and personal arenas are multiplied. It means that there is greater support and satisfaction for everyone throughout the education system.

The path to institutionalization is not a simple one. Change is never easy, and educators have had more than their share of it. Institutionalization requires formidable changes on multiple fronts – in the way that the system is organized, the way students and teachers relate to one another, the way learning is delivered and assessed. Still, the discomfort caused by learning new skills and altering relationships can be greatly diminished if an advocate is able to show people what to expect beyond the present upheavals. If an advocate can convey a powerful vision, then others will see that the many smaller steps are taking them somewhere they want to go.



Resources and Acknowledgments

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Acknowledgments

The National Center for Learning and Citizenship wishes to thank the following Learning In Deed coordinators and contacts who were interviewed for or otherwise contributed to this report:

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Additional resources

Organizations

Center for Youth and Communities

The Heller School for Social Policy and Management
Brandeis University
60 Turner Street
Waltham, MA 02453
781.736.3770
<http://heller.brandeis.edu>

The Center for Youth and Communities is a national leader in service-learning research and program evaluation.

Close Up Foundation

44 Canal Center Plaza
Alexandria, VA 22314
800-CLOSEUP
www.closeup.org

The foundation provides challenging educational programs and products that foster civic education and participation.

Constitutional Rights Foundation

601 S. Kingley Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90005
213.487.5590
www.crf-usa.org/

This organization seeks to instill in the nation's youth a deeper understanding of citizenship through values expressed in the Constitution and its Bill of Rights, and educates them to become active and responsible participants in society.

Corporation for National and Community Service – Department of Service-Learning

1201 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20525
202.606.5000 (request the Department of Service-Learning)
www.cns.gov

Established in 1993, the corporation engages more than a million Americans each year in service to their communities.

K-12 Service-Learning Leadership Network

Academy for Educational Development
100 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10011
212.367.4588
www.aed.org

The network, composed of constituents from throughout K-12 public education, promotes effective service-learning practices.

KIDS Consortium

215 Lisbon Street, Suite 12
Lewiston, ME 04240
207.784.0956
www.kids.consortium.org

KIDS has brought its nationally recognized service-learning model to hundreds of schools and communities during the past decade.

Learning In Deed Research Network

RMC Research Corporation
Writer Square
1512 Larimer Street, Suite 540
Denver, CO 80202
303.825.3636
www.rmcdenver.com

This network of researchers and evaluators identifies and communicates best practices in service-learning.

National Center for Learning and Citizenship

Education Commission of the States
700 Broadway, Suite 1200
Denver, CO 80203-3460
303.299.3606
www.ecs.org/clc

The center is a national organization that provides K-12 school leaders, legislators and other education stakeholders with resources, profiles and strategies to integrate service-learning through practice and policy.

National Commission on Service-Learning

Education Development Center
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02458
617.969.7100
www.edc.org

The commission comprises leaders from the fields of education, government, youth development and community activism, and promotes research and best practices in service-learning.

National Community Education Association

3929 Old Lee Highway, Suite 91-A
Fairfax, VA 22042
703.359.8973
www.ncea.com

The association is a leadership organization that helps to build learning communities in response to individual and community needs. In addition, NCEA works with local organizations to promote parent and community involvement in public education.

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

University of Minnesota
Department of Work, Community and Family Education
1954 Buford Avenue, Room R-460
St. Paul, MN 55108
1.800.808.7378
www.servicelearning.org

This comprehensive information system focuses on all dimensions of service-learning at all levels of education.

National Service-Learning Exchange

Exchange National Center
c/o National Youth Leadership Council
1910 W. County Road B
St. Paul, MN 55113
1.877.LSA.EXCH
www.nslexchange.org/

The exchange is a national peer-based service-learning network for training and technical assistance, organized by region.

National Youth Leadership Council

1910 W. County Road B
Roseville, MN 55113
612.631.3672
www.nylc.org

The council provides training programs for educators and youth leaders interested in developing effective service-learning programs for youth.

SEANet – The State Education Agency K-12 Service-Learning Network

One Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001
202.336.7031
www.seanetonline.org

This is a national network of staff from state education agencies and organizations who provide leadership for statewide K-12 school-based service-learning initiatives.

Written Resources

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This report was produced by the National Center for Learning and Citizenship at the Education Commission of the States for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation service-learning initiative, Learning In Deed. It was written by Linda Fredericks and edited by Elizabeth Holman and Josie Canales.

Additional copies of the full report can be ordered from the Education Commission of the States Distribution Center, 700 Broadway, Suite 1200, Denver, CO 80203-3460; 303.299.3692. Ask for #SL-02-01. Price is \$20. ECS accepts prepaid orders, MasterCard, American Express and Visa. All sales are final. Please see www.ecs.org/clc for more information.

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