



Center for Civic Engagement

Kennebec Valley Community College

Student, Faculty, Community Partner Manual

Welcome

First, welcome to the world of Service-Learning as it is experienced at KVCC! This manual is intended to assist you in many ways depending on what role you play in the implementation of Service-Learning.

There are three roles: Student, Faculty, and Community Partner

Student

Students engage in service at KVCC for a number of reasons. It might be that they enjoy volunteering, recognize a need that they can meet, or they may be doing so for personal growth.

Some faculty offer students the opportunity to volunteer as part of their course work...this is "Service-Learning".

Faculty

Faculty want to use the best and most effective methods to engage their students in the course material and meet the course learning objectives. Research has supported that Service-Learning is a very effective pedagogy for teachers to use. Not only do students achieve their academic goals, but the project also has a social impact.

Community Partners

Community Partners are those agencies and services in the community that benefit directly from the presence of volunteers. Most of these are "non-profit" organizations with a public-service mission. There are many, many organizations in your community that utilize volunteers.

What is Service-Learning?

Although there are many definitions for Service-Learning out there, SL can be simply described as the incorporation of community service into the academic class. SL happens at all ages and grade levels. SL projects differ based on the degree to which the teacher is involved in designing the project and the interests that the students have.

This manual is being presented to help assist Students, Faculty, and Community Partners in understanding what SL is and how they can engage with it. It is hoped that the SL efforts at KVCC will engender a high degree of cooperation and connection between students, faculty, and the community.

We will begin by exploring the types of SL projects.

Types of Service-Learning

Introductory SL Projects

These types of projects are usually found in Introductory level courses and consist of having students venture out into the community and find Community Partners to volunteer for. The student is responsible for ensuring that the experience is meaningful and is often asked to relate their experiences to course content in some meaningful way.

Independent SL Projects

These types of projects occur when students identify a specific need in the community and focus their project on meeting this need. In essence, they are “creating” something that was not there before. For example: a student might see the need for an after school program in their community and they organize a committee to establish one.

Course Specific SL Projects

Some projects have defined locations or situations that limit the scope of the project. It might be that an Occupational Therapy class would require their students to work at local nursing homes or at other facilities in which they are likely to work. The learning objectives for these kinds of projects are often very well defined.

Action Research SL Projects

An advanced form of SL projects, action research combines the research of the faculty with meeting a community need. SL projects of this sort have often been instrumental in effecting real community change and informing social policy.

Travel Related SL Projects

In these projects, students or groups of students, may travel across the state, the country, or even the world and engage in service in an area that has a need. The need may be due to a tragedy or it may be due to cultural and economic needs that exist in the area. These projects are obviously complex and are often a course unto themselves.

As you can see there are many different kinds of SL projects that can happen. Faculty are key in identifying which kind of SL project they intend their students to have.

Next we will explore what each “Player” in the process is responsible for...

The Roles People Play

I stated at the beginning that there were three roles that people play; Student, Faculty, and Community Partner. SL involves a close working, collaborative relationship between all three of these entities.

Students

Depending on the type of project students may be partially or wholly responsible for all aspects of the SL Project. Introductory SL Projects, for example, typically involve having the student find an opportunity (or create one) in an area of special interest to them as students. Other types of SL Projects will require a different degree of engagement in the process.

Students are also responsible to ensure that they have completed all the paperwork, quizzes, writing, and/or reflection activities required by their instructor.

Tips to finding/developing projects:

- Consider volunteer work you have done in the past or are doing currently
- Consider your hobbies and academic interests
- Consider working in the field that you are going to someday be a part of
- Consider social organizations (political, environmental, advocacy, health, etc.)
- Consider working in groups
- Consider working to identify real needs in the community that can be addressed through organized service
- Consider the work of religious and fraternal organizations (church, clubs, organizations, etc.)
- Search for regional and state volunteer opportunities on the web
- Get the word out...it is just like looking for a regular job...word of mouth is important!

Faculty

Faculty who provide opportunities to have students conduct SL projects design their classes with this in mind. SL might be optional or required, it may replace an existing alternative project (such as a research paper), or it may be key and central to every aspect of the class.

Faculty need to provide students with the following:

- Clear expectations as to what kind of SL project is expected
- Appropriate assistance in finding a Community Partner
- Clearly outlined Learning Objectives related to the SL Project
- Assessment and Evaluation of these Learning Objectives
 - Papers
 - Conversations

- Discussions
- Presentations
- Exams
- Opportunities for reflection in the following areas (reflection is a necessary aspect of SL projects):
 - Impact of engagement in SL on the student personally
 - Impact of engagement in SL on the course/college
 - Impact of engagement in SL on citizenship

Community Partners

Community Partners are expected to provide students with meaningful work, but this may depend on the type of SL project. Sometimes the mundane tasks of non-profits can be designated as volunteer job duties. In this case the Community Partner should take on the responsibility of connecting these activities with the overall mission of the agency or organization

Community Partners can be expected to do the following:

- Provide a safe and secure place for volunteers to work
- Provide a clear job description or list of duties and expectations
- Provide the volunteer with appropriate on site training and supervision
- Provide clear expectations on time spent on the job
- Treat their volunteers as they treat their employees
- Comply with local, state, and federal guidelines on the use of volunteers
- Complete mandatory paperwork such as “Service Agreements”, “Time Logs”, and “Supervisor Evaluations”
- Participate in the development of meaningful service opportunities and engaging with the college

The Process

Students, Faculty, and Community Partners who wish to explore SL should visit the website of the KVCC Center for Civic Engagement.

<http://www.mhkcreation.net/CCE>

Students

Review with your faculty as to the possibility of doing an SL project for their class. Even if it is not included in their original plan, many faculty may be willing to negotiate how to include service in their classes.

Understand that you are representing yourself and the college when you are “out there”. Professionalism is of utmost importance both in terms of reputation, but also in terms of gaining valuable experience and references from your volunteer job.

Faculty

Faculty interested in incorporating SL into their classes in any way should contact the Director of the Center for Civic Engagement through the website.

Community Partners

Agencies and individuals who wish to utilize volunteers should explore this first in regard to the mission and business plan of the company and then contact the Director of the Center for Civic Engagement through the website.