Research, Links and Resources for Service Learning

Service Learning in Higher Education (tab)

Community based experiential learning might take on different names and structures, including *work-integrated learning*, *service learning*, *professional placements* and *internships*. Each of these experiences, however, has similar characteristics in that they aim to integrate and apply academic learning in a community based context.

The Local Global Learning Project led by James Cook University, focused on higher education student experiences that require service in an intercultural community setting (local or global) that are supported by a structured process of preparation, sense making, engagement in social issues and reflection.

Service learning engages students with their own community. Successful community-based learning experiences allow students to challenge themselves, reflect on their learning, engage in meaningful participation with communities, and link their experiences to theory (McKinney *et al.* 2004[1]; Rajaram, 2007[2]). Hall *et al.* (2004)[3] found that students learn better, are more motivated, and demonstrate a greater understanding of social issues when they have a personal connection with their community. Service learning in intercultural environments promotes student engagement with global perspectives, increases intercultural competency cpf "ecp"ej cmgpi g"uwf gpwø'f kr qukkqpu'tggarding their own contribution to local and/or global communities.

As Bringle (2010)[4] asserts, using the image below, Service Learning brings together teaching and service in a community setting. Forms of service learning that offer professional services or involve students in participatory action research can bring together the three functions of universities ó teaching, research and service.
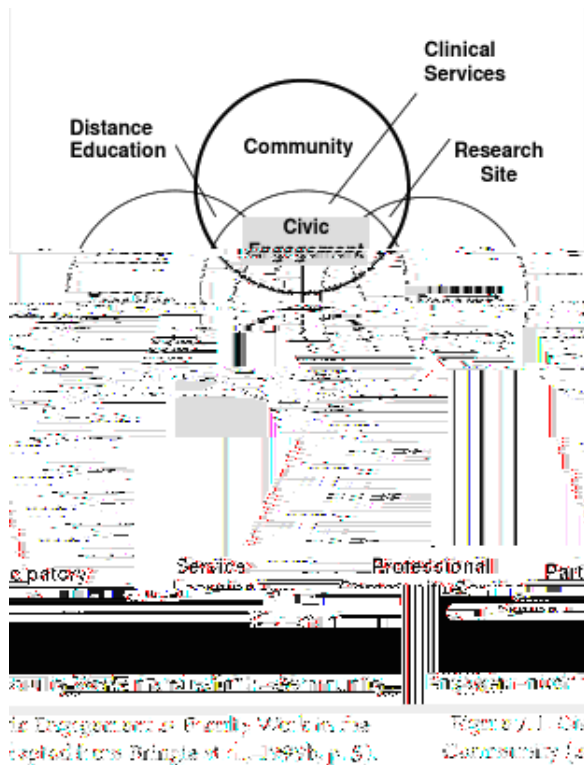
Diagram from Bringle, R. (2010) The Teaching of Research and Other "Tools of the Trade". In: Cooksey, M.A. and Olivares, K.T. (eds.) Quick Hits for Service-Learning: Successful Strategies by Award-Winning Teachers. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, United States of America.

There is a powerful rationale that service learning is one structure through which the university can contribute to the public good and more specifically to needs in the local and global community. Other rationales for service learning include improved academic engagement, retention, the application of broader attributes and capabilities including social and collaborative skills and enhanced transitions between university study and the world of work.

Service Learning in Australian Schools (tab)
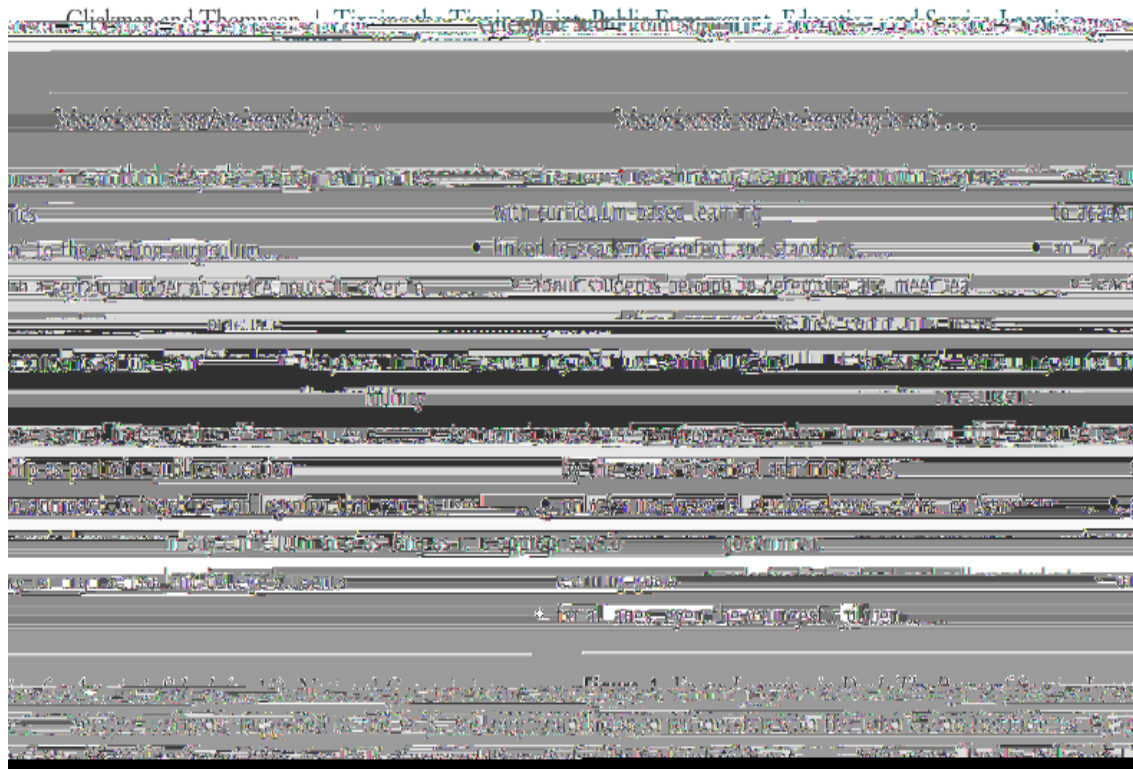
What is Service Learning? (tab)

Service learning is a transformative pedagogy that seeks to integrate meaningful community service with academic content and skills, combined with critical reflection on service learning experience (Cairn & Kielsmeier, 1999 cited in Karayan & Gathercoal, 2005, p.79). It has emerged as a key element in supporting students to become active citizens and in enhancing the practical application of their studies (National Service Learning Clearing House, 2011).

The distinction between service learning and volunteerism is one that is often blurred. Lemieux and Allen (2007) offer the following clarification:

> Although all service learning occurs in a community context, not all community-based learning is service learning. Service learning, by definition, is a collaborative relationship between the community and the classroom that equally prioritizes student learning and community service… Voluntary service also is distinguished from curriculum-based service learning in that the former emphasizes service over

learning. In summary, students…who volunteer in the community may be harvesting learning from the community, but they would not be engaged in academic service learning because of the different emphases placed on learning and service.

This suggests there is a clear difference between 'service' and 'service learning'.

Service Learning as a Pedagogical Framework (tab)

STAGES OF SERVICE LEARNING AS A PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

PREPARATION
- dentifying community needs,
- aligning the curriculum with community issues,
- determining resources,
- soliciting participation from parents, school personnel, community members, and appropriate businesses, agencies, or organizations

ACTION
- participating in service activities
- documenting the service as evidence of impact and student learning

REFLECTION
- reflecting to process the experience and learning
- alligned to learning goals including knowledge and skills
- reflecting on role as learner, citizen and agent of change

CELEBRATION
- publicity of the events,
- recognition of the participants,
- assessment of student learning,
- evaluation of the project
- school newsletters, bulletin boards, websites, community presentations, newspaper articles

Service Learning and the Australian Curriculum (tab)

As a pedagogical approach, Service Learning can be integrated across the curriculum to engage students in experiential learning that achieves conceptual understanding and broader capabilities. Service Learning strongly articulates with the knowledges, world views and skills evident in the *Sustainability Cross-Curriculum Priorit*y. It presents an opportunity for engaging content integration and experiential/inquiry Learning across all Key Learning Areas most commonly Science, Humanities, English, Physical Education and Civics and Citizenship. In addition, service learning fosters general capabilities such as *Personal and Social Capability* and Ethical *Understanding* and in working with diverse groups *Intercultural Understanding*.

The Australian Curriculum states that:

> Education for sustainability develops the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary for people to act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living. It enables individuals and communities to reflect on ways of interpreting and engaging with the world. Sustainability education is futures-oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action. Actions that

	through or as a product of the service-learning. Students would engage with and produce a range of texts.
Numeracy	Applying numeracy skills in real world contexts to solve problems. For instance, establishing a community garden may involve applying concepts such as area, finance and currency, density and volume.
ICT capability	ICT may be a tool for communication or a tool for engaging in indirect service learning.
Critical and creative thinking	Service- learning involves problem solving through creative and critical thinking. Creativity may also be an focus of service learning projects in the development of engaging texts and activities such as community arts projects.