



**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
THROUGH
SERVICE LEARNING**

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Definitions

“Service, combined with learning, adds value to each and transforms both.”
(Honnet & Poulsen, 1989, p.1)

“A credit-bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.” (Bringle and Hatcher, 1995, p. 112)

Providing value to a community partner through

Prescribed service

Requires students to work according to a plan provided to them.

Problem-based learning

Requires students to apply critical and creative thinking to devise a solution to a problem.

Offers deeper educational opportunities and value to students.

Steps to development

- Establish course learning outcomes
- Identify prospective partners for an initial outreach
- Meet with interested prospects
- Select partner(s)
 - Ensure accessibility/welcome - disabilities, non-traditional students, gender, ethnicity, under represented groups
- Collaborate with partner to develop assignments and assessments
 - Ensure assignments/service requirements provide value to both the students and the community partner
 - Integrate reflection
- Implement, adjust, seek feedback

Goals


Enhance understanding of course content

Broaden appreciation of the discipline

Instill a sense of civic responsibility

Goal: Enhance understanding of course content

- Which course learning objectives are relevant? Add?
 - Consider a specific objective for the service
- What community experience would best enhance learning?
- How applicable is course content to the experience? Adjust?
- What assignments?



**Goal: Enhance
understanding of
course content**

- How to measure?
- When/how to integrate the field service experience back into the classroom?
 - Discussions, lecture content

Goal: Broader appreciation of the discipline

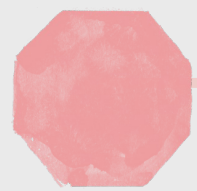
- Establishes a connection between classroom learning and “real world”
 - Where/how knowledge and skills might be applied
 - Variety of knowledge and skill applications
- Shines light on ability of the discipline to make a difference
- Provides opportunity to take academic questions into the service
 - Write these?

Goal: Enhanced sense of civic responsibility

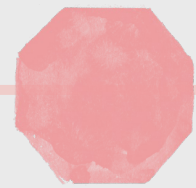
- Builds awareness of
 - Community need
 - Role of the individual in meeting needs
- Encourages empathy
- Generates trust and respect for the work of community organizations

Curricular models

Three basic approaches

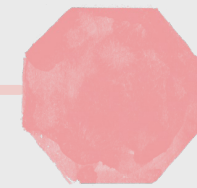


**Community
based**



In classroom

At least one on-site visit and/or
community rep visit to classroom



Combination

Model: Community-based service

- Pre-arranged placements
 - Education course includes tutoring in schools
 - Social Work students - 200 hours of field work per student/per semester
- Program
 - CSD provides free speech-language treatment

Model: In-class service

- Project or product
 - Ad/PR campaign plan prepared for the Abilene Zoo
 - Policy paper for an advocacy group

Model: Combination community-based and in-class service

- **Presentation**
 - Nutrition class develops presentation and delivers to audience at community agency
- **Product or project**
 - Build a database, design a greenhouse
 - History students develop kiosks for museums
 - Engineering students reengineer vehicles at Safety City to run on electricity

Guidelines for portion of course designated as SL

Number of hours

Minimum 15 hours per course
(regardless of credit value
of the course)

Placements 4-10 hrs/week/semester

Percent of grade

Minimum of 15% of course grade

**Commit to the time it
will require.**

Expect the unexpected.



Establishing outcomes

- Bloom's Taxonomy -
remember, understand, apply,
analyze, evaluate, create
- Start with the academic
learning needs of the course
 - Incorporate the service and needs
of the community partner

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**SECURING AND
WORKING WITH A
COMMUNITY PARTNER**

What partners need to know

- Goal: Address a problem, add value
- The educational needs/what students should learn
- Specific timing
 - Start and end dates
 - Points of contact
- Expectations
 - New assignment
 - Required participation/commitments (e.g., initial briefing + 2 meetings)
 - Time constraints - preparing students, semester framework

What partners need to know

- Expectations
 - Quality may vary by student and by semester. But partners:
 - Contribute to education
 - An opportunity to educate and help shape some savvy, eager up-and-coming professionals
 - Model civic engagement
 - Inspiring students to be engaged and involved citizens who give back to their community

What partners need to know

- Any legalities
 - Ownership of deliverables (copyright form)
 - Confidentiality/Non-disclosure Agreement (NDA)
- Contact points
 - When and how often
 - Who will be point person(s) - partner and ACU
- Facilitating feedback on the experience

Cold emailing a partner prospect?

- Subject line important
- Be specific about what students can offer and what you require
 - Overview in email
 - Attach a one-page doc with more details as needed

Non-profit organizations in Abilene

abilenegives.org

unitedwayabilene.org

Memorandum of Collaboration

**Prompts for conversations with
prospective partners.**

**Form available on the Adams Center
website.**

Assignments

- Generally, require both traditional and service learning assignments
- Reflection (a necessary component of service learning)
- Forms
 - Presentation, poster, paper
 - Product or knowledge based - plan, develop, create, design, build
 - Combine with traditional assignment - e.g. additional essay prompt or test questions, the experience as an additional research source

Assignments

- Assignment that demonstrates how students connect service to course content and their discipline/area of study

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REFLECTION

FROM

EDLP

Why?

- Part of the developmental process of learning.
- Generates awareness and understanding
 - what students have learned
 - how they have changed
- Provides opportunity to reconceptualize knowledge and process cognitive dissonance.
- Leads to enduring learning.

When?

- Before the experience (preflection)
- During
- Immediately after experience
- End of course

Reflect on -

- The service as it relates to course content
 - How the experience compares, corroborates, challenges course content
 - Applying course content to critique the experience
- The broader discipline
 - Impact on career choices
- Civic responsibility
 - Organizational and individual role in community service

How can reflection happen?

- Modality (connect to the skills of your discipline?)
 - Written (journal with prompts, blog)
 - Spoken (presentation or interview or group discussion)
 - Ex: students reflect through orienting the next cohort in the program
 - Multimedia (digital story or video)
 - Survey (evaluation of experience, self, peer)

Tips

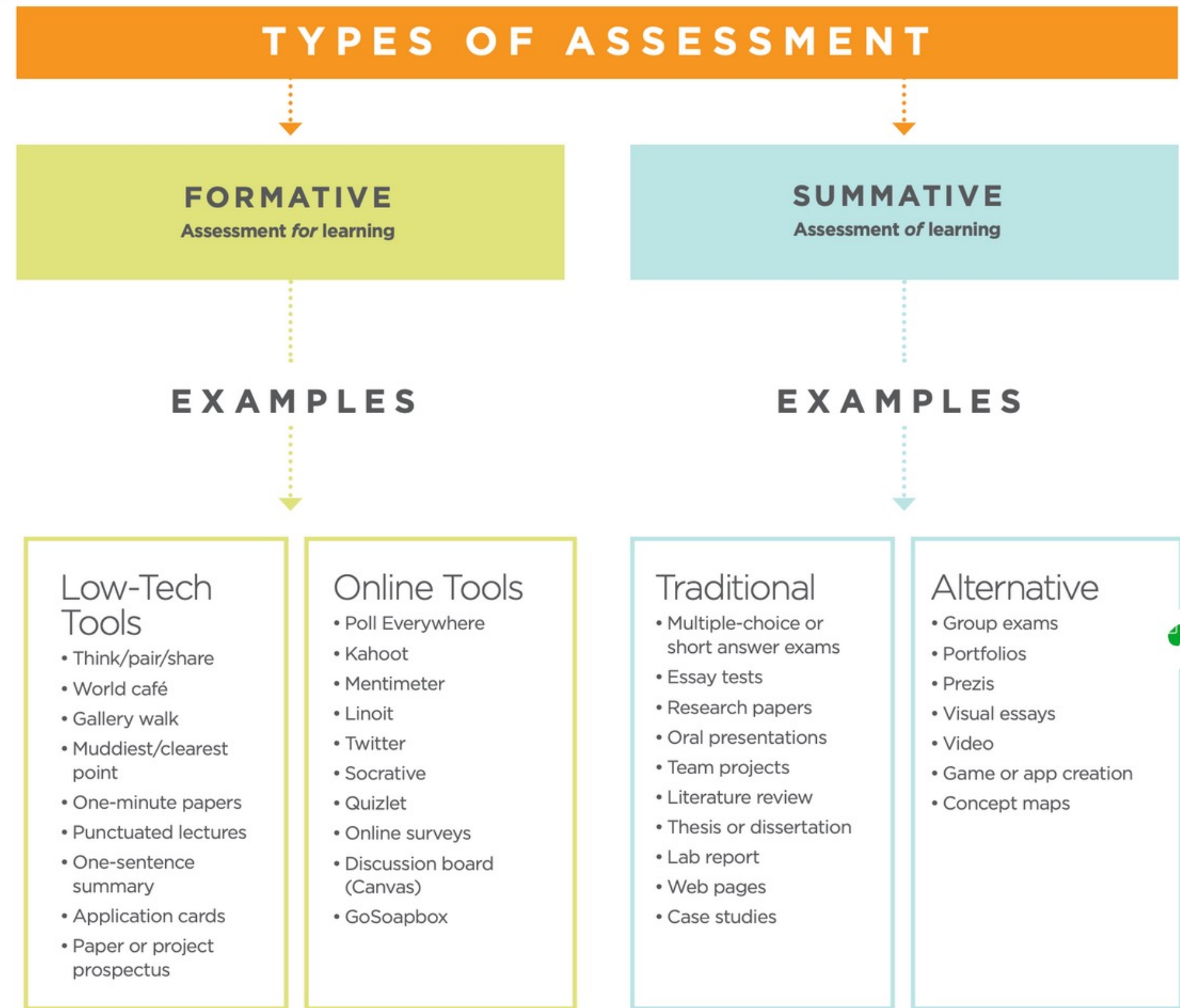
- Focus on the experience rather than teacher or course
- Avoid assigning a reflection exercise that might make a student fabricate an experience in order to have something upon which to reflect
- Connect to assessment and program outcomes

Other assessment tips

- Grade the learning not the service
 - Even a bad experience can result in good learning
- Don't lower standards - quality of thinking, writing etc...
- Resource for planning assessment and reflection questions -
 - <https://teaching.utk.edu/servicelearning/>

APPENDIX 3: ASSESSMENT TOOLBOX

Assessment is the process through which programs evaluate what students know, think, or do as a result of those programs. Programs use assessment results to make any improvements needed to the curriculum.



APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Remember that sincerity is the most important element when answering reflection questions.

Before the Service Project

1. What are some personal perceptions that you have about the agency you will be working with?
2. What characteristics make a community successful?
3. What are some of your perceptions or beliefs about the population you will be serving?
4. What is the identified problem or community need?
5. How is your community partner site addressing that need?
6. Why are you needed?
7. What concerns, if any, do you have about working in the community?
8. What do you hope to gain from this experience?
9. How does your service-learning experience relate to the learning objectives of the course?
10. What would you like to change about your community?
11. Report a civic experience you have had in the past. Include comments about what type of difference you made to those you served. How did you feel about your service? What if any attitudes or beliefs changed for you as a result of your service?
12. What communities or identity groups are you a member of? How might this be related with your commitment to service?
13. What do you think you will do and what impact do you think you will have?
14. What needs did/do/will your project help fill?
15. What do you think are the causes of those needs?
16. How do you think people contribute to this problem? How do we help to solve it?
17. How does what you perceive your role in this project to be compare with how others may see your role?

During the Service Project

18. How is your service-learning experience related to the readings, discussions, and lectures in class?
19. What happened?

20. What did you observe?
21. What issue is being addressed or population is being served?
22. How is your experience different from what you expected?
23. Identify three areas where you feel you could use additional guidance and learning in order to be more effective.
24. Identify three strengths you demonstrated in your service placement.
25. Relate your service experience to the text/reading/chapter.
26. What resources are missing from the volunteer site, and how can you as students remedy this situation?
27. What is the relationship of your service to the "real world"?
28. How have you been challenged?
29. During your community work experience, have you dealt with being an outsider at your site? How does being an outsider differ from being an insider?
30. What new questions do you have?
31. What did you do at your site since the last reflection discussion?
32. What has worked? What hasn't?
33. What do you think is (will be) the most valuable service you can offer at your site?
34. Describe your service-learning project. Include a description of the agency or organization you will be working for (i.e., what is their purpose? How big are they? What is their history? What is their mission? What are their goals?).
35. How does the service-learning experience connect to your long-term goals?
36. What new skills have you learned since beginning your service?
37. Have you ever felt hopelessness, despair, discouragement, or burnout related to your service? How have you dealt with this?
38. What did you do today (or this week) that made you feel you made a difference? Why?
39. Identify a person, group, or community that you got to know

40. What impacts the way you view the situation or experience? What lens are you viewing from?
41. What did you like or dislike about the experience?
42. What did you learn about the people and community?
43. What are some of the pressing needs and issues in the community? How does this project address those needs? What seem to be the root causes of the issue addressed? What should others do about this issue?
44. What would you like to learn more about related to this project or issue? What information can you share with your peers or the community?
45. Has there been a problem situation that you want to discuss with your instructor?

After the Service Project

46. Describe what you have learned about yourself as a result of your service.
47. What have you learned about your community?
48. What have you contributed to the community site?
49. What values, opinions, beliefs have changed?
50. In your opinion, what was the most important lesson learned during the course?
51. Do you have a different picture of your community than you had before you began your project?
52. Did you learn a new skill or clarify an interest?
53. What learning occurred for you in this experience? How can you apply this learning?
54. What follow-up is needed to address any challenges or difficulties?
55. If you could do the project again, what would you do differently?

56. What specific skills have you used at your community site?
57. Describe a person you've encountered in the community who made a strong impression on you, positive or negative.
58. Talk about any disappointments or successes of your project. What did you learn from it?
59. Complete this sentence: *Because of my service-learning, I am . . .*
60. What about your community involvement has been an eye-opening experience?
61. Do you see benefits of doing community work? Why or why not?
62. How have the environment and social conditions affected the people at your site?
63. What institutional structures are in place at your site or in the community? How do they affect the people you work with?
64. Has the experience affected your world view? If so, how?
65. Have your career options been expanded by your service experience?
66. Would you be interested in continuing your involvement with this group or social issue? If so, how will you do this?
67. What were the most difficult or satisfying parts of your work? Why?
68. Talk about any disappointments and successes of your project. What did you learn from them?
69. How were your values expressed through your community work?
70. What sorts of things made you feel uncomfortable when you were working in the community? Why? If so, what?
71. Did anything surprise you? If so, what?
72. What were the most difficult and most satisfying parts of the service for you? Why?

Adapted from Austin Community College Faculty Resources.

Preparing the students

Explain the why of service learning

Share specific and detailed expectations

Implement an orientation and onboarding

Build in checkpoints

Preflection as preparation

Learn/serve agreement

**Explain why
you have
chosen to
include service
learning in
your course?**

- How will learning of course content be enhanced?
- What other learning will occur (e.g., understanding the importance of civic engagement)

What are the expectations?

- What they'll *do/produce*
- Expectations for amount of *time* spent
- Appropriate for the organization
 - dress and etiquette standards
 - confidentiality of internal information
 - call ahead or notify site supervisor in a timely fashion if late or absent
- How they'll be graded
 - what does success in the project/assignment look like

Orientation and onboarding

- Become familiar with the mission and history of the community partner
- Tour and meeting
- Transportation, conduct off campus, safety

Checkpoints

- Check in with students early and often
- Reflections as a check in opportunity

Preflection as preparation

- Helps students recognize and understand how their own social status and ideas of self-identity influence their attitudes and behaviors as service-learners

Learn/Serve Agreements

- Agreement between community partners and students, regarding work duties, scheduled work hours, how hours will be recorded, how unavoidable absences will be handled/made up, frequency of supervisory meetings
- Signed by students, community partners, and instructors