

Principles of Effective Practice for K-12 Service-Learning

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For more than a decade, NYLC has been working with service-learning leaders from across the country to refine a set of Principles of Effective Practice for K-12 Service-Learning, derived from the 1999 Essential Elements of Service-Learning, and based in research. These principles set the stage for developing national standards of service-learning practice, the next step in the process, which will — in turn — help ensure quality service-learning practice, as well as broader recognition for practitioners.

Principles of Effective Practice for K-12 Service-Learning

- 1. Curriculum Integration** — embedding service-learning experiences in curricular goals and standards that drive student learning of concepts, content, and skills in academic disciplines and co-curricular settings.
- 2. Diversity** — fostering civil discourse and democratic values through the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences, and through a respect for all learners.
- 3. Meaningful Service** — applying problem-solving and critical thinking skills to community and civic needs within real-world environments.
- 4. Reflection** — facilitating continuous reflection — before, during, and after the service experiences — using multiple, cognitively challenging methods to encourage critical and creative thinking that address learning objectives.
- 5. Youth Voice** — engaging the vision and leadership of young people as valued contributors to society by integrating their ideas into the selection, design, implementation, and evaluation of the service-learning experiences.
- 6. Process Monitoring** — analyzing student reflections and assessment measures, in combination with project and partner evaluation data, for continuous review and improvement.
- 7. Duration** — ensuring that service and learning experiences are of sufficient intensity and duration, (or are equal to one semester), so that all phases of planning — through project evaluation — are included.
- 8. Reciprocal Partnerships** — leveraging community assets and promoting collaborative communication and interaction among stakeholders.* ■



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*Adopted by the National Service-Learning Standards Committee, February 24, 2006, St. Paul, Minn.

Updates

Certificate of Excellent Practice in K-12 Service-Learning

To promote more consistent levels of service-learning practice, NYLC has developed a Certificate of Excellent Practice in K-12 Service-Learning. The certificate is being piloted this summer, with an online course offered in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin – River Falls. Applicants are participating in online discussions on the Principles of Effective Practice and creating portfolios of project examples to demonstrate their proficiency. Using criteria developed by a national panel of service-learning experts, an evaluation board will offer certification to practitioners whose portfolios meet the established criteria for high-level service-learning. Participants who successfully complete the coursework will receive two graduate credits from the University of Wisconsin – River Falls.

Third Annual Urban Service-Learning Institute

For the third consecutive year, NYLC hosted the Urban Service-Learning Institute; this year's event was held August 2-3 at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn. The theme, *Enriching Urban Education Through Service-Learning*, focused on strategies, best practices, and recommendations for advancing service-learning in urban environments. Keynoters included Dr. James Hildreth, Director of the Center for Health Disparities at Meharry Medical College, and Elona Street-Stewart, Chair of the Saint Paul Board of Education. The Institute provided an opportunity for urban professionals from across the country to connect and help shape a national agenda for this developing area for service-learning. Recommendations advanced will inform NYLC's program priorities for the upcoming year.