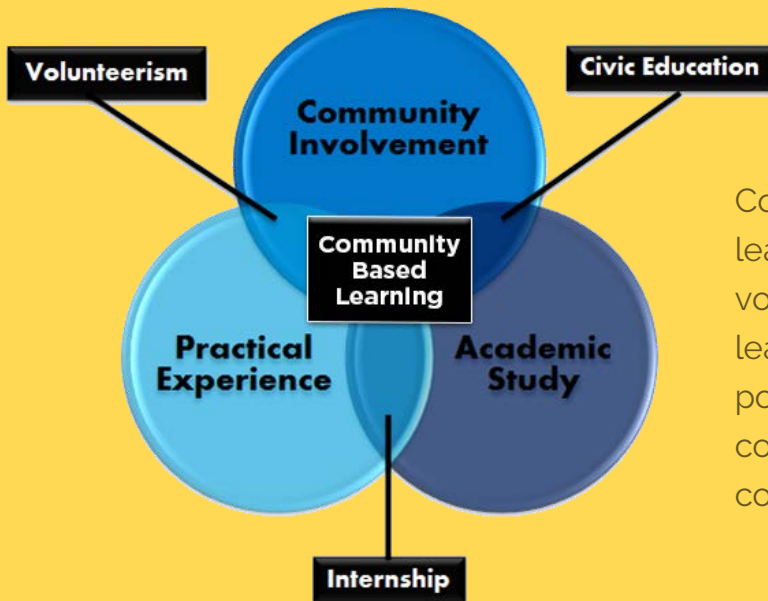




MINNESOTA STATE
Transportation Center of Excellence

COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

FACULTY RESOURCE GUIDE



WHAT IS CBL?

Community-based learning (CBL) is hands-on learning meets community. It's not just volunteering; CBL is a way of teaching and learning course content. A wide variety of possibilities exist for community-based learning collaborations between classrooms and community partners.

BENEFITS OF CBL

CBL can be accomplished in a number of ways:

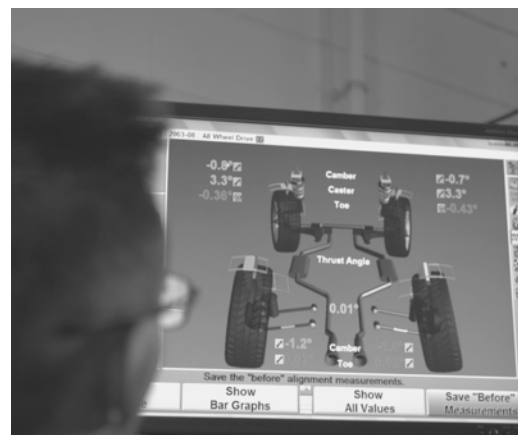
- Individually or by an entire class (required for credit or optional)
- Direct service or indirect service
- Research or advocacy
- In the community, in the classroom or completely online

FACULTY BENEFITS

- Support retention and student success
- Build community partners and stakeholders
- Enhance and diversify your teaching
- Connect your industry experience with your classroom

STUDENT BENEFITS

- Deeper understanding of course content
- Explore majors and career options
- Enhance skills such as communication, critical-thinking and problem-solving
- Network with industry
- Gain concrete experience, especially for students who don't have a lot of prior experience in the field



EXAMPLES

Create a demonstration, class, or workshop and present it at an after-school youth program or senior living residence.

Build or repair transportation technology for a nonprofit.

Host a community event related to your course that families might enjoy

Learn about public policy and laws that effect your industry. Meet with your elected representatives to discuss your viewpoints on the policy or law.

If your industry has a union or lobbying organization, meet with representatives to learn about how students can affect change within their industry.

Is it important for students to have effective interpersonal communication skills upon graduation? Work together or as individuals to volunteer for a local nonprofit where students will communicate with folks outside of their peers. Back in the classroom, debrief about what they learned about communication and how they can apply it to their profession.

The college is a community in itself. Partner up with student organizations or departments on a project or event, and use the experience to talk about how to effectively work with others. How will they need to work with others in the workplace? What does effective teamwork look like?

For additional ideas and assistance with implementation, contact the
Transportation Center of Excellence staff:
minntran@dctc.edu
Or use the connect form on our website:
<https://www.minntran.org/contact/>

PLANNING CBL

Jeffrey Howard's Principles of Good Practice for Service-Learning Pedagogy is among the most widely accepted and adopted documents addressing service-learning practice. The principles were originally published in the Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning. They include the following:

1. Pre-Planning
2. Plan with Your Partner
3. Prepare Students for Learning and Serving
4. Evaluation and Celebration

PRE-PLANNING

Before making decisions about what and how to include community-based learning into a course, consider these questions (adapted from University of Arkansas):

1. What are the key learning outcomes for the project?
2. How could a CBL project help achieve course objectives? For instance, how would it help students apply the skills that they are learning in class, reinforce understanding of concepts and theories, promote leadership skills or understanding of diversity, etc.? Try to be as specific as possible in your planning.
3. What course content will they need to have covered before they can serve? What level of mastery will they need to be successful in serving?
4. How will students' work on the CBL project be evaluated? (How will you know that they have achieved the key learning outcomes?)
5. What reflection activities will be incorporated into the project?
6. What graded and non-graded assignments (including reflection) will be associated with the CBL project?
7. What would you consider a successful outcome for the CBL project?



PLAN WITH YOUR PARTNER



Now that you know WHY you want your students to participate in a community project, it's time to determine WHO you'll work with.

It's important to reach out to community organizations asking what would be helpful to them, not having everything planned out already.

See your community partner as a co-educator. How can the partnership be mutually beneficial? Don't assume you know what the organization needs.

After finding a willing partner, put into writing the expectations and responsibilities for the community partner, institution, and students.



Some questions you may want to ask of potential community partners:

- What does your organization currently need that our college could potentially help with?
- What are your volunteer requirements? (Age, if a background check is needed, etc.)
- How many student volunteers can you accommodate?
- What kind of training or orientation can you provide?
- As a result of a partnership, I want students to learn.... do you think that would be a match for your needs?

HOW TO FIND A PARTNER...

- Ask your Student Life staff for recommendations
- Web search to find out if your community has a volunteer center
- [Volunteermatch.org](https://www.volunteermatch.org) or your local United Way
- Ask your colleagues where they volunteer

PREPARE STUDENTS FOR SERVICE

"PRE-FLECTION"



In order for students to get the most out of their CBL experience, it is important to prepare them for what they will do and how it connects to the course content. Before sending students to do their CBL project, give context to the issues they will be encountering and introduce them to the organizations where they will be serving.

Be clear with students about the intended learning outcomes, how reflection will be facilitated, what assignments are connected to the CBL project, and how their learning will be assessed.

LOGISTICS + ORIENTATION



Invite your community partner to visit class and talk about the organization and project prior to the service

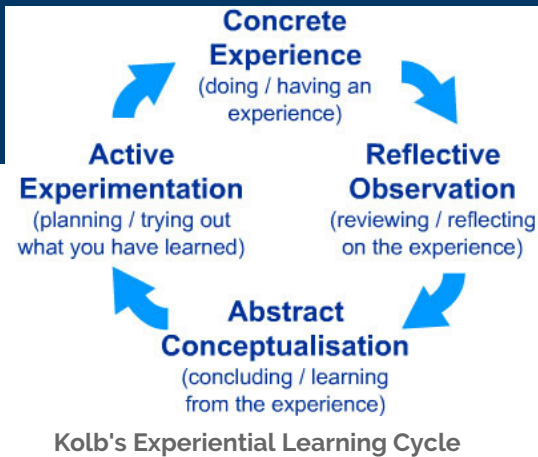
Determine how students will get to the service site and what supplies they need to bring

Have students sign a liability waiver (your campus may have an off-campus activities waiver or you can use the Minnesota State waiver)

Talk through potential problems that may arise and what to do

Check in with students and community partners throughout the experience

PREPARE STUDENTS FOR LEARNING



Learning from a CBL project will not take place without critical reflection on what was learned.

Critical reflection is "the process of analyzing, reconsidering, and questioning one's experiences within a broad context of issues and content knowledge (Jacoby, 2015)."

Gateway Technical College has a comprehensive [guide to service-learning reflection](#) that can be used as a resource.

WAYS TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING

Verbal Demonstrations

- Give oral reports to your group.
- Teach others what you learned.
- Do public speaking about the project.
- Plan a training session for other youth.
- Testify before a decision-making or policy-setting group to educate and inform.
- Present at a conference or workshop.

Written Demonstrations

- Write an essay.
- Write briefing papers for policy makers.
- Create fact sheets.
- Write a letter to the campus president about the experience or an article for the department newsletter.

Tech Demonstrations

- Make, post, and share a video online.
- Keep a blog throughout the project.
- Create a Website about the topic.

Integrated Demonstrations

- Create and share portfolios (traditional or electronic).
- Host a culminating event for the project.

Adapted from: Roehlkepartain, E. C. Service-Learning in Community-Based Organizations: A Practical Guide to Starting and Sustaining High-Quality Programs. Scotts Valley, CA: Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009, page 48.

EVALUATION



WRAP UP TO-DO LIST

Thank your community partner and ask for their feedback.

Celebrate the completion of your project - share pictures with the campus community, ask marketing to post about it on social media, etc.

Ask students to evaluate the experience.

Hold on to liability waivers for one year.

EVALUATE THE LEARNING

- Give grades based on the learning, not the service hours or checking the box.
- You should not be more lenient because service learning takes more time. You don't give breaks to students who spend many hours writing a research paper if it's a bad paper.
- Keep rigorous criteria, just as you would for a regular assignment.
- Even if the project doesn't turn out well, look at how well they analyze the situation and make suggestions for improvements.
- How well does the student what they learned in class with the project?
- How well does the student analyze the situation and understand the problem?
- Are they able to communicate this information?
- How well do they formulate conclusions and recommendations for solutions?
- The better your learning goals are formulated and communicated to students at the beginning, the easier it will be for you to evaluate and grade them at the end.

Source: Marquette University

<http://www.marquette.edu/servicelearning/evaluating.shtml>

