



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

Experiential Learning Teaching Methods

Method: Service-Learning

Description: Service-learning describes a range of activities in which student learning is advanced by participating in community-based service activities. This may take place by students volunteering a set number of hours in a local organization as part of a course/degree requirement, or it may occur as an extra-curricular activity in which a student participates in community work in a way that applies their studies.

Link to Experiential Learning: Service-learning is what may think of as synonymous with experiential learning. Experiential learning is, however, a broader pedagogy than service-learning in that it does not only refer to creating new out-of-class experiences. Service-learning is an effective way of broadening the horizons of students to see and learn from individuals that they may have never previously engaged with, and can encourage transformative learning. Service-learning as a method is particularly helpful for helping students apply learning, for encouraging personal reflection, and when done well can have social benefits in a community or organization.

Facilitator Notes: Service-learning can often focus too heavily on the field component and not enough on how those experiences are brought back into the classroom for continued reflection. A lack of structured reflection can result in negative learning and negative impacts on local organizations. It is important to find ways to encourage reflection prior, during, and after service experiences. Service-learning can require more work than benefit for local organizations and ambiguous assignments can be difficult for students. It is important to create clear expectations ahead of time with the partner organization regarding the nature of the volunteer placement, time expectations, and desired outcomes. Reflection on issues related to power and privilege is strongly encouraged as part of any service-learning experience.

Learn More:

<http://www.washington.edu/teaching/teaching-resources/engaging-students-in-learning/service-learning/>

<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-through-community-engagement/>

<http://www.communityservicelearning.ca/en/>

<http://ccps.unc.edu/files/2012/10/Toolkit-for-Preparing-Students-for-Service-Learning.pdf>