

Meaningful Service

Service Learning is a method of teaching classroom curriculum where students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that meets an authentic community need.

Meaningful Service

What Is It

Meaningful Service occurs when a relevant and actual need is met in the community. Although other people could meet this need, as students become involved, the service becomes a reciprocal, transforming experience.

Explain It

Meaningful Service exists when a real need is identified and met through students' efforts. It will benefit the receiver in a tangible way because a need has been met. Students will benefit through increased learning, awareness, and empathy. "Meaningful Service is not about doing good to someone, it is about dignity and growth of the giver and the receiver." Harry C. Silcox

Support It

It is well documented that Academic Service Learning can deeply impact a wide range of student behaviors, creating positive changes in everything from attendance and grades to connections and empathy for others in the community. (For a detailed list of impacts and evidence see *The Grantmaker Forum on Community and National Service* at www.gfcns.org) According to RMC Research, this impact is only achieved through high quality and meaningful Academic Service Learning experiences.

RMC Research (2004) <<http://www.rmcdenver.com/>>

A brief overview of six key factors of Academic Service Learning that includes the importance of authentic and high quality learning experiences.

Shelley Billig, Ph.D. <<http://www.nylc.org>> *Research on K-12 School-Based Service-Learning: The Evidence Builds*. RMC Research Corporation, Denver, CO.

An excellent overview of service learning that reviews the elements of quality, Academic Service Learning. It discusses the importance of reciprocal benefits and the need to insure that both service and learning occur for all involved in the project.

Profiles of Success: Engaging Young People's Hearts and Minds Through Service-Learning. <<http://www.gfcns.org>>A comprehensive summary of positive impacts and data related to meaningful Academic Service Learning.

Andrew Furco and Shelley Billig, eds. *"Is Service-Learning Really Better Than Community Service? A study of high school Service Program Outcomes."* Advances in Service Learning Research Series. Furco and Billig compare the benefits of Academic Service Learning in this chapter. Also discussed is how students react positively when they experience a meaningful service learning project and negatively if they perceive a project as pointless.