



# **Academic and Emotional Benefits of Service- Learning in a Sixth Grade Classroom**

by

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# Introduction

*“An educated citizenry is the cornerstone of a democratic society, and for our democracy to prosper, our youth must demonstrate both academic achievement and civic responsibility.”*

*-California Department of  
Education,  
1999*

# Introduction

- Definition of Service-Learning
  - Provides developmental opportunities that promote personal, social, and intellectual growth.
  - Provides developmental opportunities that promote civic responsibility and career exploration.

# Introduction

- What Service-Learning is...
  - a teaching method that combines community service with curriculum-based learning
  - linked to academic content and standards
  - students helping to determine and meet real, defined community needs
  - an effective way to encourage and foster active citizenship as part of public education
  - an approach to teaching and learning that can be used in any curriculum area as long as it is appropriate to learning goals
  - for all ages, even the youngest of children

# Introduction

## ■ What Service-Learning is not...

- a volunteer or community service program with no ties to academics
- an “add-on” to the existing curriculum
- logging a certain number of service hours in order to graduate
- one-sided—benefiting either the students or the community
- compensatory service assigned as a form of punishment by the courts or school administrators
- only for use in social studies classes, civics, or American government
- only for high school and college students

# Introduction

- Question

- How will the sixth grade students in my classroom, in a suburban middle school, benefit academically and emotionally from their service-learning project during the 2001 - 2002 school year?

# Project

*“Tell me and I forget, Teach me and I remember, Involve me and I learn.”*

*-Anonymous*

- Four Steps of Service-Learning

- Step One: Preparation - Identifying a Need

# Project

- Four Steps of Service-Learning
  - Step Two: Action - Carrying Out the Project

# Project

- Four Steps of Service-Learning
  - Step Three: Reflection on Experience

# Project

- Four Steps of Service-Learning
  - Step Four: Demonstration of Learning

# Data Collection

- Debate
- Open-Ended Question
- Diamond Poem

# Data Collection

- Debate

- Should schools allow the sale of junk food in the cafeteria at lunchtime?

# Data Collection

- Open-Ended Question

- What did you learn from your experience at the health care center today?

# Data Collection

- Diamond Poem - A reflection on the total service-learning experience.

service

(adjective for service)      (adjective for service)

(-ing word for service)    (-ing word for service)    (-ing word for service)

(adj. for service)      (adj. for service)      (adj. for learning)      (adj. for learning)

(-ing word for learning)    (-ing word for learning)    (-ing word for learning)

(adjective for learning)    (adjective for learning)

learning

# Results and Analysis

*“Education goals that [President Bush] has spoken of are accountability and standards, while developing civic responsibility and character education. How do you measure those? In my view, service-learning is a good way to do that.”*

*-Amy Cohen, acting director, Department of Service-Learning, “Schools Strive to Align Service-Learning Into Academic Standards,” School Board News, January 25, 2001*

# Results and Analysis

- Debate

- The sixth grade students (should not offer unhealthy food selections) lost to the seventh grade students (should offer unhealthy food selections).

# Results and Analysis

- Open Ended Question
  - 27 of 27 students questioned said that they had learned something from the field trip to the health care center.

# Results and Analysis

- Open Ended Question - Student Responses
  - Student Number Seven – I learned that helping people is highly appreciated. The seniors were not as boring or quiet as I thought they were going to be. I also learned that someday I am going to be an elderly person, sitting in one of those chairs.
  - Student Number Eight – I learned that older people aren't all the same and are pretty cool sometimes. Also I learned that giving feels a lot better than receiving. Another thing is that when you do something nice for others, you think you don't get something in return but you really do.

# Results and Analysis

## ■ Diamond Poem

- 27 of 27 students turned in their diamond poems.
- 83% used adjectives correctly the first time the poem was assigned.
- 17% needed to make revisions and were asked to turn in a second copy.

# Conclusion

*“What is learned...depends far less on what is being taught than on what one actually experiences.”*

*-Edgar Z. Friedberg, The Dignity of Youth*

# Conclusion

- The results from the data collected showed academic and emotional growth in the students selected for this project.

# Conclusion

- What will the future hold for service-learning in the classroom?
  - Will service-learning remain an ambiguous concept to a majority of teachers?
  - Will most educators continue to confuse service-learning with community service?
  - Did service-learning grow too quickly?
  - Will too many teachers implement low quality programs and quickly find the benefits to their students do not match those of other programs?