



# What Is Service Learning?



Cleaning up a river is service.

Sitting in a science classroom, looking at water samples under a microscope is learning.



*Students taking samples from local water sources, analyzing the samples, documenting the results and presenting scientific findings to a local pollution control agency is service learning.*

*National Youth Leadership Council, 1994*

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*In other words, "service learning is made up of activities that connect serving the community with the learning already being done in a school, program, or organization. Service learning provides a hands-on application of knowledge and skills to meet real life community needs."*

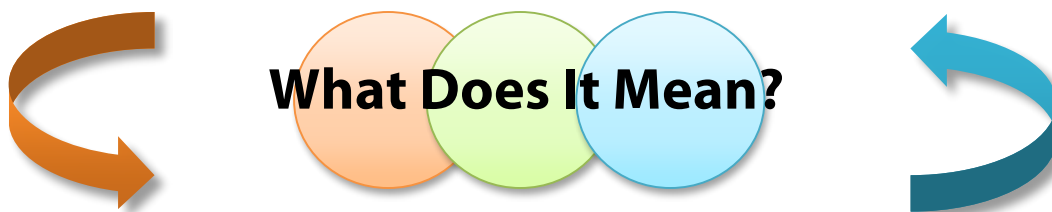
*Institute for Global Education and Service Learning, 1998*

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Service learning is education in action — a way for youth to gain knowledge and develop skills while meeting real community needs. After identifying and examining local issues, students agree on a plan, take action, and evaluate results.

Service Learning Texas





The following are terms that are sometimes confused with service learning. They are presented in hopes of assisting with the clarification of what *is* and *is not* service learning.

### **Volunteerism**

Volunteerism refers to people who, of their own free will and without pay, perform some service or good work (such as with charitable institutions or community agencies). Many of you may have volunteered while growing up through scouting, 4-H, church youth groups, or other organizations.

### **Community Service**

Community service is a form of volunteerism. It is done within a defined community, which could be a classroom, school, town, city, etc. It does not have any intentional tie to learning; the emphasis is strictly on the service.

### **Community-Based Learning**

Community-based learning is a term for any learning experience that occurs in the community. Common forms of community-based learning are internships and apprenticeships, which, although they have no formal service purpose, offer important experiences for students to master skills within a real life setting. Community-based learning may or may not include service.

### **Philanthropy**

Philanthropy is the act of donating money to support a charitable cause, usually over an extended period of time and in the interest of a defined objective.

### **Some other terms you'll want to know:**

**Assets** – These are how we generally refer to the good, positive resources in a community.

**Needs** – When using this term, we are often referring to something in the community that needs to be improved, needs to be changed, or needs to be developed.