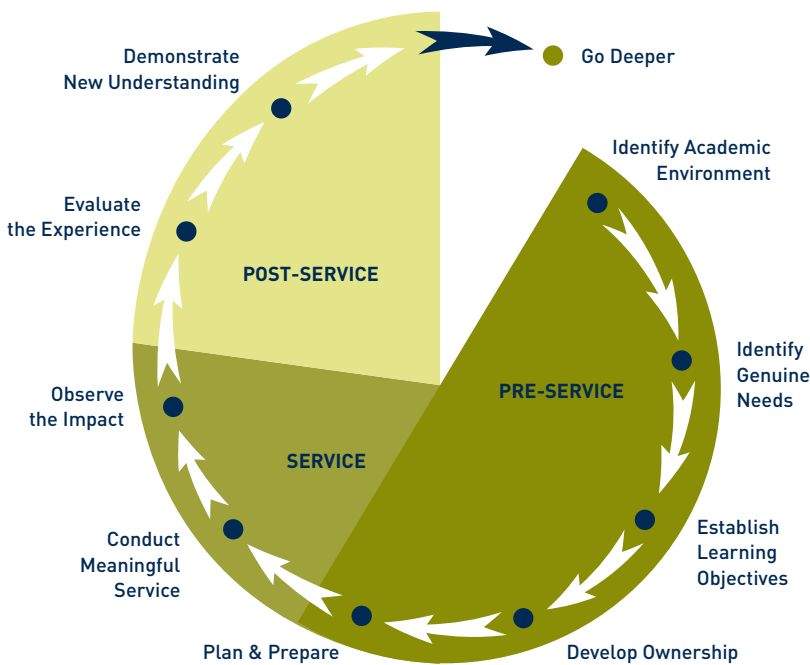


The Service-Learning Cycle



NYLC Signature Curriculum

NYLC's Signature Service-Learning Curriculum helps teachers and schools align their service-learning projects to meet existing learning goals, and help students understand their community and how they can contribute to it.

GSN classrooms navigate the entire service-learning cycle following a curriculum with an array of flexible tools teachers and students can use at each step in the process. Through the online GSN community, we provide project plans and examples, planning templates, reflection ideas, evaluation and assessment checklists – all the tools teachers and their students need to ensure successful learning and service.

Projects offered within these themes represent a cross-section of curricular focus, including math, science, language arts, social studies, and others. They are tailored to student grade levels (elementary, middle, or high school) and carefully designed to encourage the outcomes high-quality service-learning is known for:

- keeping young people engaged in school and learning
- helping them become more involved citizens of their communities
- honing skills such as critical thinking and problem solving
- improving their job readiness

GSN members can browse through exemplary projects developed by NYLC, our partner organizations, and other teachers. The projects cluster around three themes:

- environmental sustainability
- peace and social justice
- health and safety

Generator School Network – Education in Action

Service-learning isn't glorified community service; it's a way of teaching and learning to meet your existing academic goals. NYLC's 25-year history of practice excellence in service-learning informs this compendium of resources to help you shape your service-learning projects to meet your learning goals, your community needs, and the interests of your students. The curriculum takes you through a step-by-step cycle and helps you infuse your projects and practice with the essential elements of high-quality practice outlined in the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice.

The Service-Learning Cycle

PRE-SERVICE

1. Identify the academic environment. Inventories and reflective questions guide educators in laying the groundwork for effective service-learning by outlining their academic obligations, goals, and resources. It sets the stage to describe the overarching academic goals their students will achieve.
2. Identify genuine needs. Community mapping and other processes help young people explore their communities and connect with other people to recognize relevant issues, assess resources, and discover what's important to themselves and their community.
3. Establish learning objectives. What are the learning outcomes that can be achieved in addressing the needs students identified? Link your specific academic objectives to the planned service and identify the actions needed to close the gap between capacity and need.
4. Develop ownership. Service-learning coordinators, classroom teachers, students, and community partners all develop a sense of engagement, investment, and ownership. Participants evaluate what they bring to the experience and set goals, laying a sustainable foundation on which to build.
5. Plan and prepare. Using proven methods and tools, teachers and students collect relevant information, develop their project, engage in the necessary training, build vital partnerships, and gather the necessary resources to implement their ideas about how to improve their communities.

SERVICE

6. Conduct meaningful service. Young people participate in interesting and engaging service activities that meet classroom objectives while addressing a genuine need.
7. Observe the impact. Service-learning participants observe the effects of their project on different participants, exchange ideas with peers and community partners, look at the implications of cultural and diversity issues they encountered, or view the project in civic or political terms.

POST-SERVICE

8. Evaluate the experience. Participants analyze their observations to identify the significance of their service experience, comparing their prior knowledge with new understandings of academic content, their own skills and contributions, and the project's impact on the community. Educators and students evaluate how they met academic objectives and service goals.
9. Demonstrate new understanding. Students can reach out to other potential community partners – school boards, parent-teacher organizations, media outlets, legislative bodies – to present findings, share community outcomes, and consider possible next steps. This is another time students can practice the new skills and apply the knowledge they've gained through the experience.
10. Go deeper. Educators, students, and other participants continue to use their new knowledge and skills to make decisions, solve problems, and grow as engaged learners and contributing members of the community. Students come to understand root issues underlying community needs. It is a natural place in the cycle to begin again, with the question, "Given what we learned, now what?"

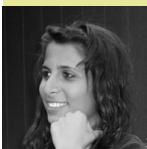


Youth Perspectives on Youth Voice



“The importance of youth voice lies in one simple idea: engagement. With the power of engagement, you can accomplish anything.”
— Siddharth Damania

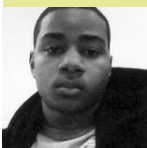
“It’s hard to raise your voice sometimes. Whether it’s about something that you close inside or a worldwide concern, speaking out can be hard. In CTT, we understand that in order to have peace and acceptance, we must first have understanding.” — Tegan Carr, Central Touring Theater student actor



“In order for a learning process to be effective, adults should recognize what appeals to different youths. This can be done by listening to the new ideas they bring to the table.”
— Farnaaz Farzanehkia



“Youth voice benefits both youths and adults. It gives adults a youth perspective and allows youths a chance to present their ideas.”
— Mathew Amys



“We create new and innovative ideas. You give to the youths, and the youths will give back to you.”
— Geoffrey Gill

Youth Voice Ideas

As the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice emphasize, an exemplary program infuses youth voice into every aspect of the service-learning experience. Each of the standards is supported by accompanying “indicators.” The following ideas build off the five indicators for youth voice, listed below.

Youth Voice Standard

Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.

Quality service-learning ...

- Engages youth in generating ideas during the planning, implementation, and evaluation process.**
 - Brainstorming
 - Picture prompts
 - Written prompts
 - Circle process
 - Wall of words
 - Imaging the future
 - Role-playing
 - KWL Charts (*What do we know? What do we want to know? What have we learned?*)
 - Pair/share
 - Youth-led reality-checks
- Promotes acquisition of knowledge and skills to enhance youth leadership and decision-making.**
 - Pre-service training
 - Community asset-mapping
 - Role-playing
 - Youth passions lists
 - Leadership role rotations
 - Feedback interviews
- Involves youth in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the service-learning experiences.**
 - Evaluation design
 - Essential questions development
 - Rubric development
 - SWOT analysis (*strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats*)
 - Survey creation
 - Checklist development
 - Self-evaluation
 - Pre- and post-testing
 - Data collection, analysis, and presentation
- Involves youth in the decision-making process throughout the service-learning experiences.**
 - Agenda-setting
 - Action-planning
 - Meeting-facilitation
 - Dot-voting*
 - Fist-to-Five*
 - Circle Process*
- Involves youth and adults in creating an environment that supports trust and open expression of ideas.**
 - Team-building activities
 - Idea or question box
 - Collectively established ground rules
 - Regular reflection (*individually, in pairs, or groups*)

Youth Voice and Consensus-Building

Incorporating youth voice throughout the service-learning cycle can be simplified with the following consensus-building techniques. Remember that consensus-building doesn't mean universal agreement. Instead, it relies on all participants contributing their perspectives so that individual concerns are addressed, and participants become more comfortable with a decision. The following tools, offered by NYLC staff members, can foster democratic expression of youth voice in consensus-building.

Fist-to-Five



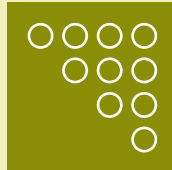
Whenever a group is approaching a decision, "Fist-to-Five" can help poll the group to determine peoples' opinions.

To use this technique, the facilitator states a decision the group may make and asks the members of the group to show their level of support by showing a fist or a number of fingers that corresponds to their agreement with the decision.

The more fingers shown, the stronger they support the proposal at-hand, from a single finger indicating a desire to continue discussion, to five fingers indicating full endorsement of the idea. Anyone showing fewer than three fingers has the opportunity to express their concerns and the group should work to address them. A fist signifies a block or no vote, signifying that the person needs to talk more about the proposal and requires changes for it to pass.

Groups can continue to use the Fist-to-Five process until they achieve consensus (a minimum of three fingers or higher) or determine they cannot reach consensus and move on to the next issue.

Dot-Voting or Dotocracy



In dot-voting, participants express their preference for one or more ideas among a number of choices. Ideas are drafted and posted, and every

member is given the same number of dots. Generally, the number of dots per person should be fewer than the total number of ideas to vote on, but the precise number can vary considerably. Each person then allocates their dots as they choose among the various ideas. They can award an idea any number of dots from zero to all of their dots. More dots indicates more support, so an idea that someone feels very strongly about might receive all of their dots.

Dot-voting can be used to make a final decision or merely to direct a group's discussion to focus only on ideas that have widespread support. This process helps minority viewpoints be seen and heard, and offers a clear visual way to determine which ideas have the most support within a group. Also, it requires participants to get up, move around, and look at all the ideas, which helps engage kinesthetic learners.

While this exercise is typically done using colored, adhesive dots, alternative "dots" can be used, including marbles, candy, post-its, etc. Different colors can also be used to signify the preferences of different groups (i.e. one color for youths and one color for adults to see whether the two groups value different ideas).

Circle Process



In the circle process, participants seated in a circle are able to foster a respectful, egalitarian climate for sharing with and listening to others. It is a

way for everyone involved to be both a teacher and a learner, a giver and a receiver. The act of speaking using the circle can be a very empowering process for participants as well as a healing activity because of the experience of being listened to, and of being heard.

The circle leader (often called a circle "keeper" — as in "housekeeper") holds a physical object called a "talking piece." Only when holding the talking piece does one talk; otherwise circle participants listen. The circle-keeper poses the question, and passes the talking piece to the person on his or her left, who addresses the question and when finished, passes it on to the next person. This simple process provides a logical way to take turns.

The circle-keeper helps set the tone of respectful listening and may start off the circle with a few ground rules such as: No talking unless holding the talking piece; everyone has a right to feel comfortable and can decide to pass on the talking piece without talking; anyone who is uncomfortable may choose to leave the circle. Sometimes, after the participants have become an effective group, the talking piece may be simply placed in the middle of the circle.

Visit www.nylc.org/standards to learn more about youth voice in service-learning.



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teacher | tools

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