



These standards and indicators were vetted through a series of “reactor panels” convened nationwide by the National Youth Leadership Council and RMC Research Corporation. The panels were composed of young people, teachers, school and district administrators, community members, staff from community-based organizations, policy-makers, and others interested in service-learning. The process was much like setting content standards in other fields. Each panel considered the work of the two before them, revising the standards and indicators to ensure that they included the strongest aspects of quality, and to make the wording clearer, measurable, and actionable. For more information, visit www.nylc.org/standards.

K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice

Meaningful Service

Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning experiences are appropriate to participant ages and developmental abilities.
2. Service-learning addresses issues that are personally relevant to the participants.
3. Service-learning provides participants with interesting and engaging service activities.
4. Service-learning encourages participants to understand their service experiences in the context of the underlying societal issues being addressed.
5. Service-learning leads to attainable and visible outcomes that are valued by those being served.

Link to Curriculum

Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning has clearly articulated learning goals.
2. Service-learning is aligned with the academic and/or programmatic curriculum.
3. Service-learning helps participants learn how to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting to another.
4. Service-learning that takes place in schools is formally recognized in school board policies and student records.

Service-learning is a philosophy, pedagogy, and model for community development that is used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.



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K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice

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Reflection

Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning reflection includes a variety of verbal, written, artistic, and nonverbal activities to demonstrate understanding and changes in participants' knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes.
2. Service-learning reflection occurs before, during, and after the service experience.
3. Service-learning reflection prompts participants to think deeply about complex community problems and alternative solutions.
4. Service-learning reflection encourages participants to examine their preconceptions and assumptions in order to explore and understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens.
5. Service-learning reflection encourages participants to examine a variety of social and civic issues related to their service-learning experience so that participants understand connections to public policy and civic life.

Diversity

Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning helps participants identify and analyze different points of view to gain understanding of multiple perspectives.
2. Service-learning helps participants develop interpersonal skills in conflict resolution and group decision-making.
3. Service-learning helps participants actively seek to understand and value the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of those offering and receiving service.
4. Service-learning encourages participants to recognize and overcome stereotypes.



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K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice

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Youth Voice

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

Indicators:

1. Service-learning engages youth in generating ideas during the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.
2. Service-learning involves youth in the decision-making process throughout the service-learning experiences.
3. Service-learning involves youth and adults in creating an environment that supports trust and open expression of ideas.
4. Service-learning promotes acquisition of knowledge and skills to enhance youth leadership and decision-making.
5. Service-learning involves youth in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the service-learning experience.

Partnerships

Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning involves a variety of partners, including youth, educators, families, community members, community-based organizations, and/or businesses.
2. Service-learning partnerships are characterized by frequent and regular communication to keep all partners well-informed about activities and progress.
3. Service-learning partners collaborate to establish a shared vision and set common goals to address community needs.
4. Service-learning partners collaboratively develop and implement action plans to meet specified goals.
5. Service-learning partners share knowledge and understanding of school and community assets and needs, and view each other as valued resources.



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K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice

Progress Monitoring

Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning participants collect evidence of progress toward meeting specific service goals and learning outcomes from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience.
2. Service-learning participants collect evidence of the quality of service-learning implementation from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience.
3. Service-learning participants use evidence to improve service-learning experiences.
4. Service-learning participants communicate evidence of progress toward goals and outcomes with the broader community, including policy-makers and education leaders, to deepen service-learning understanding and ensure that high quality practices are sustained.

Duration and Intensity

Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning experiences include the processes of investigating community needs, preparing for service, action, reflection, demonstration of learning and impacts, and celebration.
2. Service-learning is conducted during concentrated blocks of time across a period of several weeks or months.
3. Service-learning experiences provide enough time to address identified community needs and achieve learning outcomes.



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Recommended Job Descriptions

The job descriptions below are recommended titles for youth workers. In any summer work experience, it is imperative for young people to develop skills that will be useful in a 21st century workforce (see "Tools for Developing a Quality Experience" section for more information on 21st Century Skills). All jobs should include skills attainment in Professional Development / Work Ethic and Critical Thinking / Problem Solving.

Arts / Humanities (Arts / Entertainment) Assistant:

An arts/humanities assistant will gain hands-on experience with developing a visual, media, audio, or dance project. The assistant will research the historical precedent of the art project for the community in which it is being developed. Organize an event that showcases the final project for the community it impacts. 21st Century Skills attained:

- Arts and Humanities
- Creativity / Innovation
- Oral Communication

Automotive (Transportation Services) Assistant:

An automotive assistant will gain hands on experience in the field of automotive repair, maintenance, and cosmetic upkeep. Under the supervision of a mechanic or other personnel, he/she will learn the latest automotive technology. 21st Century Skills attained:

- Science
- Information Technology
- Lifelong Learning / Self-Direction

Child Care Assistant (Education Services):

A child care assistant will work directly with children, engaging them in reading circles. The assistant will develop and implement an age-appropriate lesson for children (5:1) and engage children in interactive activities that promote health and wellness. 21st Century Skills attained:

- Reading Comprehension
- Creativity / Innovation
- Ethics / Social Responsibility

Classroom Assistant (Education Services):

A classroom assistant will work directly with children, engaging them in reading circles and interactive cooperative work groups. The assistant will develop and implement a minimum of two age-appropriate lessons for children (10:1). He/she will also assist in the development and implementation of interactive extracurricular activities. 21st Century Skills attained:

- Writing in English (grammar, spelling, etc.)
- Leadership
- Written Communication

Recommended Job Descriptions (continued)

Clerical Assistant:

A clerical assistant works to keep the office organized. Duties include filing, database maintenance, and other administrative tasks. The assistant will gain experience in organizational technique and will receive training on all databases he/she will be working with.

21st Century Skills attained:

- Reading Comprehension
- Information Technology Application
- Written Communication

Communications Intern:

A communications intern works on various communications, development, and marketing projects. The intern will gain experience in written communication, including the writing of press releases, grant proposals, web content, and/or marketing materials. The intern will also have the opportunity to explore design software used for various publications within the organization. 21st Century Skills attained:

- Writing in English (grammar, spelling, etc.)
- Written Communication
- Creativity / Innovation

Community Development Assistant (Non-Profit / Social Services):

A community development assistant will engage community members in asset mapping. The assistant will conduct surveys (pre, post, etc.) assessing the opportunities for and threats to the community. He/she will research the historical significance of the community and develop a plan of action for improvement that includes a public presentation. 21st Century Skills attained:

- History / Geography
- Diversity
- Ethics / Social Responsibility

Customer Service Assistant:

A customer service assistant can work in a variety of industry areas with the overall goal of ensuring customer satisfaction. The assistant will answer customer questions and troubleshoot problems before they escalate. The assistant will be assigned a direct supervisor who is available to assist with any difficult situations that may arise. 21st Century Skills attained:

- English Language (spoken)
- Oral Communication
- Diversity

Digital Media Assistant:

A digital media assistant works to provide support for video, graphics, and multimedia projects. The assistant will get hands-on training with computer programs and production equipment and be able to see a project from inception through completion over the course of the internship.

21st Century Skills attained:

- Humanities / Arts
- Creativity / Innovation
- Information Technology Application

Recommended Job Descriptions (continued)

Environmental Assistant:

An environmental assist works for an organization committed to bettering the environment and lessening our carbon footprint. The assistant will learn about the effects our society has the environment and the most effective ways to ensure its stability. 21st Century Skills attained:

- Mathematics & Science
- Ethics / Social Responsibility
- Teamwork / Collaboration

Financial Intern:

A financial intern works within the finance department of an organization or in the banking sector. The intern will gain experience with payroll, accounts payable and receivable, record keeping, and/or cash handling (i.e. bank teller). 21st Century Skills attained:

- Mathematics & Science
- Leadership
- Lifelong Learning / Self-Direction

Food Service Assistant:

A food service assistant works in culinary and food preparation for a restaurant, catering company, hotel, or other food establishment. The assistant will work under the guidance of a kitchen staff member to learn food preparation techniques. 21st Century Skills attained:

- Humanities / Arts
- Leadership
- Teamwork / Collaboration

Health Services Assistant:

A health services assistant works in a medial setting (i.e. hospital, medical office, etc.). The assistant will learn about medical record keeping and will have the opportunity to rotate through various departments to gain exposure to different fields. 21st Century Skills attained:

- Mathematics & Science
- Lifelong Learning / Self-Direction
- Diversity

Information Technology Assistant:

An information technology assistant will work in the IT department. The assistant will gain hands-on experience in technical support, network maintenance, and systems design under the supervision of an IT staff member. 21st Century Skills attained:

- Mathematics & Science
- Information Technology Application
- Creativity / Innovation

Recommended Job Descriptions (continued)

Maintenance Assistant:

A maintenance assistant will work with the maintenance or building operations department. The assistant will be responsible for basic maintenance duties including repairs and general upkeep. 21st Century Skills attained:

- English Language (spoken)
- Leadership
- Teamwork / Collaboration

Recreation Camp Counselor (Non-Profit / Social Services):

A recreation camp counselor will lead children in interactive activities that promote health and wellness. The counselor will develop and implement a minimum of two lessons on interactive activities that promote healthy living. He/she will organize a collaborative activity such as a tournament or contest for children that promote teamwork and positive sportsmanship. 21st Century Skills attained:

- Humanities / Art
- Teamwork / Collaboration
- Oral Communication