Service-Learning in a Nutshell
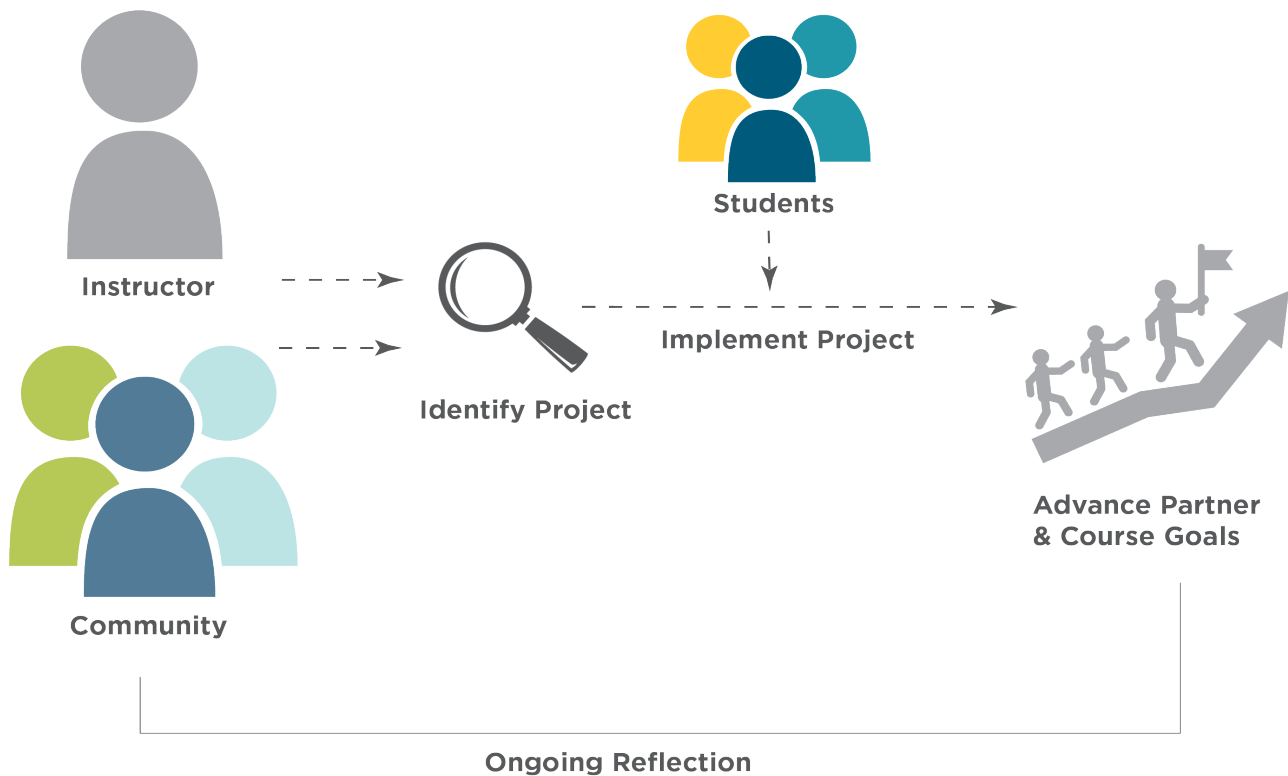
▶ ········· What is Service-Learning?

Service-learning is a **course-based experiential learning strategy** that engages students in meaningful service with a community partner while employing ongoing reflection to connect the service to course content. When implemented according to standards of best practice, service-learning can **enhance students' academic learning, promote civic responsiveness, and strengthen communities.**

▶ ········· How does it work?

Service-learning aims to enhance academic learning by challenging students to apply disciplinary knowledge within the context of real-world situations.

- It involves an **instructor** working collaboratively with a community partner - typically from the nonprofit or public sector - to develop a course-based service project.

- **Students** implement the project in collaboration and regular feedback with the community partner and instructor.

- The **project** advances the goals defined by the partner while deepening students' learning in the course.

Instructor

Students

Community

Identify Project

Implement Project

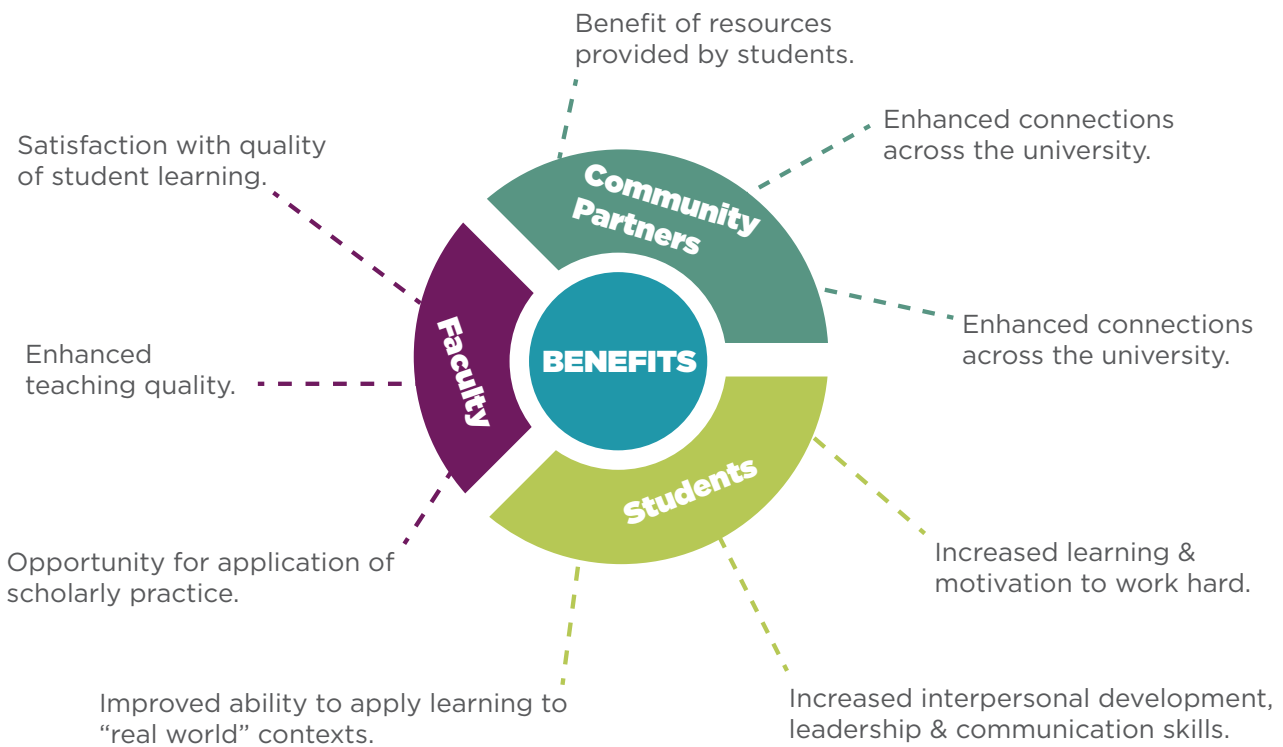Advance Partner & Course Goals

Ongoing Reflection

The instructor regularly asks students to reflect upon their experiences working on the service project, making meaning of these experiences in light of course concepts.

▶ ·········· Why is it so powerful?

Because service-learning addresses actual community needs, it has the potential to engage students' hearts and minds in ways that other teaching methods may not. In short, service-learning at its best can **transform students into life-long learners and change-agents.**

▶ ·········· Evidence of Benefits

A number of researchers (Astin et al., 2000; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Eyler et al., 2001 & 2007; McGoldrick & Ziegert, 2002; Willis, 2002) have documented the benefits of service-learning to students, faculty, academic institutions, and community members. Service-learning can enhance the learning experience and improve student learning outcomes, particularly as they relate to personal and interpersonal development, understanding and application, critical thinking, and citizenship. Faculty who employ service-learning and other engaged practices report enhanced teaching, service, and research opportunities. Community partners can enjoy a number of benefits from well-designed service-learning, including students' application of skills and creation of resources that help them support their organizational missions.

Benefit of resources provided by students.

Enhanced connections across the university.

Satisfaction with quality of student learning.

Community Partners

Enhanced connections across the university.

BENEFITS

Faculty

Enhanced teaching quality.

Students

Increased learning & motivation to work hard.

Opportunity for application of scholarly practice.

Improved ability to apply learning to "real world" contexts.

Increased interpersonal development, leadership & communication skills.

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Interested in Designing a Service-Learning Course?

You can find additional resources on **servicelearning.utk.edu** under the **"Faculty Resources"** tab.