

Service Learning in Nursing Education

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Definition

Service learning is an educational activity involving students, faculty, and community partners to promote high-quality care and provide mutual benefits.

Service learning can be used in nursing education at all levels to promote advocacy, cultural competence, active learning, communication, and civic responsibility to assist students in meeting program outcomes, course outcomes, and competencies.

Background

- **Foundation:** a need for high-quality nursing care, recommendations from nursing and healthcare organizations, and local community needs
- **Settings:** community-based organizations, schools, clinics, public health departments, and additional community areas
- **Activities:** service, health screenings, health promotion, medication administration, creation of teaching materials, and other learning assignments
- **Resources:** Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning; Delve, Mintz, and Stewart's (1990) service learning model; Boyer's (1990) model of scholarship; and Anstee, Harris, Pruitt, and Sugar's (2008) service learning process model



Implementation Process

Developing and implementing a service-learning activity requires careful planning. This process is a guide to help a faculty member plan a service-learning activity from the idea to the evaluation.

1. Start with an idea
 - What population is your passion?
 - What does the community need?
 - What do your need students to learn?
2. Engage the community partner
3. Determine alignment with the mission, vision, and philosophy of nursing program, institution, and community partner
4. Locate placement in the curriculum (outcomes, competencies, content)
5. Offer involvement with peers, administrators, students
6. Consider funding opportunities
7. Design engaging learning activities
8. Create performance evaluation rubrics
9. Facilitate learning (student preparation, engagement, reflection)
10. Evaluate the students and the activity



References

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- Markaki, A., Prajankett, O., Shorten, A., Shirey, M. R., & Harper, D. C. (2021). Academic service-learning nursing partnerships in the Americas: A scoping review. *BMC Nursing*, 20(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-021-00698-w>

Benefits

For the community

- Awareness
- Health
- Value

For students

- Advocacy
- Civic and global responsibility
- Collaborative practice and interprofessional education
- Communication
- Connect theory to practice
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Problem-solving
- Professionalism
- Reciprocal learning
- Self-actualization

For nursing programs

- Achieve program outcomes and competencies
- Engage community partners
- Increase visibility
- Meet community needs
- Promote faculty scholarship
- Provide experiential learning

Challenges

- Cost
- Faculty knowledge and experience gap
- Resistance by faculty and administration
- Time and effort to develop and implement

