

# Service learning in Lutheran schools

## Definitions for service learning

Inquiry, knowing, and learning continually shaped by the question, 'How does this serve the needs of the world?' will be appreciatively different from knowing not accompanied by such a question. [Tom Christenson 2004 p 126 The Gift and Task of Lutheran Higher Education]

'...ensures students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organised service experiences that meet actual community needs and are coordinated in collaboration with the school and the community.'

'...integrates intentionally into students' academic curriculum and provides structured time for a student to think, talk, or write about their participation throughout the service experience.' [Keith Wilson September 2010, NSLA Newsletter October 2010]

Service learning goes beyond service to the community. Students advance their skills and knowledge through this experiential method of teaching. The community becomes a classroom. [Adapted from [www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org)]

### Some clarity...

Community service ... if students clean up a degraded water catchment, they are providing a service to the community as volunteers.

Service learning ... if students clean up degraded water catchment, then analyse what they found, share the results with the community, offer suggestions to reduce waste ... that's service learning

Service learning is not:

- An episodic volunteer program
- An add-on to an existing school or college curriculum
- Logging a set number of community service hours in order to graduate
- Compensatory service assigned as a form of punishment by the courts or by school administrators
- Only for high school or college students
- One-sided: benefiting only students or only the community