

WHAT is the **Community and Service Programme (C and S)** ?

DESCRIPTION

The IB is committed to community and service. Its importance is reflected in the prominent role it has in all of the IB's programmes. Community and service should provide a vehicle for the foundations of a relationship between students and the community that emphasizes mutual benefit, and where the needs of the community are matched with the interests and skills of the students. A good community and service programme provides students with opportunities to use their existing skills and knowledge in real-life situations while helping to develop new skills and knowledge. It is desirable, but not mandatory, for community and service activities to be linked to the student's career/vocational studies.

From the student's perspective, a community and service programme should help develop learning, responsibility, practical skills, social skills and a sense of caring for others.

The concept of community may be viewed from a local or international/global perspective and should emphasize communication and partnership between the student and the community.

The concept of service in the IBCC is based on the principles of **service learning**.

Students must liaise with members of the community and undertake unpaid and voluntary activities that help the community and that have a learning benefit to the student. The rights, dignity and autonomy of all those involved are respected. Concurrency of learning is important in the IBCC. The core activities should continue throughout the programme, however, the reflective project is submitted at the end of the programme.

AIMS

The aims of the community and service strand are to:

- provide a service that meets a community need
- develop working relationships with members of the community
- develop a sense of caring about, and a responsibility for, others
- facilitate active student reflection
- build on existing skills and develop new ones
- enhance the existing school curriculum

HOURLY REQUIREMENT

Approximately 50 hours are required for the community and service programme. It is the quality, rather than the quantity, of the core activities that is important. "Hour counting" is to be discouraged and, consequently, the IB will not mandate a minimum number of hours that each student must devote to the core.

ASSESSMENT

The nature of the assessment in the community and service strand of the IBCC core is to be determined by the school. It is very strongly recommended that some form of reflection, such as a reflective journal, is part of the assessment.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learning outcomes are differentiated from assessment objectives because they are not rated on a scale. Learning outcomes are desirable outcomes that have been achieved, either fully or in part, after experiencing the core activities. School assessment of the core should consider evidence of the following outcomes having been achieved.

- The student has developed a sense of social awareness, community involvement and social action. The student is able to recognize a need in the community and most importantly is prepared to act to make a difference.
- The student has recognized issues of equity, justice and responsibility. It is important that the student is able to look beyond himself or herself and recognize issues of inequity and injustice both locally and internationally.
- The student has increased awareness of his or her own strengths and areas for growth. The student is able to see himself or herself as an individual with various skills and abilities, some more developed than others. The student has grown in self-esteem and confidence and understands that he or she can make choices about how to move forward.
- The student has undertaken new challenges. A new challenge may be an unfamiliar activity, or an extension to an existing one.
- The student has planned and initiated activities. This can be shown in activities that are part of larger projects, for example, service learning activities in the local community, as well as small student-led activities. As well, the student has received feedback and acted upon it.
- The student has worked collaboratively with others. Collaboration can be shown in many different activities, such as working in teams and helping the local community resolve a problem and then thinking about preventing the problem from happening again.
- The student has shown perseverance and commitment. At minimum, this implies attending regularly, completing assigned tasks and accepting a share of the responsibility for dealing with problems that arise.
- The student has engaged with issues of global importance. The student may be involved in international projects but, at minimum, the student has developed a sense of international-mindedness and global citizenship.
- The student has considered the ethical implications of his or her actions. Ethical issues arise throughout the core activities, and the student must show that ethical principles have played a role in decision-making.
- The student has developed new skills. New skills may be shown in activities and tasks the student has not previously undertaken, or in increased expertise in an established area.

Some of these outcomes may be demonstrated many times in a variety of activities, and others occasionally, as long as there is **some** evidence of every outcome.

The focus on learning outcomes emphasizes that it is the quality of the core, and its contribution to the student's development, that is of most importance.

WHAT IS SERVICE LEARNING

Service learning is **not** volunteer work and it is **not** collecting money for charities, although these are considered worthwhile activities. Service learning is authentic service in that it has the potential to transform or redefine a student's behaviour and actions within his or her personal values. It can change the student and the community for the better. A priority of service learning is that it uses community service as a vehicle for new learning that has academic value.

Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse 2007

Service learning aligns service objectives with learning objectives and is accomplished by activities that encourage "self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content" (National Service-Learning Clearinghouse 2007).

Service learning in the IBCC can be represented by the model in figure 2.

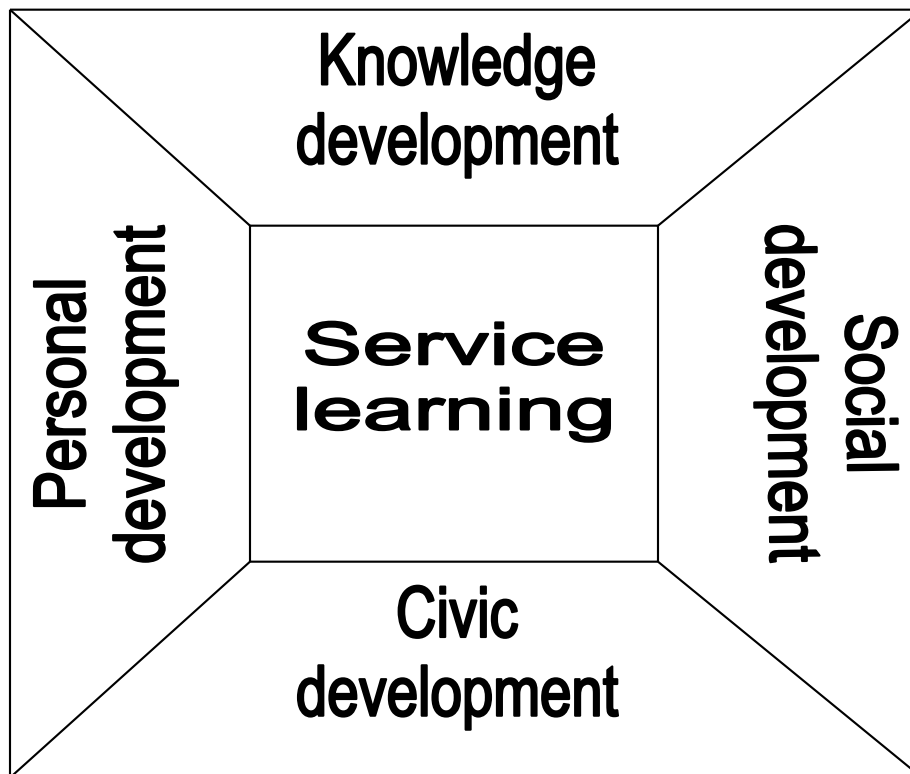


Figure 2

Service learning model

The model suggests that service learning fosters positive outcomes in four key domains: knowledge development, personal development, social development and civic development.

1. Knowledge development refers to a deeper understanding of the nature, purpose and validity of knowledge. It should lead to improved cognitive and intellectual skills, while providing a richer context for student learning. An effective service learning programme will enhance academic engagement and achievement.
2. Personal development refers to the ability to tap into one's abilities and potential. It is likely to bring out an awareness of one's weaknesses, strengths, inner feelings and thoughts. The aim is to make students more self-aware, self-confident, self-directed and resilient.
3. Social development refers to the ability to interact and work with other individuals, and within groups. Issues of responsibility, commitment, independence, diversity of opinion, leadership, managing emotions and interpersonal relationships should be explored.
4. Civic development refers to becoming involved in community issues leading to prosocial behaviours. It should lead to increased awareness of community connections, community problems, citizenship and social responsibility.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The IBCC is grounded in the principle of experiential learning. In very simple terms, experiential learning refers to any kind of learning based on experience. It is the idea that people can learn very effectively through direct, hands-on experiences.

Experiential learning is often represented by an experiential learning cycle that models a structured learning process. The IBCC is represented by a three-stage learning cycle (see Figure 1).

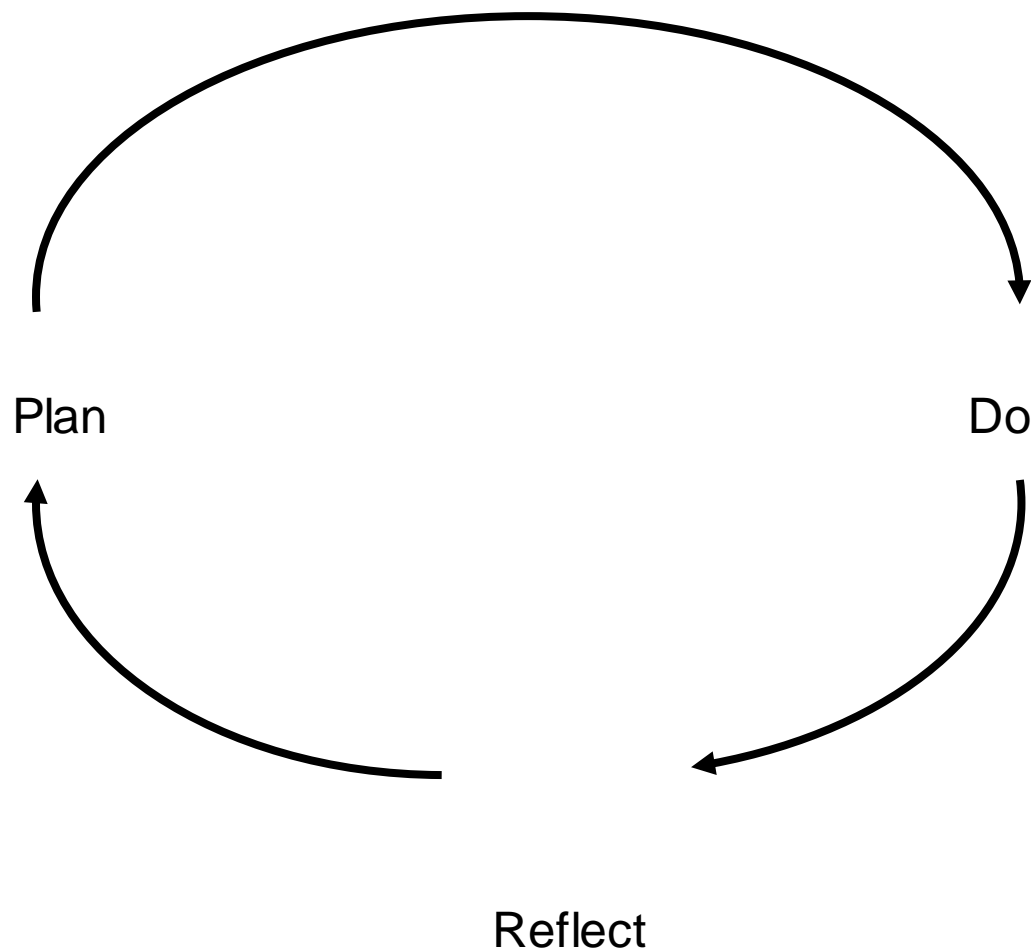


Figure 1 Three-stage learning cycle

The learning cycle suggests that there is more than just the experience involved in experiential learning. The experience is also packaged with facilitated cognitive thinking and the need to adapt or change in light of the experience before acting again.

Plan

The first step of the planning process is to identify a community need appropriate to the service learning programme. Not only must it be something that meets a community need, but it must be something that the student(s) can realistically achieve and it must be something that interests the student(s). The best way to come up with the appropriate activity is for the supervisor and the student(s) to brainstorm ideas. Consider a variety of activities. It might be worthwhile to think about the causes behind each need. Students must also be made to think carefully about the academic learning that is to take place.

Once an activity has been confirmed, the next step in the planning process is to find a community partner. Students should be encouraged to draw on the knowledge of teachers, parents and peers. Students should meet with the partner and then work together to formulate a workable plan.

The final step in the planning process is to draw up a detailed plan. Students should be encouraged to adopt a project management approach to the activity. There are specific software packages that could be used for this purpose or students could design their own plan using a spreadsheet or even by word processing.

Do

This stage of the experiential learning cycle, as it applies to service learning, involves collaboration, giving and receiving feedback, action, flexibility, managing and leading the project, taking responsibility and problem solving. The supervisor should always be on hand to support the student(s) through this stage of the process.

Reflect

For true learning to take place, some form of reflection must take place. Students need to think about the experience and produce something that expresses the experience. Students should be encouraged to undertake cognitive reflection, affective reflection and process reflection (The Strawberry Point School, 2007). Cognitive reflection asks the students to think about what they have learned in terms of new knowledge and skills. Affective reflection asks students to think about how the experience has affected them personally and how it may have affected others. Process reflection asks students to consider what they have learned from the process itself, including leading and managing a project, working with others and helping the community.

Appropriate reflection activities could include making a video, painting a mural, writing and performing a short play, writing a personal journal or writing a news article for the local newspaper or school newsletter.

COMMUNITY and SERVICE and the IBCC

It is crucial that the community and service activities for each student are negotiated between the student and the designated community and service supervisor appointed by the school. The supervisor should act as a mentor advising and helping the student.

The key participants in any service learning activity are the students, the school-appointed supervisor and an individual or agency for the community, for example, a local government department, the local chamber of commerce or a service organization such as the Lions Club.

Community and service should be an ongoing experience and is expected to occur regularly throughout the length of the student's studies.

There are two aspects to the community and service strand of the IBCC core.

1. Community involvement directly related to the reflective project.
2. Service learning directly related to the needs of the community—students could undertake the service cooperatively or individually.

The reflective project requires students to identify an ethical issue that arises from their career-related studies. The issue should have community implications. Once the issue has been determined, students need to assign some of their time devoted to community and service to exploring the impact of the issue on the community.

In addition to the community involvement associated with the reflective project, students are expected to undertake service learning projects that satisfy community needs. It is most important, however, that student needs are considered as well. A good service project matches the needs of the community with the interests and skills of the students. It is a reciprocal relationship.

EXAMPLES of COMMUNITY AND SERVICE

A group of students in collaboration with the local community produces a mural in a public place. The mural itself reflects and celebrates the community, possibly in terms of its cultural heritage, its achievements or its future. Students would need to explore other examples of murals that have been produced to enhance the community and to discourage graffiti. They would also have to research the role of public art and the relationship between neighbourhood culture and art.

A student could go to a local water source, for example, a lake or river and clean up a particular section. Samples of water in the affected area could be taken. The student could then learn about the various tests and examples of water pollution. The student could also examine the local history of waterways. The water could be tested and the findings communicated to the local council or sent to a local newspaper.

A group of students, with community assistance, could design and create an eco-friendly garden. As part of the activity, students would learn about ecosystems.

Students may find, in consultation with the local health authorities, that there is a need to raise awareness among members of the community around important health issues. The students could then study the background to specific health problems, for example, diabetes types 1 and 2, and then a public awareness campaign could be devised around different sectors of the community.

Students become aware of a sharp fall in the numbers of “endangered species” in their local area. Students develop valuable research skills while learning about the biological and physiological make-up of different species. The students then develop a plan to provide a suitable habitat and enhance population growth. A plan is then devised to communicate the project to the local community.

After discussions with local community representatives, the need to develop a website to increase awareness of the local museum is identified. This website might include the museum’s logo, general information, a map, photos, a newsletter, gift shop information and a virtual tour of the museum. Students would develop the site, and in so doing would improve their web design skills.

A community-funded youth development programme requires an activities leader to help design and implement a new programme that engages and empowers adolescents in the local area. The student who chose to take on this role would learn about adolescent behavioural problems while developing a variety of skills in areas such as conflict resolution, leadership and team building.

Students may wish to add an international dimension to their community and service experience. A number of international organizations (for example, Amnesty International and relevant branches of the United Nations), non-governmental organizations (for example, Médecins Sans Frontières and World Vision) and registered charities (for example, Book Aid International, Theatre versus Oppression and The Memory Project) are available to assist.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the school are:

- to liaise with the community to develop a network of service learning contacts and partnerships
- to establish a core group of service learning teacher-mentors
- to make presentations and provide information to students about service learning
- to monitor the progress of students
- to provide feedback to students
- to help the students achieve their desired goals.

The responsibilities of the student are:

- to determine the nature of their own service learning activities
- to set up initial meeting with community contacts, after initial consultation with the school's service learning teacher-mentor
- to plan and manage their own service learning programme
- to work with the community to achieve predetermined goals
- to reflect on the experience.