

Pedagogical Practice: Service Learning

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Hundreds of University of Detroit Mercy students pursue [service learning](#) opportunities as the means to fulfill an academic requirement each year. What they may not know is that embarking on such an experience can also lead them to be inspired and fulfilled, both civically and personally. Our founders understood the transformational power of service to those in need and this fundamental belief is a huge part of Detroit Mercy practice today.

Service Learning should not be confused with community service as learning is not necessarily a predetermined outcome of community service. As such, academic service learning should not be classified as community service. Service learning, is a style of experiential learning and a pedagogical approach that uses direct service in leading students to accomplishing course objectives. According to *The Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, the presence of three specific criteria meets the qualification for academic service learning.



Photo by RODNAE Productions:



<https://www.pexels.com/photo/man-assisting-person-with-walker-6647037/>

Service Learning Criteria:

Provides learners with service opportunity that is relevant and meaningful to the community.

Opportunities align with and further academic objectives.

The experience intentionally prepares learners for active civic participation.

Benefits of Service Learning:

Promotes academic goals/objectives

Leads to personal and interpersonal development

Develops a sense of responsibility and citizenship for students

Applies relevant, meaningful real-world experience

Promotes strong leadership and communication skills

Reduces stereotypes and facilitates cultural/racial sensitivity

Instills a commitment to serve

Below, you will find a number of helpful resources to steer coursework toward a service learning trajectory.

Service Learning Resources:

[The Institute for Leadership and Service](#)

[Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning](#)

[Intro to Service-Learning for faculty and students](#)

[Detroit Mercy Service Learning Resource](#)