



University of Wisconsin - Extension

IDEA SHEET

## THE SERVICE MATRIX

by

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**ABSTRACT**

Service Learning is becoming more and more popular with educational institutions as a way of engaging young people in active learning. Furthermore, this active learning is designed to benefit the community by meeting a defined need or issue. The Service Matrix was originally developed to explain in a clear and concise manner, the similarities and differences between volunteerism, community service, community based learning and service learning. As The Service Matrix has evolved, this instrument has been used as both a teaching tool and a reflection tool. This paper describes the Service Matrix and gives examples of how it has been used.

## THE SERVICE MATRIX

### Situation

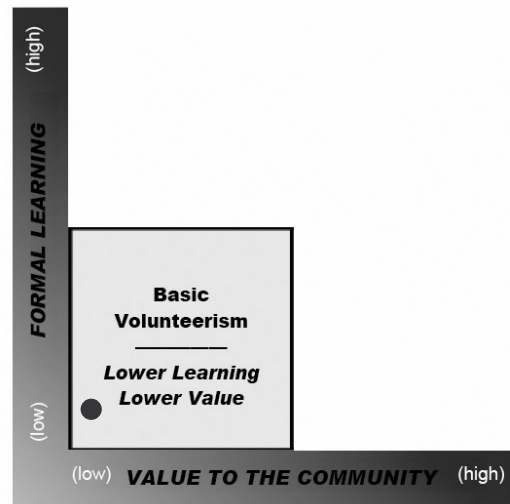
As the popularity of Service Learning grows, the need to have a common language for discussion is critical. Currently there are a tremendous amount of resources on Service Learning, but often these resources are complex and abstract, leading to difficulties in describing and defining quality service learning experiences. In order to address this problem, The Service Matrix was created (see appendices A).

The Service Matrix was designed to plot individual contributions to a particular service effort but is not intended to plot an entire service effort. With these parameters in mind, the X axis measures the value of a service effort to the community, while the Y axis measures the formal learning that occurred during the service effort. These axes intersect and provide the framework for the four quadrants of The Service Matrix. The following examples best describes these four quadrants of The Service Matrix.

### *Quadrant One: Basic Volunteerism*

**(Lower Formal Learning, Lower Value to the Community)** Anthony attends a blood drive and gives a pint of blood. This example is considered basic volunteerism because Anthony learned very little (lower formal learning) and the individual pint of blood is small when compared to the overall need for blood in the community (lower value).

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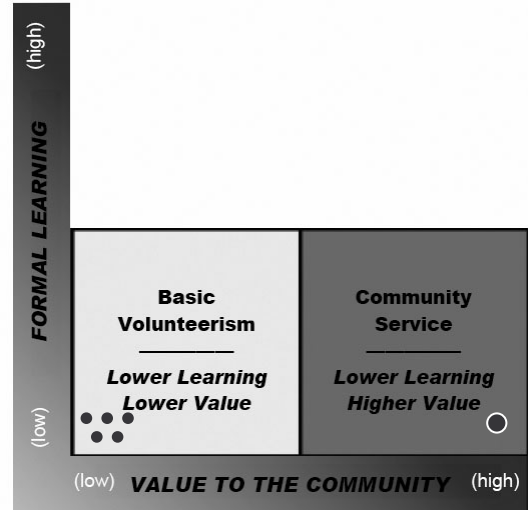


### ***Quadrant Two: Community Service***

#### **(Lower Formal Learning, Higher Value to the Community)**

In this example, Chloe brings 10 of her friends to the blood drive. Although, Chloe's formal learning has not increased (Lower Formal Learning) with this example, due to her efforts she has now increased her value to the community (Higher Value to the Community) by meeting the need with greater impact. Chloe's contribution is considered community service; however, her friends remain in the basic volunteerism quadrant.

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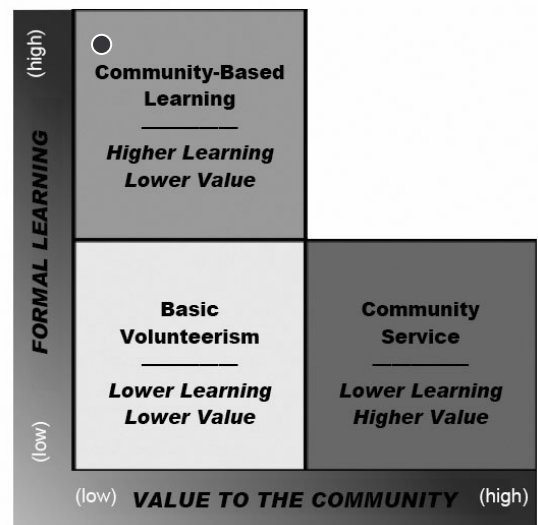


### ***Quadrant Three: Community-Based Learning***

#### **(Higher Formal Learning, Lower Value to the Community)**

Carlos is a high school senior enrolled in a Certified Nursing Assistance (CNA) class. As part of his coursework, he is assigned to attend a blood drive and observe nurses drawing blood. As a result, Carlos saw first hand how his coursework applied to real life situations (Higher Formal Learning), although his individual contribution to the community was insignificant (Lower Value to the Community) because there was no service

### **THE SERVICE MATRIX©**



performed on his behalf.

### ***Quadrant Four: Service Learning***

#### **(Higher Formal Learning, Higher Value to the Community)**

Pauline is in a marketing class at her high school.

After learning basic marketing principles, her assignment is to apply her knowledge in a way that would benefit the community. Pauline reads in the local paper that there is a need for blood in the local blood banks and hospitals. Responding to this need and using her marketing knowledge, Pauline organizes a blood drive at her high school.

Putting theories into practice, Pauline was able to internalize and reinforce her marketing knowledge (Higher Formal Learning). At the same time, because of Pauline's efforts, 100 pints of blood were collected. (Higher Value to the Community)

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<b>FORMAL LEARNING</b>	(high)	<b>Community-Based Learning</b> <hr/> <i>Higher Learning Lower Value</i>	<b>Service Learning</b> <hr/> <i>Higher Learning Higher Value</i>	
	(low)	<b>Basic Volunteerism</b> <hr/> <i>Lower Learning Lower Value</i>	<b>Community Service</b> <hr/> <i>Lower Learning Higher Value</i>	
		(low)	<b>VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY</b>	(high)

### **Objectives**

1. By using The Service Matrix, individuals will gain a clear framework for understanding the different levels of service, including service learning.
2. Individuals using The Service Matrix as a reflection tool will be able to evaluate the quality and impact of their individual contribution(s) to a particular service effort.

**Methods**

As a teaching tool, The Service Matrix was used by Kenosha Unified School District (KUSD) school administrators to educate local school board members on the levels of service and the need for a more organized and intentional approach to service learning.

As a reflection tool, Kenosha County Youth As Resources (YAR) board members used The Service Matrix to evaluate the quality and impact of their individual contributions to their wheelchair-accessible garden project.

**Results/Evidence**

Using The Service Matrix as a teaching tool, Kenosha Unified School District school administrators were able to clarify the levels of service and their impact on education. Through this process, the Kenosha Unified School District board approved including Service Learning in Kenosha Unified School District's strategic plan.

Kenosha County Youth As Resources board members voted to use The Service Matrix as the primary evaluation tool in all their future service efforts.

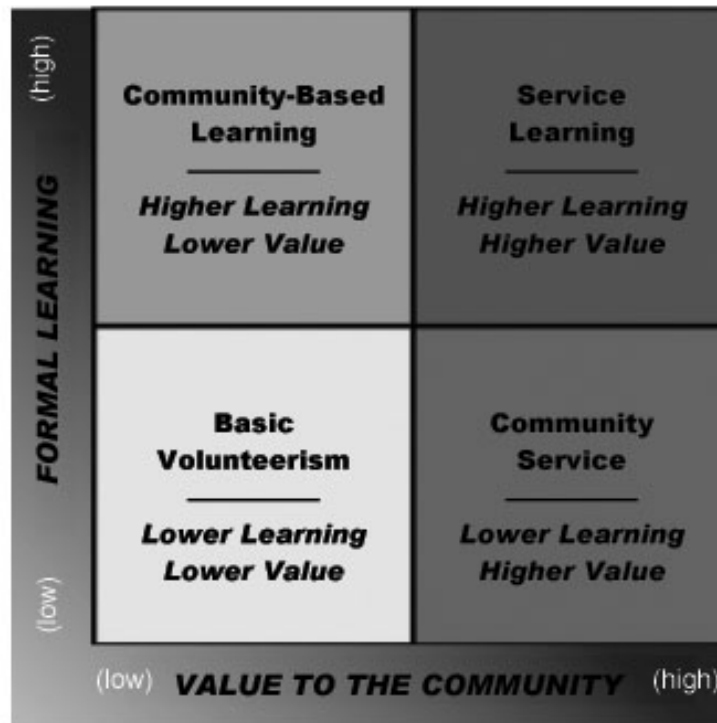
**Implications**

As service learning gains further recognition as a valuable teaching method, there is a tremendous need for a common language when discussing its impacts.

Both as a teaching and reflection tool The Service Matrix provides a clear, concise model for discussing types of service. Furthermore, the model can be used with youth, adults, educators, and administrators in both school and non-school settings.

## Appendix A

## THE SERVICE MATRIX<sup>®</sup>



THE SERVICE MATRIX<sup>®</sup> was created to plot individual contributions to a particular service effort.  
 THE SERVICE MATRIX<sup>®</sup> is not intended to plot the entire service effort.

Developed by de Montmollin, J., Hendrick, M., Jones, A.



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