

## TEACHER'S CORNER – SEPTEMBER 2018

### SERVICE LEARNING IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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What comes to mind when you hear the term *service learning*? Perhaps you think of taking your students to a location outside of your classroom and completing a hands-on project. Maybe you think of having your students volunteer with a local organization. You likely think about how the work that your students do will serve the community. Undoubtedly, you also think about the impact the time spent serving will have on your students.

In his article "[Using Service-Learning as Part of an ESL Program](#)," James Minor describes service learning as "a union of community service and formal learning." This description notes that service learning has two main components: some type of community service and related classroom instruction. Though service learning can take many different shapes, these two components are essential to a true service-learning experience.

Service learning is an excellent way to engage students who are studying English because it provides a meaningful context for language practice. Students have an opportunity to use English to read and speak about topics, to write reflections, and to participate in discussions about relevant issues in their own communities. Service learning also gives students hands-on experience and a chance to address issues or needs that are important to them. In doing this type of work, students reflect on their values and develop new perspectives. Students can then use English to communicate their ideas, thoughts, and feelings about the experience and what it means to them.

This month's Teacher's Corner will present a four-step process for implementing service learning with students who are studying English. The first week will address how to choose a community issue or need as a class. Subsequent weeks will explain how to design classroom instruction, implement the service component, reflect on the experience, and share what was learned with others.