

## **Extract from Service-Learning in the Disciplines: Lessons from the Field**

This publication contains the stories of 14 of these service-learning modules representing 13 disciplines at five universities.

Service-learning joins two complex concepts: community action – the ‘service’ – and efforts to learn from that action and connect what is learnt to existing knowledge – the ‘learning’.

It offered to educators means for connecting universities and communities with development needs, for engaging academic staff and students in addressing these needs through academic contexts, and for building democratic commitments and competences in all concerned.

The service-learning definition cited most often in South Africa as describing what educators aspire to is:

...a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995: 112)

Successful, sustained service-learning requires strong pedagogy and partnerships, as well as institutional support.