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Service Learning: Its Opportunity and Promise

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Guest Editor's Introduction

Julia R. Miller

Introduction

Service learning is not new in higher education, but over the past twenty five years there has been a shift from service learning as an outcome of undergraduate education to the integration of service experiences throughout the learning-teaching process. More recently, Ernest Boyer and other educators have challenged higher education to reconsider its mission as it relates to education for life and citizenship (Bingle and Hatcher, 1996; and Wutzdorff and Giles, 1977). Today, proponents of service learning advocate identification of intentional skills and collaborative, action-oriented endeavors within the context of communities.

According to Bingle and Hatcher (1996), this transformation in undergraduate education, focusing on the inclusion of service learning as an accepted and valued component of academia, enriches all learning and renews communities, while bringing “new dignity” to the scholarship of service. Further, it is their perspectives that service learning should be credit-bearing, organized experiential learning that fulfills community needs, provides opportunities for greater understanding of and appreciation for course content and the discipline, and promotes civic responsibility.

Research provides evidence that service learning is valuable to higher education. Results of research reveal that student ratings of service learning courses, as well as students' personal, attitudinal, moral, social, and cognitive outcomes, also have been positive. Clearly, this form of experiential learning builds partnerships or bridges with communities that mutually reinforce institutional commitments to integrating practice and theory (Hirsch and Lynton, 1995). Further support of this conclusion is provided by Stanton, Giles, and Cruz (2000). They state:

The best learning is that which involves persons doing mutual exploration, learning together, rather than the “banking” type of learning which Freire describes as giving something to somebody else.

As an approach to expend pedagogical resources beyond traditional active-learning strategies that are “classroom bound,” service learning moves students beyond the limits of the acquisition of knowledge for self-interest and private good to that

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of civic responsibility. In addition, it provides opportunities for students to engage in problem-based and collaborative learning, undergraduate research, critical thinking, multiculturalism and diversity, leadership development, and reflection (Eyler and Giles, 1999; and Zlotkowski, 1998).

This special issue of Kappa Omicron Nu *FORUM* is dedicated to disseminating theory and models of service learning among family and consumer sciences/human sciences professionals. Because the profession has historically been vested in an ecological perspective that is systemic and interactive, service learning is a “natural fit” for our programs in higher education. Further, a basic assumption of this perspective is the imperative, the need, the responsibility to address issues pertaining to the positive relationship of individuals and families within the context of their communities.

Contributors to this special issue provide a broad spectrum of approaches to learning and teaching which includes universally accepted ideologies, specific models that have been implemented, and suggested methods of outcomes assessment. In essence, as one author advocates, service learning must be a pedagogical approach which involves both the goals and reality of practice. Similarly, there is attention given to the dynamic and ongoing feedback and reflections that are vital characteristics of this experiential learning-teaching process.

This issue of Kappa Omicron Nu *FORUM* provides exemplars of the successful transformation and integration of action-oriented strategies into actual curriculum subject matter. Also important to the service learning educative process is student feedback. Authors provide evidence of student perceptions related to the value of service learning experiences and the synergy of fulfilling community and curriculum needs, engaging in reflective learning, and building responsible citizenship. This perspective provides a holistic view of the educative process that engages students in both theoretical and action-oriented problem solving and decision making necessary for guaranteeing the vitality of learning.

We hope that the ideas and practices presented in this issue will serve as exemplars, models, and catalysts for our readers to expand and redirect service-learning programs—building dynamic university-community partnerships that lead us closer to achieving Boyer’s ideal for the scholarship of teaching, research, and service. In this way, family and consumer sciences/human sciences professionals will continue to promote scholarship across the mission of our universities and to provide

leadership in the acquisition, application, and dissemination of academic knowledge that is the unique contribution of our ecological perspective.

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State of the Society Message

Janis B. Van Buren

Chair, Kappa Omicron Nu Board of Directors
Chair, Department of Human Sciences, Texas A & M University-
Kingsville

December 31, 2001

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Kappa Omicron Nu, it is my pleasure to report on the health and well-being of our honor Society. This message highlights the dynamic and exciting actions Kappa Omicron Nu is pursuing to address our mission, **empowered leaders in Family and Consumer Sciences.**

Throughout the 2000-2001 biennium, the Board of Directors, various committees, numerous volunteers, and capable headquarters staff have engaged in strategic thinking and mission-driven programming to guide decision making for Kappa Omicron Nu. The Board, including our Executive Director, makes decisions on the several ends policies. These policies are designed to put the entire Society, including collegiate and alumni chapters, in the best possible position to prepare scholars and researchers as leaders for this century.

The ends policies are

- Scholarship Research *and* Leadership: *through* Skills that enable members to provide direction to the profession and empower others to meet their full potential.
- Organization *to provide*: An organizational and management driven environment that supports mission-driven programming.
- Member Development *to provide*: Strong affiliation networks that develop empowered leaders.

Among the strategies to achieve these ends are the recognition and awards programs that promote scholarship, encourage intellectual development, promote research, foster the spirit of inquiry, confer distinction for high achievements, and promote leadership development. For the fiscal year 1999-2000, fellowship and grant awards totaled \$58,000. For the fiscal year 2000-2001, fellowship and grant awards totaled \$34,000. Forty-six grants were awarded to chapter scholars. Eight Conclave Scholarships were provided for Chapter Advisors along with 12 Undergraduate Student Paper Awards.

The Board continues to use Policy Governance,[®] the Carver Model, as a strategy to create an organizational and management

environment that supports our mission-driven programming. At the January 2000 Board meeting, Sue Stratton of Leading Edge Mentoring, assisted the Board in review of our policies for compliance with the Policy Governance model.

Society publications continue to include the Dialogue and the Forum, which has included themes such as “Legacies”, “Leadership: Up Close and Personal,” and “Diverse Families.” The KON Web Site has been enhanced. It offers six classifications of information: Membership, Leadership, Conclave, Publications, News & Events, and URC. There are two online courses, Reflective Human Action and Self-Managed Mentoring. There is also an undergraduate Research Newsletter that you can access through the Web site.

Collaborative initiatives continue to help us build strong affiliation networks. The development of an **Undergraduate Research Community for the Human Sciences** has been an initiative sponsored by the Kappa Omicron Nu Leadership Academy this past year in partnership with several other entities. Collaborating universities include Michigan State, Kansas State, and the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore. Other entities included in the partnership are the Board on Human Sciences, the Council of Administrators of Family and Consumer Sciences, the Higher Education Unit of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, and the 1890 Council of Administrators. Twenty-two institutions of higher education have joined as participating members many of which have students participating in undergraduate research.

As a member of the Coordinating Council of Honor Societies, we have continued our 21-year history of collaborating with Phi Upsilon Omicron. We continue to co-sponsor the luncheon of the Coordinating Council at the annual AAFCS national meetings. The Council also sponsors the Graduate Showcase and the Undergraduate Research Paper and Poster Presentations.

Kappa Omicron Nu contracted to supply support services for the Family and Consumer Sciences Administrative Leadership Council. This collaboration was undertaken because the groups share objectives. As a result of this cooperative effort, “Leading by Design: Family and Sciences Emerging Administrators Workshop,” was just held in Athens, Georgia from July 22-27, 2001.

Financially speaking, our commitment to our members and the unique opportunities to support our profession have been overriding factors in the Board decisions this biennium. This has



been to the detriment of the commitment to aggressively build the general fund reserve. We continue to have our endowed funds and designated funds in a mix of equity and income investments.

Liabilities and Fund Balances

<i>Year End</i>	<i>General Fund</i>	<i>Designated Funds</i>	<i>Net Assets</i>
6/30/01	\$42,288	\$301,782	\$344,070

Our organization is enriched by the expertise of a large number of members who volunteer or who are elected to a variety of positions. On behalf of the Board of Directors I wish to thank each of you who has volunteered to help Kappa Omicron Nu to continue to strengthen its mission. Board members whose terms expired in 2000: **Karla Hughes**, Vice Chair/Program, and **Barbara McFall**, Secretary; in 2001: **Jan Van Buren**, Chair, **Sarah Shoffner**, Vice Chair/Finance, and **Gail McNinch**, **Wanda Rummage**, and **Amy Stoll**, Student Board Members.

In conclusion, I am pleased to indicate that Kappa Omicron Nu is healthy and continues to focus on its mission: **empowered leaders in Family and Consumer Sciences!**

Building a Service Learning Program: A View From Inside

Mary E. Henry, Kenneth Brook, Freyda Lazarus

Abstract

An increasing number of colleges and universities are committing institutional resources to expand community assets through service learning partnerships. Developing a service learning program requires strong leadership, institutional support, committed community partners, and the active involvement of faculty, staff, and students. This article describes Montclair State University's experience in getting started, building the program, involving the faculty, creating long-term partnerships with community organizations, and developing recognition and reward structures for all participants.

Introduction

Over the last decade, service learning has been integrated into the curriculum as an instructional strategy and philosophy at an increasing number of universities and colleges across the nation. As an instructional strategy, service learning has promoted a shift away from the transmission of knowledge by faculty to students to a learning model that focuses on the joint discovery and construction of knowledge (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Service learning courses, based on campus-community collaborations, provide environments in which students can learn and apply disciplinary knowledge and develop the reflective practices required for socially responsible citizenship. Service learning courses enable a university to foster student learning, civic responsibility, faculty engagement, and scholarship. This article describes how a service learning program was created and implemented at Montclair State University (Montclair) in Upper Montclair, New Jersey. A full understanding of the process requires an analysis of the mission of the university, a description of the activities of key faculty members willing to alter their teaching styles and research agendas, an assessment of the institutional support capacities, and a realistic appraisal of community organizations to be partners in service learning. We present this review of the Montclair experience in the hope that it will be of assistance to others pursuing similar initiatives.

Getting Started

Between 1994 and 1996, the inception period for Montclair State University's Service Learning Program, a number of

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actions were undertaken to examine campus culture, gain institutional support, identify key stakeholders, and locate potential community partners. The following list describes our accomplishments in the initial building stage:

- Obtained the support of top-level university administrators, including the President, Provost, vice-presidents, and deans;
- Identified faculty members, department chairpersons, and administrators willing to serve in leadership roles;
- Assessed the contextual factors (i.e., university mission statement, faculty roles, student interest) at the University that might be conducive to the integration of service learning into the curriculum;
- Created a climate supportive of faculty efforts to build sustained relationships with community partners;
- Studied how other universities institutionalized service learning;
- Promoted a change in university culture in which faculty and staff who work in service learning would be recognized and rewarded for such work through retention, promotion, tenure, and multi-year contracts;
- Built relationships with community partners who indicated an interest in the program;
- Obtained funding; and
- Created a permanent structure to facilitate faculty-staff-community collaborations.

Institutional Support and Program Leadership

In the early 1990s, several faculty members and administrators at Montclair noticed the emergence of service learning programs and a shifting national climate that urged universities to become good citizens by participating more actively in community life. Fueled by Montclair's commitment to explore new educational programs that promoted academic rigor, student development, institutional advancement, and community engagement, a group of faculty and staff came together. With the endorsement of the President, the Provost, the Vice-President for Student Development and Campus Life, and the Vice-President for Institutional Advancement, the group formed an ad hoc Service Learning Implementation Team (Team). Each member of this four-person team brought different skills and knowledge to the table. Their collective experience enabled them to envision program development from varied disciplinary perspectives. The Chairperson of the Department of Anthropology had been the major architect of the Five-Year BA-MA Program in Practical Anthropology, an academic program that involved the application of social science theory to the resolution of community problems. As the union negotiator for faculty, librarians, and professional staff, he had extensive knowledge of the procedures for the evaluation of

faculty for reappointment, tenure, and promotion. The Director of Cooperative Education had extensive experience in program design and administration, in-depth knowledge of active learning strategies, and broad experience in writing grants. The faculty member in the Department of Human Ecology had managed programs for older adults, had extensive experience in curriculum development, and had served on several organizational and community advisory boards. The Assistant Director of Cooperative Education had a background both in university shared governance and in building community partnerships.

University Mission, Vision, and Service Learning

Academic programs and initiatives must be consistent with a university's mission statement. Holland (1999) argued that a well-conceived mission statement sets the tone for curriculum development, student learning experiences, faculty roles and development, community engagement, and research agendas. A service learning program must address each of these concerns. It provides students with opportunities to apply their classroom acquired knowledge to their service activities and to hone skills that are required for academic, personal, civic, and career goals. It provides faculty an opportunity to master innovative learning and teaching strategies as well as to engage in community-based research in collaboration with community partners.

At the time the Service Learning Implementation Team began exploring the relationship between the philosophy and pedagogy associated with service learning and the mission and goals of Montclair, the University published a planning report, which was approved by the University Senate. Entitled, *Reflections on the University Mission and Goals*, the report stipulated that the educational goals of the University should be based on the following principles:

Our students must become skilled at critical thinking, defined as the ability to make effective, responsible judgments that are caring, informed, self-correcting, and self-reflective and based on clearly understood, examined, and explicit criteria and values. Second, they must become critically and actively involved in the process of their own education. . . . These two principles inform our belief that our purpose is not simply to convey information but to create for our students environments and experiences, both in and out of the classroom, in which and from which they can discover and construct knowledge themselves. (Montclair State University, Planning Committee, 1996, p. 2)

The vision statement issued by the Board of Trustees was also consistent with service learning. This statement indicated that Montclair's undergraduate program should be:



. . . a rigorous and comprehensive program of general education required of all students which includes not only advanced learning skills and preparation for effective citizenship, but which also fosters an appreciation of a shared human heritage leading to the enhancement of the quality of both personal and community life. (Montclair State University Undergraduate Catalog 1994-1996, p. 3)

Since faculty development is also an important aspect of a service learning program, it is important to note that Montclair's Board of Trustees stated that the University should offer: "programs which strengthen the efforts of an able and dedicated faculty and which support the scholar's continuing need for intellectual and personal renewal" (Montclair State Undergraduate Catalog 1994-1996, p. 3). The Service Learning Program permitted the faculty to experiment with multidimensional pedagogies that enhanced knowledge gained through active participation in the community.

The Team believed that Montclair's Service Learning Program should support sustained university-community partnerships that engaged the campus in experiential learning and applied research. The program would be one vehicle for institutionalizing the scholarship of engagement as described in Boyer's (1996) vision of the New American University. He stated that our

. . . universities and colleges remain . . . one of our greatest hopes for intellectual and civic progress in this country. . . . The academy must become a vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems, and must affirm its historic commitment to . . . the scholarship of engagement. (p. 11)

Support for public institutions of higher education is under intense scrutiny. For example, Rice (1996) argued that "Higher education is regarded by all too many as a private benefit, not a public good. Viewed in that light, the kinds of solid financial support higher education has enjoyed over the past half century . . . the prestige of the professoriate . . . academic freedom, and especially tenure make less and less sense to the general public" (p.4). Walshok (1999) indicated that "colleges and universities can neither be an 'ivory tower' set apart from the community nor a 'contractor' whose work exclusively is dictated by community needs. Colleges and universities need to be true participants" (p.82).

The Team wanted to enable faculty and community partners to apply their knowledge, resources, and research skills to the public good. Faculty would introduce academically rigorous service activities into their courses and use their disciplinary knowledge to help students learn from the community. Students would be equipped with habits of learning and an ability to

reflect on concerns of the community in ways that would prepare them to understand and analyze the cultural and social issues of the times. For students to learn these skills, behaviors, and knowledge, they needed to be involved as active participants in local problem solving. The Team believed that a service learning program would promote cultural pluralism and democratic participation among students and also strengthen the community's commitment to the University through collaborative efforts to promote the common good.

Faculty Roles and Rewards and Service learning

To create an engaged university, Boyer (1990) urged the academy to reconsider and expand its definition of scholarship beyond the traditional areas of discovery, of the integration and communication of knowledge, to include the application of knowledge through service devoted to addressing real life problems. Consistent with Montclair's mission statement and the prevailing demands for more direct involvement of universities in the community, the Union and Montclair's administration reached an agreement on a new process and criteria for the reappointment, tenure, and promotion of faculty members. Based on Boyer's (1990) book, *Scholarship Reconsidered*, Montclair State University developed the Faculty Scholarship Incentive Program (FSIP). This program extended to faculty members the opportunity to reduce their annual teaching load by one fourth to work on scholarly projects of their own creation. Participants in the FSIP are required to prepare a proposal describing a two-year project that will generate scholarly products to be disseminated in appropriate disciplinary venues. The projects need to fall within one of the following scholarship categories used for personnel evaluation: the scholarship of pedagogy; the scholarship of discovery, integration, and aesthetic creation; or the scholarship of application. Although each faculty member is expected to produce work in each of these areas of scholarship as well as in teaching, their self-selected FSIP category is assigned the most weight. For example, if a faculty member selected the scholarship of application as the FSIP category, the weights assigned to each of the four evaluation criteria would be: 40% for the scholarship of application, 30% for teaching, 20% for the scholarship of pedagogy, and 10% for the scholarship of discovery, integration, and aesthetic creation. See Table 1 for additional information on FSIP categories and evaluation distributions.

The FSIP provides an opportunity for faculty members to more directly relate their participation in the Service Learning



Table 1: Faculty Scholarship Incentive Program Categories and Weights for Personnel Actions

Criteria	FSIP Category	Weight for Personnel Actions
	Scholarship of Pedagogy	
Teaching		30%
Pedagogy		40%
Discovery, Integration, or Aesthetic Creation		10%
Application		20%
	Scholarship of Discovery, Integration or Aesthetic Creation	
Teaching		30%
Pedagogy		10%
Discovery, Integration, or Aesthetic Creation		40%
Application		20%
	Scholarship of Application	
Teaching		30%
Pedagogy		20%
Discovery, Integration, or Aesthetic Creation		10%
Application		40%
	Teaching	
Teaching		40%
Pedagogy		20%
Discovery, Integration, or Aesthetic Creation		20%
Application		20%

Program to the categories of personnel evaluation. For example, each faculty member in the Service Learning Program is expected to create and teach a service learning course, to learn the pedagogy and practices of service learning, to disseminate scholarly products related to their work and research in service learning, and to share their professional expertise with community partners. Such participation allows faculty members to organize their workload in a fashion that is “more complete and connected. Complete refers to the integration of teaching, research, and service, and connected refers to these activities being linked to the community” (Bringle, Games, Foos, Osgood, & Osborne, 2000, p. 883). Because service learning is consistent with each of Montclair’s personnel evaluation categories, the Team encouraged faculty members to use the FSIP to create service learning courses, to conduct applied research, to prepare scholarly products, and/or to create educational materials for use by faculty, students, and community partners.

Building the Program

The Team made great efforts to build the infrastructure to support the program. Over the first six years (1996-2002), our major accomplishments included:

- Receiving a three year, annually renewable Learn and Serve America Higher Education grant (1997-2000) from the Corporation for National Service to create an infrastructure to support a university-wide Service Learning Program;
- Adopting a definition of service learning based on Bringle and Hatcher's (1995) work and developing criteria for a service learning course. In the Spring of 1998, the definition and criteria for a service learning course were approved by Montclair's Committee on Experiential Education and the University Senate (See Tables 2 and 3);

Table 2: Definition of a Service Learning Course

A service learning course is a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized community service activity that is integrated into the content of the course. The service activity meets identified community needs and provides sufficient time for reflection in such a way that students gain a greater understanding of the course content and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

Note. In developing Montclair's definition of service learning, the Team was strongly influenced by the work of Bringle, R. G. & Hatcher, J. A. (1995). A service learning curriculum for faculty. Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 2, 112.

Table 3: Criteria for a Service Learning Course at Montclair State University

A service learning course must be formally recognized by the University and adhere to the following criteria:

1. Establishment of a community-based partnership to address an identified community need. This partnership is between the faculty member, enrolled students, a grassroots organization/community agency, and service recipients.
2. Active methods of teaching are used to facilitate critical reflection on the service experience throughout the semester.
3. Student learning outcomes are clear, explicit, and structured to maximize the achievement of course objectives.
4. The course employs the integration of theory and practice to facilitate student learning in such a way as to gain a greater understanding of course content and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.
5. Students, faculty, site supervisors, and community partners each understand their responsibility to each other.
6. Orientation, training, supervisor support, recognition, and evaluation are included in the structure of the experience.
7. Mechanisms for participants to provide feedback on the service learning experience are utilized.
8. Evaluation procedures are used to assess the impact of the experience on the students, community partners, and the service recipients.



- Codifying the mission and goals of Montclair’s Service Learning Program (See Table 4);

Table 4: Montclair State University’s Service Learning Program Mission and Goals

Mission

As a Program of the Center for Community-Based Learning, Service Learning seeks to foster the development of informed and involved citizens through the integration of service to the community with academic course work.

Goals

- Provide support systems for faculty to create and offer academic courses that foster student learning through direct experience and reflection on issues of public concern.
- Establish and sustain community partnerships that are based on reciprocity and rely on long-term commitments between the University and the community.
- Encourage the use of course appropriate reflection strategies that stimulate new insights and a greater awareness of issues of social concern.
- Maintain a Service Learning Scholars Program to insure that there is a cadre of scholars who have mastered the pedagogy and practices of service learning.
- Offer training and development activities to meet the needs of students, faculty, and community partners.
- Build an institutional infrastructure that supports faculty, community partners, and students.
- Maintain an efficient system of Program administration and risk management.
- Encourage the recognition of student contributions to the community.

- Organizing cross-disciplinary task forces around community issues and needs;
- Creating and implementing procedures for monitoring and evaluating the Service Learning Program;
- Institutionalizing a faculty development program focused on the pedagogy and practices of service learning;
- Developing a risk management policy and providing liability insurance coverage for students enrolled in service learning courses;
- Holding annual conferences at Montclair on service learning for faculty, staff, students, administrators, and community partners;
- Developing programs to reward faculty, administrators, staff members, students, and community partners for significant contributions to the advancement of service learning; and
- Offering 124 sections of service learning courses.

The cross-disciplinary teams mentioned above partnered with community organizations around six different issue areas: literacy for youth, aging, substance abuse prevention, conflict resolution and peer mediation, the digital divide, and at-risk youth. The adoption of this issue-oriented approach to service learning

enabled Montclair to provide continuous support for community organizations from one semester to another. The partnerships facilitated the mobilization and coordination of university resources around community needs. For example, faculty and students from the Department of Human Ecology's Family and Child Studies Program along with faculty and students from the Departments of Anthropology and English, partnered with the Montclair Board of Education to provide after school tutoring at approximately 11 community sites each semester. Faculty and students from Anthropology, Human Ecology-Family and Child Studies, Health Professions, Psychology, and Sociology partnered with a wide range of organizations (e.g., the Montclair Chapter of the American Red Cross, Van Dyk Manor, Montclair Inn, Montclair YWCA, Montclair YMCA) to address the needs of older adults.

Faculty and students transformed their teaching and learning through community-based experiences. An analysis (Lucas, 2000) of the perceptions of Montclair faculty about the benefits of student participation in service learning indicated that the "S-L [service learning] experience helped students see the connection between what they were learning in the course and everyday life, gave students experience with people different from themselves, and helped students become more aware of the needs of their communities" (p. 29). Data from the 2001-2002 student assessments revealed that

The program continues to provide students with valuable experiences that enhance their academic learning, increase their understanding of social issues, and strengthen their personal commitment to actively work to solve community problems. It also gives many students the opportunities they do not otherwise have to interact in meaningful ways with people who are different from them in a number of critical ways—especially in terms of race, ethnicity, degree of affluence, and age. (Lucas, 2002, p. 16)

As Boyer (1994) suggested, a university could take "special pride in its capacity to connect thought to action, theory to practice. The New American College would organize cross-disciplinary institutes around pressing social issues" (p. A48). With this focus on solving problems and building community assets, students could apply and test their learning beyond the classroom and explore answers to the classic questions, "Knowledge for what?" and "Knowledge from what?"

Faculty Development

Educating and updating the faculty about the latest developments in the pedagogy and practices of service learning is crucial to the



success of the program. Initially, the Team hosted several brown bag lunches for faculty who wanted to learn more about service learning. Faculty members who expressed an interest in an issue area or in teaching a service learning course met with the Service Learning Coordinator to explore ways they could connect with community partners. In a few instances, new issue areas were identified and new community partnerships were developed. Two faculty members, designated as Service Learning Scholars for their scholarship activities and extraordinary contributions to Montclair's Service Learning Program, provided leadership for Montclair's various faculty development initiatives.

Since 1997, the Provost has provided the Team with the support to sponsor an annual conference for the campus community. Prominent national figures (e.g., Keith Morton, Edward Zlotkowski, John Saltmarsh, David Cox, and Michelle Dunlap) were brought to campus to address selected topics in service learning. Since Spring 2000, the Provost has funded a year-long faculty fellows program for full-time, tenure track faculty who want to learn about service learning and teach a service learning course. Participants received a stipend and money for travel to a service learning conference of their choice. By the end of the second year of this program, ten faculty members had received the designation of Service Learning Faculty Fellow.

University-Community Partnerships

The key element of service learning is building partnerships between the university and the community. Such partnerships should be based on needs identified by the community. The Team established partnerships with community agencies based on Mattessich and Monsey's (1992) definition of collaboration:

. . . a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to: a definition of mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards. (p. 7)

In a publication by Campus Compact, the national coalition of college and university presidents committed to civic purposes of higher education, entitled *Benchmarks for Campus/Community Partnerships*, Torres (2000) defines community as "the immediate neighbors of the college or university" (p. 3). Since the Team believed that a Service Learning Program should work with the community in which a university is located, it decided to establish relationships with organizations in the Township of Montclair rather than disparate agencies dispersed throughout the State of New

Jersey. Service Learning Program staff, university administrators, and faculty could more easily manage work with service learning partners when travel time was minimal. It was also easier to assign students to sites, make site visits, and add new sites. Proximity enabled faculty and community partners to collaborate and accomplish together what they could not do alone. Fortunately, The United Way of North Essex, NJ conducted a needs assessment at the time the Team was beginning its work. Some of the community needs and issues determined to be of greatest concern were substance abuse prevention, meeting the needs of vulnerable older adults, and providing services for youth. The report stated,

The results of this study represent the opinion and conclusions of hundreds of human service professionals, community leaders, and representatives from agencies that serve the ten-town North Essex area [which includes the Township of Montclair]. While this report identifies the most urgent needs and problems of our communities, we must recognize that this is only the first step. (Ullmann & Fisch, 1997, p. 5)

From 1995 to 1998, the Team worked with local organizations in the Township of Montclair to form partnerships based on the *issue areas* of literacy for youth, substance abuse prevention, and aging. In 1996, the University established its first official partnership with the Montclair Board of Education to reduce the academic achievement gap found between white and minority elementary school age children in the Montclair Public Schools. In this initial partnership, 2 Montclair faculty and 27 students worked in the School/Community Tutorial Program to improve language arts and math skills at 11 different community sites. The following year, the University partnered with a number of agencies in the Township of Montclair to support substance abuse prevention programs. By Spring 1998, the University had also entered into partnerships with a number of community-based organizations in the Township of Montclair to enhance services for the well, frail, and institutionalized elderly. Montclair State University students assisted in providing meals for the homebound, enhancing recreation and social activities for the well and institutionalized elderly, and locating isolated older adults in need of information and referral services.

In 1998, the Team adapted Bringle and Hatcher's (1996) Comprehensive Action Plan for Service Learning (CAPSL) to plan and assess service learning tasks and activities. The Team identified the major stakeholders (i.e., faculty, administrators, students, community partners) and assessed the tasks that each needed to perform related to: planning, building program awareness, developing prototypes, identifying resources, expanding the program, recognizing program participants,



monitoring programmatic outcomes, collecting data, evaluating the program, conducting research, and institutionalizing the program. For an example of the application of Bringle and Hatcher's (1996) CAPSL model, see Table 5, which reviews the community engagement activities planned for AY 1998-1999.

By 2002, the Service Learning Program supported partnerships in six *issue areas*: literacy for youth, aging, substance abuse prevention, conflict resolution and peer mediation, the digital divide, and at-risk youth. The Program had a full-time service learning coordinator, a full-time program assistant, a graduate assistant, and two service learning faculty scholars. Between Spring 1996 and Spring 2002, 2019 students had enrolled in 124 sections of service learning courses taught by 30 faculty members. They collaborated with 26 community partners to provide service at 53 different community sites.

Summary and Conclusions

The Team's experience suggests that building a comprehensive and coherent Service Learning Program is a complicated process that requires institutional commitment, faculty and staff involvement, sustainable community partnerships, and an eager and caring cadre of concerned students. The mission and goals of the university must be consistent with the philosophical underpinnings of service learning. Collaborative relationships between the university and community partners built upon earned respect, trust, and shared resources need to be fostered. The university must support the formation of an infrastructure for the development, maintenance, and evaluation of the program as well as a formal process for recognizing and rewarding the accomplishments of faculty, staff, administrators, students, and community partners.

To date, Montclair State University's Service Learning Implementation Team has received strong support from the University, the faculty, and community partners. The Team has benefited from the work of national organizations and national leaders who have promoted excellence in service learning and experiential education. Service learning has been integrated into the academic curriculum, and Montclair continues to expand its capacity to work with community partners to address important social issues of immediate concern in the local community.

Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify community decision makers • Identify community needs and interests
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct site visits at potential partner organizations • Educate staff at partner organizations about service learning • Publicize campus-community partnerships in local and campus newspapers • Facilitate meetings between faculty and community leaders
Prototype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Campus Compact literature for models of excellence • Discuss partnership model with national leaders/consultants
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community needs assessment prepared by United Way • Serve on the Tutorial Steering Committee and the Technology, Education, Access, Mentoring Committee in the Township of Montclair • Create inventory of existing and potential service learning sites and update descriptions of service opportunities • Collaborate with literacy partner to increase involvement of the public school teachers in the orientation, training, and supervision of Montclair's service learning students • Expand relationships between faculty, staff, and community partners
Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a campus-community task force around the issues of aging • Explore new partnerships • Recruit more faculty to teach service learning courses • Review potential grant opportunities • Increase community partner involvement in structuring and evaluating the service experience • Recruit more faculty for the Issues of Aging Task Force
Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish articles about service learning in local and campus newspapers • Sponsor recognition events for community partners • Recognize faculty who make significant contributions to advance community partnerships • Collaborate with community partners to formally recognize Montclair students who provide service in partner organizations
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor training and supervision of students at partner organizations • Maintain records of student, faculty, and partner involvement in service learning
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess service experiences through focus groups with students and interviews with community partners • Assess impact of campus-community collaboration on selected faculty and community partners
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate on the design of research instruments • Identify needs of community partners
Institutionalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training to agency personnel seeking to affiliate with Montclair's Service Learning Program • Formalize the Issues of Aging Task Force
<p>Source: From "Implementing Service Learning in Higher Education" by R.G. Bringle and J. A. Hatcher, 1996, <i>The Journal of Higher Education</i>, 67(2), 224. Table adapted with permission from <i>The Journal of Higher Education</i>, Vol. 67, No. 2 (March/April 1996). Copyright ©1996 by The Ohio State University Press. All rights reserved.</p>	



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Service Learning: Making Meaning from the Messes

Lynnette F. Brouwer
J. Quincy Chapman

Abstract

*This paper situates the development and implementation of service learning projects in an adaptation of the Wells and Knepfelkamp (1984) model of Practice-to-Theory-to-Practice. The authors concur with the notion underlying this model, that “theory is developed out of hands-on experiences, and in the process of evaluation and assessment, practice-based theory is translated into better, more appropriate practice” (Jacoby, 1996, p. 28). However, through their own practice in the area of service learning, they have also come to think in terms of two aspects of their practice— **practice goal**, that is, their intention for the projects, and **practice reality**, or the on-the-ground compromises that inevitably constitute the final project. They further integrate their model incorporating practice goals and practice reality with perspectives of Palmer (1983, 1998), Boyer (1990), and chaos theory or self-organizing systems, as discussed by Wheatley (1994), Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996), and Mitstifer (1998).*

Introduction

This paper situates the development and implementation of service learning projects in an adaptation of the Wells and Knepfelkamp (1984) model of Practice-to-Theory-to-Practice. This discussion is anchored in the literature and grounded in the authors’ focused reflections. Therefore, the reader will encounter a first-person voice in this work.

The authors concur with the notion underlying the Wells and Knepfelkamp (1984) model, that “theory is developed out of hands-on experiences, and in the process of evaluation and assessment, practice-based theory is translated into better, more appropriate practice” (Jacoby, 1996, p. 28). However, through our own practice in the area of service learning, we have also come to think in terms of not just one, but two, aspects of our practice—the *practice goal*, that is, our intention for the projects derived directly from our theory, and the *practice reality*, or the on-the-ground compromises that inevitably constitute a final service learning project.

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Although we would aim, for instance, for the reciprocity in learning advocated by Kendall (1990) in which all parties “are learners and help determine what is to be learned” (p. 22), we have certainly had situations where the service recipient did not actively participate in determining what was to be learned. Similarly, although Sigmon’s (1979) principle that “those being served control the service(s) provided” (p. 10) informs our practice goal, curriculum and various practical issues also influence the service provided. Then there are times when a project feels out of control. In addition, this practice goal is often also in direct conflict with encouraging student ownership and control. “We completely lost our enthusiasm when our original idea got shot down,” reflected a member of one team. As in Marullo’s (1999) review of *service learning* (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999), we too find that “when it comes to practical program decisions, there are frequent trade-offs and compromises to be made in order to accommodate resource limitations and incompatible demands” (p. 135). Yet there is learning in this as well; in the words of a student: “You can’t always do things your way in service. You must first start by knowing your customers and what they want . . . I think our group learned to be very flexible with others’ needs and desires because our original plan got completely changed.”

Service learning is defined by Jacoby (1996) as “education that is grounded in experience as a basis for learning and on the centrality and intentionality of reflection designed to enable learning to occur” (p. 9). Although the authors serve as facilitators for students’ service learning projects, we are also by definition engaged in our own service learning—both by virtue of working with the students on their projects and because we have made a practice of intentionally reflecting on our own learning regarding how best to develop and facilitate these projects and the associated student learning. This article is, in fact, both process and product of our service learning—a contribution to, and result of, our reflection on our service learning facilitation experience.

As we consider our own reflection, and that of our students, we are guided by Schon’s (1983) discussion of the reflective practitioner. He suggests that “the possible objects of . . . reflection are as varied as the kinds of phenomena [presented] and the systems of knowing-in-practice which [the practitioner] brings to them” (p. 62). Such objects of reflection, he says, might include the actor’s norms, strategies, theories, feelings, roles, and problem-solving frameworks. We concur with his observations regarding the array of aspects inviting reflection.

We further believe that such reflection is a scholarly exercise inseparable from good teaching. Palmer (1998) suggests that “teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one’s inwardness, for better or worse . . . Good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (pp. 2, 10). We have come to believe that our own teaching—both in formal courses and informal student activities—must be continually assessed by us, measured against the standard of our own identity and integrity, our principles, our intentions, and the wholeness that “emerges from [our] inwardness” (Palmer, 1998, p. 2).

Service learning Projects—Toward an Integrated Model

As a result of this reflection on our own practice as service learners—reflection on our norms, strategies, theories, feelings, roles, and problem-solving frameworks—we find we must acknowledge that our students’ service learning projects don’t always measure up to what we believe is the standard of our own “identity and integrity.” From this observation we have arrived at our framework of practice goals and practice realities. We simply cannot deny that periodically the actual projects we facilitate fall short of our intentions. In the organizational literature we are reminded of the distinction between one’s *espoused* theory of action and one’s *theory-in-use*, terms coined by Chris Argyris (1991). “Ask people . . . to articulate the rules they use to govern their actions,” he says, “and they will give you . . . their ‘espoused’ theory of action. But observe these same people’s behavior, and you will quickly see that this espoused theory has very little to do with how they actually behave, . . . the individual’s ‘theory-in-use’” (p. 103).

Working Within the Tension Between Practice Goals and Practice Reality

But this discrepancy need not be cause only for disappointment and frustration. Rather it is a source of learning in true service learning form. Dewey (1916/1944) notes that “mere activity does not constitute experience When the change made by action is reflected back into a change made in us . . . we learn something” (p. 139). And so it is by thinking in terms of a continuous feedback spiral (see Figure 1) from theory to practice goals to practice reality, on through reconsideration of our theory and forward again to the practice goals for our next projects, that we hope to continue to move our practice reality closer to our practice goals, our theory-in-use closer to our espoused theory of action.



Figure 1: Continuous feedback spiral
Theory, Practice Goals, and Practice Reality.



We do not believe we are unusual in the conflicts we experience between our practice goals and our practice realities. Yet we prefer to think of this conflict, and our acknowledgement of it, as potentially contributing to our growth as teachers rather than diminishing our efforts. Palmer (1983) acknowledges that “seldom do we live up to the truth we are given, but that does not mean we must cease speaking the truth. Instead, we must be obedient to the whole of our truth—including our frequent failure to live it out. If we can do that, with ourselves and with each other, the words of truth will continue to be given, and we will be given the power to live them more fully” (p. 45). Boyer (1990) notes, “we need scholars who not only skillfully explore the frontiers of knowledge, but also integrate ideas, connect thought to action, and inspire students” (p. 77). Palmer (1998) says this connection is often absent, indicating “the world of education as we know it is filled with broken paradoxes . . . [one of which is that] we separate theory from practice. Result: theories that have little to do with life and practice that is uninformed by understanding” (p. 66). The intentional reflection of service learning works to counter this broken paradox. Our feedback spiral incorporates observations of both Palmer and

Boyer, identifying theory as most parallel to thought, practice goals as most parallel to the intersection of thought and action, and practice reality as the action (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Continuous feedback spiral
Incorporating the connection of thought to action.



Service learning As a Complex and Dynamic Process

Our reflection has further led us to consider the relationship between the process of facilitating service learning projects and chaos theory, or self-organizing systems (e.g., Wheatley, 1994). Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996b) conclude that the three conditions necessary for effectiveness in complex and dynamic processes, that is, self-organizing systems, of which service learning is certainly one, are: (a) identity or self-knowledge, (b) free-flowing and abundant information, and (c) healthy on-going relationships. All of these conditions are key to each phase of the project—theory, project goals, and project reality (see Figure 3). Self-knowledge aligns with awareness of the theories, which inform practice, as well as the authors' acknowledgement of the frequent conflict between practice goals and practice reality. Palmer (1998) also ties identity to integrity: "Identity lies in the intersection of the diverse forces



that make up my life, and integrity lies in relating to those forces in ways that bring me wholeness and life rather than fragmentation and death” (p. 13). Abundant and free-flowing information is necessary to respond to the shifts and modifications that often occur during a project and to evaluate and reflect on projects so as to bring the learning forward in the lives of all participants and to future service learning projects. “A successful service learning experience is one that involves clear communication from all partners,” note Vernon and Ward (1999, p. 36). Healthy relationships between and among students, University faculty and staff, agency staff, and the client population are critical for the flexibility and understanding necessary when projects must be revised or simply go awry.

And go awry they can. This student candidly captured the near-disaster of his team’s project: “My service learning group had initially failed at each . . . principle of great service: reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. We failed to be reliable in numerous ways; we had never arranged financing to purchase the tangibles; we had obviously not been responsive to our client’s need to have the project on a specific day, certainly did not convey a feeling of assurance to our client due to our poor communication; and we showed a low amount of empathy by not calling our client promptly to give individualized attention when the date changed.” Yet in evaluating a team that demonstrated similar errors, but then worked hard to repair the relationship, a client noted, “Even with all the frustrations due to my not knowing what was going on, I’d work with this group again because they were delightful to work with.”

Mitstifer (1998) and McCollum (1995) further explore chaos theory in relation to values-based leadership and servant leadership, respectively. Their discussions relate to one another, and apply to the connection between chaos theory and service learning. Mitstifer’s discussion of the conceptual framework of *Reflective Human Action* incorporates the Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996b) organizational conditions of *sharing information* and *developing relationships* as two of its four core principles, the other two being *accepting chaos* and *embracing vision*. McCollum discusses the servant leader’s desire “to serve, to serve first” (p. 247) as creating a “field—a force of unseen connections that influences [people’s] behavior . . . [and results in] waves of energy, spreading out in regions of the organization, growing in potential” (Wheatley, 1994, pp. 13, 52). We suggest here a relationship between:

- the theory that guides our service learning practice and the field we create,

- our practice goals and the vision emanating from this theory or field, and
- our practice reality and the need to accept chaos, to recognize that “there are no permanently right answers, [that] the capacity to keep changing, to find what works now, is what keeps any organism [any service learning project] alive” (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996a, p. 13) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Continuous feedback loop
Incorporating chaos perspective.



Theory and Practice: Applying the Integrated Continuous Feedback Loop Model

As we reflected on our own practice goals and practice realities, and considered observations made in the literature, we realized two key questions kept surfacing for us. These concern:

- 1) Project Control. Who controls the service learning project? and
- 2) Project Purpose. What is the intended purpose of our projects?

The merit of these questions is supported by the Wingspread Principals (Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning, 1989), which speak to project control in stating that an effective service learning program “allows for those with needs to define those needs” (p. 2), and to purpose in noting that an effective service learning program “engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good” (p. 2).



Bringing these questions about control and purpose into our model, we then ask:

- What is the theory that guides our decisions and choices regarding project control and purpose? or What is the field we are creating that we wish to create?
- What are the practice goals regarding roles and purpose that which arise from this theory? or What is the vision emanating from the field?
- What are the practice realities in which we find ourselves, and how did we get there? Or What right answer will emerge from this particular bit of chaos, or self-organizing system, and how do we stay alert to it so we can capitalize on its emergence, use it as learning rather than view it as error? and
- How can we use this experience to inform our future choices of guiding theory, to shape the field we want to create for our next round of projects?

We find our key theoretical foundations are shaped both by material in the service learning literature—Barber (1992), Bullard & Maloney (1997), Kahne & Westheimer (1996), Kendall (1990), Korfmacher (1999), Morton (1995), Sigmon (1979), and by leadership and organizational perspectives—Greenleaf (1970/1991), Lewin (Weisbord, 1987), and Weisbord (1987). Theory, practice goals, and practice realities related to our two key questions are discussed in the following sections.

Who Controls the Project?

Central to both the design and implementation of service learning projects, and guiding the evaluation process, is this matter of who controls the service learning project. Sigmon (1979) emphasizes the role of those being served as well as the service-providers, who are likely to be the students. The principles of service learning as put forward by Sigmon (1979) are that:

- Those being served control the service(s) provided.
- Those being served become better able to serve and be served by their own actions; and
- Those who serve also are learners and have significant control over what is expected to be learned (p. 10).

Greenleaf (1970/1991) also takes the case of those served. The guiding question in his servant leadership model is “Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” (p. 7). Do we respect those served, and are we the kind of role models that they might follow in order to also provide respectful service to others?

Bullard & Maloney (1997) further address the students’ role in their discussion of constructivist learning theory, which says in part that knowledge is more effective when:

- Curriculum is organized, at least in part, around student-selected projects rather than subjects, and
- Students are actively involved in planning their learning, diagnosing their needs, and assessing their progress (Bullard & Maloney, 1997, p. 117).

Lewin (Weisbord, 1987) emphasizes the importance of gatekeepers—those directly involved in the situation and its implementation. His Gatekeeper Theory indicates we are likely to carry out decisions we have helped to make. This would most likely mean direct student involvement, but might also pertain to University faculty/staff in a facilitation role, agency staff in a liaison role, and the client population as well.

The role of the instructor. If you have sensed some potential contradiction in all of this, or at the very least an extremely delicate balancing act, then you have arrived at the same conclusion we have. To regain our footing, we return to Greenleaf for guidance regarding the field we hope to create for our service learning projects—a field in which those served grow and develop. We would define *those served* broadly to include not only the client population, but also the agency contact, our students, and even ourselves—anyone who would receive some benefit in the form of learning or service. As Kendall (1990) advises, “All parties in service learning are learners” (p. 22).

Korfmacher (1999) provides the next key link for us, connecting thought to action, verbalizing a vision, taking us toward our practice goals regarding how to enact a field that facilitates growth and development of all involved. She surfaces four main themes from student comments about the appropriate University faculty/staff role in service learning: “selecting and structuring the project, facilitating the students’ work as a group, negotiating contacts with the community, and serving as a resource to students” (p. 43).

Regarding the first theme, Korfmacher says “the instructor must negotiate the line between providing enough flexibility to the students to give them a sense of ownership of the project and providing enough structure to make the project feasible in one semester” or the allotted time period (pp. 43-44). To facilitate their work on the service learning project, the second theme, students suggested University faculty/staff take on the role of “coach, mentor, cheerleader, sounding board, reflector, debriefer, troubleshooter, and, most commonly, facilitator” (p. 44). Students said the instructor should take responsibility for initiating contacts with community members. Finally, to serve as a resource, the University faculty/staff could generally provide “quality control” on student projects, while “providing/supporting techni-



cal tools, advising the applied research process or work plan, [and] serving as a critical reader” (p. 44).

Although Korfmacher (1999) notes that “these expectations are probably impossible to achieve in all cases . . . they give insight into the extensive demands of” University faculty/staff when working with service learning projects. Yet such extensive demands are not contrary to another aspect of the field we want to create, that “we must ourselves [as University faculty/staff] be willing to take risks, to stretch and learn from experience” (Zlotkowski, 1995, p. 126). Korfmacher further acknowledges, “an appropriate [University faculty/staff] role may well vary depending on the topic or particular group of students” (p. 43). We are reminded of Waldrup’s guidance as noted in McCollum (1995): “Observe. Observe. Observe. Where you can make a move, you make a move” (p. 256). Operating effectively in the chaos of service learning project realities means staying alert to possibilities and problems and acting as appropriate in that particular situation.

How do we translate Korfmacher’s and Waldrup’s guidance into our own practice goals? In order to observe, observe, observe, we know we must stay personally in touch with each project and be more involved than we would probably like to be, and more involved than time often allows. Although one of Korfmacher’s students said, “The instructor should be a ‘facilitator of discussions only when needed,’” the University faculty/staff must be intimately involved with a project in order to make that determination. The only way we know whether to stay out of it, or get into it, is to be there—to be present, to be in a position to observe. Although we advise students to let us know about problems that might develop, the fact is that they often don’t. Whether from embarrassment, a sense of responsibility, lack of commitment, or some other reason, we have learned that they often don’t come to us. We may, in fact, not even hear of a problem until it has come to the attention of agency staff or the client population. Again we need to observe and act appropriately, facilitate learning from the service failure, and be open with students about our own learning: that is, reflecting with them on how we as faculty or staff might reshape the project in the future.

We also know that we must be conscious of the shifting and reshaping of projects, and sensitive to students’ reaction to this shifting, especially when it negatively impacts their sense of ownership in the project. Through sharing information, continuing to build relationships, and staying in touch with our own integrity and identity, we need to find ways to reincorporate their voice,

their goals—to make sure that the project continues to respond to students’ learning needs. And, yes, we spend a great deal of time initiating contacts with community members, maintaining these relationships, and initiating contacts again when our liaisons take jobs elsewhere. We find that serving as a resource varies from facilitating group development in service learning teams to reminding students to attend to a myriad of project details.

A dynamic reality. And what is our practice reality? We have watched students lose ownership in, and therefore commitment to, their project while feeling at loss to do much about it because we are also trying to respond to shifting client population needs. We have let quality control slip through our fingers, as in being unaware that when changing its service delivery date, a team failed to notify the agency contact of the change. And no matter how varied and far-reaching our community contacts, we always know that there are other projects out there—and perhaps projects, which would permit greater impact in both service and learning than the projects we have selected. We may choose an agency contact not so much for the project offered, but because the contact wants to work with us and is willing to take the risk of letting student teams tackle a project. Student work schedules, academic calendars, individual personalities, and even the weather may impact project choice as much as our ability to network with key community contacts. “Life uses messes to get to well-ordered solutions,” suggest Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996a, p. 13).

For us, the well-ordered solution that might emerge from any mess is learning. Even if a team fails to deliver on the project, this does not minimize the learning opportunity—it just changes it. This becomes food for student reflection, for our own reflection, and for the reflection of our agency contact as well. We both recall surprised students commenting on our ability to pull learning from a project that has not turned out like we or the students intended.

Recently a student in one of our classes noted in her final service learning reflection essay, “Something that I would do differently next time is for everyone in the group to meet with the client [population] at the beginning of the planning and then again closer to the actual day.” The team of which this student was a member did finally successfully implement their project, but only after two near-disasters. Although the authors had independently come to the same conclusion the student did, what’s important is that the student arrived at this conclusion independently. Even though the agency contact did come to the classroom to discuss the project, through the events of this



particular project the student realized that's not enough. And since the course was Introduction to Global Service Management, realizing the need to be close to the end-customer was a key learning, indeed.

What is a Project's Purpose?

The basic theoretical framework regarding purpose is summarized by Kahne and Westheimer (1996) as charity and change. That is, students might work within the system to help people less fortunate or lucky than themselves, or they might work to change the system and the conditions that got those people into the situation in the first place. The latter might also be characterized as activism. This perspective can be tracked to Barber (1992) who presents service learning as a means to prepare students for responsible citizenship, and Morton's (1995) discussion of three paradigms of service: charity, project and social change. We shall return to Morton later.

After introducing this simple framework—charity or change—Kahne and Westheimer (1996) go on to acknowledge that significant moral, political, and intellectual (or learning) goals may be achieved by pursuing either track. The model becomes more complex when they suggest that a service learning activity might encompass commitments to both change and charity, that “the same activities may be experienced quite differently by different students” (p. 595), and that an individual might experience the moral, political, or intellectual development more common to a change purpose, even while engaged in a charity-focused project. “There are numerous ways in which a curriculum focused on giving provides opportunities for students to develop caring relationships” (p. 596). This might occur, for example, by encouraging students to interact one-on-one with those served and by posing focused reflective questions to students during and at the conclusion of the project. One can also imagine that while engaged in a charity-focused project, a student may become newly conscious of certain system aspects, begin to question or critically examine that system, and emerge from the experience having had what Kahne and Westheimer refer to as a “transformative experience.” Such an outcome is contrary to the Kahne and Westheimer model, which suggests that the transformative experience would, in fact, be a result of a change-focused project. We have leapt from simple to complex, linear to convoluted.

We return now to Morton (1995) who takes us on a similar path. He begins with a depiction of a service learning continuum from charity to project to social change, indicating ever-increasing investment in relationships and concern with root causes along

the continuum. He goes on, however, to challenge the continuum framework and suggest instead a “series of related but distinct community service paradigms that [he] refers to as charity, project, and transformation. Each paradigm,” Morton continues, “contains a world view, a problem statement, and an agenda for change. Each paradigm has ‘thin’ versions that are disempowering and hollow, and ‘thick’ versions that are sustaining and potentially revolutionary” (p. 24).

Because it is Morton (1995) who we find most directly influences the field we hope to create, we briefly describe each of his three paradigms.

- Charity. This approach “begins with an individual grounded in community; . . . is spiritually based service . . . that bears witness to the worth of other persons; may be an act of faith or . . . an ideal way of being in the world” (p. 26).
- Project. “The logic of [this] approach assumes that no solutions are ultimate, and that thoughtful, reasoned approaches leading to measurable action—doing something—is the appropriate response to community needs . . . Ethical leadership, surviving over time, and listening to and encouraging the participation of those served, are as important . . . as setting and meeting objectives, competing for resources and ‘building the organization’” (p. 27).
- Social Change or Transformation. “Personal integrity . . . is . . . an issue that comes up regularly . . . Change, from this perspective, comes about when otherwise ordinary people find ways to bring their values, their actions and their world into closer alignment with each other . . . ‘though you’re always caught between your responsibilities and your limits’” (p. 28).

Deepening student learning. In Morton’s (1995) concluding comments he discusses how any of these three types of projects might be *thin* or *thick*. We quote at some length.

The thin versions [of service learning projects] may take the forms of paternalistic or self-serving charity that imposes services on unreceptive ‘others;’ projects that magnify or institutionalize inequalities of power, produce outcomes that are worse than the original problem, or lead to unrealistic and unsustainable dependencies; social change work that is only rhetorical, narrowly selfish, and against a wide range of offenses without offering alternatives. And any of the paradigms can raise false expectations, inflame social divisions, and leave people tired and cynical.

The thick versions of each paradigm are grounded in deeply held, internally coherent values; match means and ends; describe a primary way of interpreting and relating to the world; offer a way of defining problems and solutions; and suggest a vision of what a transformed world might look like. (p. 29)

How do we reflect these potential purposes in our own practice goals? We aim for thick projects, there is no question. We both



acknowledge that our own personal bias is toward social change, transformation, social reconstruction, yet we recognize that our students may not be in this place. One way we believe we aim for thick projects is not to impose our own bias on our students, but rather to open up the projects such that the students themselves might individually define the paradigm through which they wish to engage with the project. Our practice goals regarding project purpose include serving as role models ourselves, and facilitating student growth, in:

- becoming grounded in the community as a whole, and the immediate community of the project team;
- recognizing the inherent value of each individual regardless of age, disability, income, or any other descriptor that may be translated as putting someone in a less-than place;
- taking action to respond to community needs;
- checking our values against our actions (espoused theory compared to theory-in-use) and checking those against the world in which we live and are working to create; and
- recognizing we do have limits, yet must do what we can.

Kahne and Westheimer (1996) identify moral, political, and intellectual domains in service learning outcomes, yet also note that “these domains are not discrete; moral, political, and intellectual goals are intertwined”(p. 595). Morton (1995) observes, “at their thickest, paradigms seem to intersect, or at least to complement one another” (p. 28). Although we surely concur, our practice reality also suggests that Morton might go the step that Kahne and Westheimer have—to acknowledge that paradigms are not discrete, and not only intersect, but are intertwined.

Closing the Loop. Prior to discovering Morton, we continually came up against the conflict between designing and facilitating projects that seemed more like charity when our own ideals would have directed us more toward change. We were unable to loop our practice reality back to theory that could truly and constructively inform our practice goals. Morton nearly closes the loop. And when we focus on aspects of projects he describes as thick, without distinguishing between charity, project, or social change approaches, we close the loop. We can evaluate our projects, and read and listen to student evaluations of these projects, with an ear to thickness, rather than charity, project, or social change. We can ask whether students are making observations related to community-building, the inherent worth and humanness of their client population, the importance of taking action to respond to community issues; alignment of values and action, and the critical, even if limited, impact they can make. If so, they have achieved thick projects; if not, then we must loop back to our theory and practice goals and ask what changes do we need to

make in project design, facilitation, and reflection to build opportunities for students to engage in thick projects.

These are some comments from the authors' students that we believe reflect thick project experiences:

- “I learned that you can't always do things your way in service. You must first start by knowing your customers and what they want out of your business interactions . . . I think that our group learned to be very flexible with others' needs and desires because our original plan got completely changed and we didn't have a big problem with adjusting with the changes and working together to make the most of the situation.
- “When the lady asked if she could help and I said yes I could see the sparkle in her eye. It was like she had a purpose. The explicit [tangible] service we provided seems to be meaningless at this point. At first I thought we were going to just make some food and make the people happy through what we were doing for them . . . The eating of the desserts made the people happy but I do not think this could possibly compare to the few minutes I took to have that lady pan up a few cookies. Before I left this lady gave me a big hug. The ladies I gave the cookies gave me a sincere thank you but this was nothing compared to the hug.”
- “I realize now that one of the many things I still have to work on is being able to recognize if what I'm doing is serving the servant [leadership] model by Robert K. Greenleaf . . . where he states, “like Sisyphus, *accept our rock and find happiness dealing with it.*” What makes the client or team member happy may not make me happy.
- “By doing this service I have entered a large chapter in my book of life that I intend to keep writing in. It's nice to be able to make a choice to make a difference, because there are so many other things that we can't control in life.”

The “thickening” function of teamwork. To facilitate thick project experiences, we both typically have students work in teams. This is part of our own integrity and is grounded in organizational theory. Weisbord (1987) claims “A productive workplace [is] . . . based on individual dignity, meaning, and community” (p. xiii). Similarly a national organizational study concluded that “creating energized, empowered teams is the best catalyst for improving an organization” (Office of Evaluation, Corporation for National Service, 1995, p. 1).

We have chosen to facilitate students' community-building skills by not only requiring they work in teams, but by serving as a resource (Korfmacher, 1999) in providing them with information on, and practice in, good teamwork. We structure time for students to plan and refine their projects, so we can provide team facilitation and leadership role-modeling where necessary. Along with Raskoff (1997), we find it absolutely true that “group



projects present a number of advantages over individual service... however, group projects can also be problematic since the potential increases for intergroup conflict and coordination problems” (p. 110). Yet students need practice to improve their skills in coordination and working with conflict among colleagues. Our practice goals include giving them this experience in an environment where we are available to coach and facilitate, to give them the tools and opportunity to learn about good teamwork throughout the semester or the project’s duration. Our practice reality, based on student comments, indicates significant movement toward these goals. As it so happens, teamwork is also a curricular, and extra-curricular, learning goal of the authors.

These student comments provide some insight regarding the practice reality of teamwork:

- “[An] aspect of service management that I found to be very helpful was teamwork . . . Pairing up with complete strangers and having a project that involves sharing our thoughts and time and talents didn’t seem too appealing to me at first . . . As I went through our project I felt that everyone in my group was motivating one another to get the job done and to have a good time doing it well . . . We all had a good time working on our project and took pride in what we were doing.”
- “I . . . had a great time with my group members and talking to them in a different setting other than the classroom.”
- “We provided a couple of implicit services [psychological benefits] while working on the project. The first service is a sense of ‘community.’ There were three age groups involved in this event: children, college students, and the [facility] residents. The intergenerational involvement provided a sense of community and a sense of belonging.”
- “We all put a lot of time and planning into the final products and I think that our working so hard bonded us.”

When we loop this practice reality back through our theory, incorporating teamwork as a practice goal is reinforced. It is surely our intention to continue to give students the opportunity and tools to practice teamwork in their service learning projects.

Conclusion

Can we control whether a project serves a charity, project, or social change purpose for our students? Can we flawlessly plan and enforce the roles all parties will play? Can we be sure that those being served will control the service provided? We would venture to say, “No, but . . .” No, but we can continue our own growth toward personal integrity and self-knowledge and role model that for students. No, but we can provide our students, agency contacts, and client population with any information we

think might be of use to them and serve as reliable liaisons. No, but we can exemplify authenticity and caring relationships with our students, agency contacts, and client populations. And we can consciously create a field which reflects our theory-base and our best intentions, embrace the vision and practice goals that arise from this theory and field, and accept the chaos (the self-organizing nature of the complex and dynamic process of service learning projects) that will emerge during actual project implementation—the project reality phase. We can also make our best effort to feed the projects with our own self-knowledge, free-flowing and abundant information, and healthy on-going relationships. We can continue to engage in reflection on our theory, practice goals, and practice reality and keep working to bring them closer together, yet we can also acknowledge, in the words of Helen Fox, “Class is still in session. I don’t know yet how it will all come out”(1994, p. 59).

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Bringing Service Learning to FCS Higher Education

Sue McGregor

Abstract

Service learning is a powerful tool for socializing the next generation of professionals as citizens in the workplace and the community. After providing a brief overview of service learning, this paper focuses on how to develop a sense of civil responsibility and citizenship within family and consumer sciences students. It concludes with initiatives and opportunities within the family and consumer sciences discipline that provide directions for bringing service learning into FCS curricula. The goal is to educate students to be responsible citizens while preparing them for a career serving individuals and families in their communities.

Service learning has been identified as a strategic new direction for the family and consumer sciences (FCS) profession and defined as, “a credit-bearing form of experiential education designed for students to participate in organized activities to meet and address human and community needs in concert with opportunities intentionally designed to further understanding and appreciation of the discipline and development of a sense of civic responsibility” (Mitsifer & Miller, 1999, p.13).

Three recent studies from the field represent some ambiguity among members about the current status of the use of service learning in the profession: we have always done it, we should do it, we could do it. Respectively, Paulins (1999) maintains that the concept of service learning is not new to the family and consumer sciences profession; that is, we have always done this although the jargon is new. To support this notion, she refers to the clauses in the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences’ (AAFCS) mission statement referring to assuming leadership roles, taking action on critical issues, and empowering members to act on social concerns. On the other hand, Hendricks and Kari (1999) assume that family and consumer sciences should be embracing service learning and ask, “how can curriculum in family and consumer sciences facilitate the civic identities among students” (p.62). And, Leach (1998) says that family and consumer sciences may be

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suited for service learning because the profession has an interactive, ecological perspective.

Many other disciplines and professions have embraced the 20 year old service learning movement (Erickson & Anderson, 1997). I agree with Mitstifer and Miller (1999), and the scholars above, that service learning can be a value-added curriculum strategy for learning and teaching within FCS and is a strategic new direction for the profession. I intend to share my views on why this is so and how to go about making it happen.

The focus of FCS is the practical, perennial problems of individuals and families as they live in their communities. Service learning embraces reflection and extends learning beyond the classroom into the community. Citizenship, an inherent part of service learning, is defined as the ongoing contribution of citizens to solving community problems (Boyte & Skelton, 1998). Thus, given that FCS graduates will be acting, in their professional role, as citizens in communities solving problems, this paper will elaborate on the meaning of citizenship education within the paradigm of service learning. The paper ends with a collection of initiatives and opportunities within FCS that provide valuable resources for incorporating service learning into the curricula.

Service Learning

There is a growing body of literature on the national movement of service learning, based on the philosophy that education must be linked to social responsibility via good citizenship (Cleary, 1996). This section will provide an overview of service learning before turning to citizenship education. The clearest way to describe service learning is “learning while you serve” (Marson, 1999). Examples of activities where students serve and learn include: designing and building urban community gardens, recycling programs, food for the homeless, preserving native plants or wetlands, designing neighborhood playgrounds, teaching or tutoring underprivileged or elderly, creating wheelchair ramps, intergenerational programs, community history projects, and health and human service projects. Projects also can include: Big Brothers/Big Sisters, after school programs, Special Olympics, nursing home “senior proms,” Salvation Army, and Habitat for Humanity (Corporation for National Service [CNS], 1999; Marson, 1999; Paulins, 1999). These activities allow the student to “make a difference while learn-

ing.” Students conduct research on/with their community to identify needs, prioritize areas of greatest needs, select needs they can help meet, design a project, provide the service, and reflect before, throughout, and after the project (Marson, 1999).

As is evident from the previous examples, service learning is a method through which citizenship, academic skills, and values are taught. It involves drawing lessons from the experience of performing service work for communities (Krumme, 1998). Service learning connects academic, course-based learning with meaningful community service, personal growth, self esteem, and a sense of social responsibility thereby giving students guided practice in responsible citizenship (CNS, 1999; Minkler, 1998). It achieves these desirable objectives by extending learning beyond the classroom. And, instead of focusing solely on preparing students for careers, service learning also prepares them to address community issues by connecting them with local communities. The core of service learning is the development of skills in an active, real-world contextual setting (Skinner, Westat, & Chapman, 1999). It engages the learner in the phenomena being studied with the hope that richer learning will result, an end that is very likely since service learning places a twofold emphasis on enriching reflective student learning and revitalizing the community (Cleary, 1996; Johnson, 1997).

Service learning differs from internships, field placements, and cooperative placements (all four are on the experiential learning continuum) in that it integrates course-based learning, community service, and reflection (Furco, 1996; Kolb, 1984). Reflection is a critical component of service learning that affords students the opportunity to think, write, and talk about their experience before, during, and after (Skinner, Westat, & Chapman, 1999). While working in service to the community, students encounter events which confirm or conflict with their assumptions and which challenge or reinforce their competencies or understandings of life. Experiences generated in a situation of learning and civic responsibility may create perplexity and dissonance. This doubt is a necessary first stage of learning and a justification for building in reflection time (Jacoby, 1996; Johnson, 1997). Instructors must provide a quiet space within the course for students to reflect on their actions via observation, questioning, speculation, and self-awareness (de Acosta, 1995).

This reflection is necessary because civic action in the local community exposes students to societal inadequacies and injustices. Service learning empowers students to reflect on these realities and to increase their civic and citizenship skills leading



to fulfillment of unmet needs in the community (Cooper, n.d.). Better yet, it promotes learning about the larger social issues behind the unmet needs in the community. It engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good (Erickson & Anderson, 1997; Kendall, 1990). Service learning improves citizenship and self-esteem by highlighting the students' importance in society and the impact they can have on others and on their communities. As a result, students become better citizens and make a difference in the lives of others while they increase their own sense of personal responsibility and advance their career (Bingle & Hatcher, 1995). They become active stakeholders in their own communities and develop political efficacy through civic participation (Marson, 1999).

Citizenship Education

Service learning, which combines community service with academic work, prepares students for leadership roles in addressing society's increasing problems and in meeting growing human needs (Howard, 1993; Jacoby, 1996). FCS professionals often assume leadership roles in their career, and they need opportunities to explore their skills and deficits. Citizenship is defined as the ongoing contribution of citizens to solving community and public problems and creating the world around us (Boyte & Skelton, 1998). Learning and citizenship are life-long activities that extend far beyond the formal educational setting (Crews, 1997). A discussion of service learning is incomplete without elaborating on the concept of citizenship education because both contribute to the vision of a transformed world. Erickson and Anderson (1997) identify five theoretical threads of service learning. One is preparation for civic responsibility, and the other four strands include experiential learning, social transformation, critical reflection, and multiculturalism (also components of the FCS philosophy). Bingle and Hatcher (1995) agree that service learning includes civic education. Thus, it is important to have a solid appreciation of what constitutes citizenship education so that we can more readily incorporate it into service learning.

There are three elements to citizenship education: the civil, the political, and the social (Abala-Bertrand, 1996; Kerr, 1999). The civil refers to community involvement and learning about and becoming helpfully involved in the life and concerns of one's community, including learning through community involvement and service to the community. The political refers to learning about, and how to make one's self effective in, public life. This learning encompasses realistic knowledge of, and preparation for,

conflict resolution and decision making, whether involving issues in local, regional, national, continental, or international affairs. Finally, the social refers to social and moral responsibilities wherein people learn self-confidence and socially- and morally-responsible behavior at work, play, and at home—behavior towards those in authority and towards each other.

Abala-Bertrand (1997) identified four other dimensions of citizenship education: human rights, democracy, human development and a sustainable development ethic, and peace at the national and international levels. The inclusion of a human rights component in citizenship education is based upon the assumption that all humans are created having equal dignity; all humans have the right to belong to a social and political community; and all rights (political, social, civil, cultural, and economic) are universal, indivisible, and interdependent. Educators should include the dimension on democracy in citizenship education because any legitimate political power emanates from individual citizens, more so if they have been socialized in the skills of preparation, enforcement, and improvement of the rule of law (political, legal, and judicial institutions). Citizens need to be exposed to skills suitable for their personal, social, economic, and political development if human rights and the rule of law (democracy) are to be sustained. Finally, human rights, democracy, and sustainable development of humans cannot be attained if peace is not in place, assured, and nurtured.

Bahmueller (1998) tenders another framework for teaching citizenship. Her approach brings a holistic approach to citizenship education placing the individual person in the world, national, regional, and community context. Family and consumer sciences embraces a holistic, ecosystem approach to practice. From this perspective, students would be prepared to: (a) care for the larger community, (b) feel they should, and can, participate in the polity, and (c) place the greater good above personal gain. Citizenship education and service learning foster respect for law, justice, democracy, and community at the same time as they encourage independence of thought, community involvement, social responsibility, and political literacy (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1998). These principles are all inherent in family and consumer sciences.

Finally, Cotton (1997) discusses the attributes of a person who has been socialized to be a prepared citizen. She says they will have gained or developed: (a) respect for the 18 values inherent in the U.S. Constitution, (b) respect for the common good, (c) knowledge and understanding of a nation's founding, current government



structures, political processes, and global context, (d) higher level thinking skills, (e) social process skills (communication, management, consensus, and cooperation), and (f) the attitude and belief that people have an obligation to participate in civil society. Again, these goals are all compatible with the learning objectives of FCS curricula and the mission of the profession.

Collection of FCS Initiatives that Can Bring Service Learning to the Curricula

This paper proposes that service learning (including citizenship education) should be an explicit part of the socialization process of students into the profession and those already in the profession. This section profiles nine FCS initiatives and opportunities that can serve as resources for incorporating service learning into the curricula.

American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Conceptual Framework

In 1994, the AAFCS approved *A Conceptual Framework for the 21st Century* for the profession. The framework is comprised of nine parts, one of which is Professional Practice. There are 11 components related to how professionals are expected to practice, with two related to service learning and citizenship: (a) practice the profession within the context of education and community-based organizations (among 9 settings) and (b) advocate on behalf of individuals, families, and communities (as well as consumers). The concepts of service learning or citizenship are not explicitly stated in the AAFCS framework but a clause says the profession will take the lead in “shaping social change, thereby enhancing the human condition.” Service learning shares this goal. The unifying focus of the profession includes concern for communities as well as individuals, families, and their near environments. It seems that service learning could easily find a home in the field of family and consumer sciences as it is now conceptualized. The framework is available at <http://www.kon.org/leadership/peace.html>.

Recent Summit on the Future of Higher Education - Outreach Component

Several FCS organizations sponsored *FCS in Higher Education: An Open Summit on the Future* in February, 1999. One of the 30 working groups explored “how to integrate across the teaching, research, and outreach missions” of the profession (#26). One of the initial actions proposed at the Summit was to develop proposals for an AAFCS funded symposia on developing a

theoretical understanding of outreach scholarship <http://www.kon.org/summit/notes.html>. The outreach component could be conceptualized to embrace service learning and citizenship education since it places students in the community to serve citizens as they learn. Many university programs have extension outreach programs that could serve as support systems for FCS service learning curricula.

Reflective Human Action Theory

Since reflection is such an inherent part of service learning, those intending to bring service learning to FCS curricula can learn much from a learning module on *Reflective Human Action Theory* in FCS practice (Andrews, Mitstifer, Rehm, & Vaughn, 1995), also described at <http://www.kon.org/publications/pleadord.html>. As well, two special issues of *Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM* focused on Reflective Human Action leadership, Vol. 9(2) and Vol. 10(1). These three documents provide invaluable tools to help integrate reflection into any service learning course (see <http://www.kon.org/archives/archives.html>).

Community Building Issues in Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM

Furthermore, since service learning occurs in the community, readers are directed to a recent issue of the *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences* that focused on resilient communities (1999, Vol. 91 (2)). Two special issues of *Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM* are relevant, one on Building Community (1995, Vol. 8(2)) and the other on Making Community (1999, Vol. 10(2)), both of which are available in the *FORUM* archives on the KON web site. The latter two deal with building professional communities and the former deals with the communities that families live in on a daily basis. A healthy professional community can better prepare students to work to create resilient communities and, to that end, service learning is a valuable addition to the curriculum.

Family and Consumer Sciences Education Standards

The *National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education* document was released in 1998. There are 16 comprehensive standards, which are then broken down into 70 measurable standards for FCS learners. A model integrates the 16 areas of FCS study (content and competencies) with appropriate process (thinking, communication, leadership, and management) and systems of actions as well as academic proficiencies in math,



science, and language arts (Vail, Fox, & Wild, 2000; <http://doe.state.in.us/octe/facs/natlstandards.htm>, <http://www.facse.org/nat.htm>, and <http://www.v-tecs.org/facs.htm>). Indeed, the professional association of FCS educators highlighted the need for service learning in their most recent newsletter (Feldbush, 2001). Marrying these educational standards (which were designed at the higher levels of learning from the critical science approach) with service learning has potential for professional socialization.

Discipline Specific Service Learning Volumes for Higher Education

The American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) has a series of volumes on how to integrate service learning into specific disciplines. Currently, no volume addresses the family and consumer sciences discipline. However, there is one on teacher education in general (<http://www.aahe.org/pubs/sl-teach.htm>), which would be very useful for those planning to bring service learning to higher education in FCS teacher preparation. Discussions about developing a FCS volume would be timely and can be taken up with the person who directs and cultivates new volumes for service learning initiatives at AAHE (info@aahe.org).

Dealing with Resistance to and Skepticism About the Service Learning Model

Instructors developing service learning courses may encounter student, faculty, institutional, and professional resistance or skepticism. Our profession can draw lessons from the wide array of articles and books dealing with issues of doubt and resistance and with the benefits for all constituent groups (for example, see Cleary, 1996; Cooper, n.d.; Cowin, 1998; Erickson & Anderson, 1997; Mattson & Shea, 1997). Bringle & Hatcher (1995), Howard (1993), Jacoby (1996), and Kendall (1990) also deal with these issues.

Logistics of Bringing the Service Learning Concept to Preservice and Inservice Education

Finally, once the profession embraces this new strategic direction, service learning courses will need to be developed in higher education programs that provide preservice socialization of new members into the profession. As well, inservice is also needed to orient those already practicing in the profession so that the service learning concept can be more readily implemented across the discipline. AAFCS, KON, FCSEA, the Family and Consumer Sciences Coalition (FCSC), the Family and Consumer Sciences Educators (FACSE, comprised of family and consumer sciences

state employees), and other professional associations—all can play active, cooperative, and coordinated roles in embracing service learning in family and consumer sciences. The Service Learning Library at Clemson University has a wide collection of videos, papers, books, etc. including works on service learning in higher education (<http://virtual.clemson.edu/groups/learning/library.htm>). The *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* is also an excellent source for this information at <http://www.umich.edu/~mjcs/> as is the Colorado State University resource at <http://csf.colorado.edu/sl/biblios/kraftbiblio.html>. Another site is <http://www.quest.edu/summarysla.htm>, which provides a summary of many articles related to service learning in higher education. These are just four examples of the wealth of information about service learning on the Internet in the form of journals, faculty manuals, bibliographies, and conferences.

There are even grants available to develop, implement, and evaluate service learning courses, notably from the Corporation for National Service (CNS) at <http://learnandserve.org/resources>.

Conclusion

The professional mission holds us to assume leadership roles, take action on critical issues, and empower members to act on social concerns. This paper has illustrated that synergy does exist between (a) serving individuals and families in their communities, (b) serving the community while engaged in reflective learning, and (c) responsible citizenship. Our commitment to our mission and to prepare professionals to be citizens in the work place can be achieved tenfold if we embrace a service learning approach to curricula and faculty development. Service learning can be an exciting tool for socialization of the next generation of FCS professionals as citizens in the work place. It is worth the effort. Service learning courses for consumer economics, resource management, clothing and textiles, and food security have already been undertaken within the profession (respectively, Paulins, 1999; Leach, 1998; Hendricks & Kari, 1999; Nnakwe, 1999). Their general consensus is that service learning has a positive effect on students' personal, attitudinal, moral, social, and cognitive outcomes and helps build self-confidence and self-esteem. These are valuable character traits for tomorrow's FCS leaders who are charged with changing society for the betterment of individuals, families, and communities.

“Service learning programs are one way in which family and consumer sciences (FCS) educators can empower a student to be a responsible and positive contributor to his or her community” (Feldbush, 2001, p. 6). When making his case for service



learning, Johnson (1997) reminds us that we remember a mere 20% of what we see and hear in a classroom but retain 60% of what we do in service, 80% of what we do with guided reflection, and 90% of what we teach or give to others through service. This paper has shown that, given the will, the building blocks are there to make service learning a value-added strategy for new and existing FCS curricula.

Readers are invited to contact the author for a collection of wide ranging sources on citizenship education.

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Rural University-Community Partnerships: Interior Design and Service Learning

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Abstract

This article describes a service learning project in interior design carried out in a rural family services center. Implementation and results of the project are discussed. The partnership between the university and the rural family service center provides a model for other university-community partnerships.

Introduction

In many ways the rural communities of Alabama have changed little since the Reconstruction era. Without a strong industry base or tax revenues, these communities have few resources to provide quality education, health care, housing, and community infrastructure development programs for their citizens. Likewise, poor rural areas are often unable to entice professionals to work in their communities. One response to these concerns is to be found in directing the resources of universities located in rural settings into partnerships with communities in need. Incorporation of service-based learning and community service into university curricula is one example of such partnerships. Ward (1996) describes a national wave of interest in community service. Participation in high quality service learning can build on this interest to foster an ethic of community service and social responsibility among students.

The project described in this article is part of a unique, multidisciplinary effort to provide a contextualized learning experience for undergraduate students while developing their civic competencies and commitment to service. Faculty from the interior design program in human sciences have joined with faculty in pharmacy, nursing, social work, teacher education, psychology, and counseling in a coordinated effort to bring services to a rural, underserved and marginalized community. This is a natural alliance for the human sciences profession, which has long recognized the importance of the relationship between academia and the community. Interdisciplinary programs, cross-cultural and international emphases, and diverse clienteles are strengths on which the profession has based its overall philosophy (Hawthorne, 1984). The specialization of interior design integrates these foundations in both a theoretical

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and applied manner (Dohr, 1992; Fowles, 1992; Guerin, 1992) in the educational setting by requiring students to apply design theory to realistic environmental spaces. In recognition of the importance of community service in interior design education the accrediting body for interior design programs, the Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER), has adopted a new standard titled Professional Values (FIDER Professional Standards, 2000). The standard includes the requirement that programs “[p]resent opportunities or experiences that develop students’ understanding of the value and importance of community and/or public service” (FIDER, 2000, p. 15). This new standard emphasizes the importance of students’ experiences and opportunities as they relate to social responsibility. Although Boyer and Mitgang (1996) were describing a new vision for scholarship in architecture education, interior design educators can embrace the goals of this vision as well. Of relevance to the current project is their emphasis on “Service to the Nation” (p. 129) as a core value of education and practice. They encourage a “climate of engagement” (p. 133) where civic activism is considered an integral part of scholarship and learning by integrating civic affairs into the curriculum. Service learning provides students the opportunity to hone their design skills in a real-life context. Of equal importance to the technical competence and business acumen they achieve, learning while serving others helps students develop the ethical grounding, intellectual facility, and maturity to consider the impact of their work on present users and future generations. This article describes a service learning project completed by interior design students addressing the needs of an underserved rural community.

Case Study

The service learning project that was completed by 9 students enrolled in an upper-division non-residential interior design studio was located in a full-service center for families located in rural Alabama. This project was a course requirement for all students. The center sponsors programs and activities designed to improve the quality of life for children and families in the surrounding county. This county is among the highest in the state with respect to negative quality of life indicators such as teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, adult illiteracy, poverty, and infant mortality (Voices for Alabama’s Children, 1998). A sampling of services provided by the center includes: GED classes/adult education, individual and family counseling, abstinence-based school and community teen pregnancy prevention programs, in-home and group parenting instruction, and support services to expectant and new parents.

At the beginning of the ten-week term, students were given the center's mission statement, its floor plan, and a roster of staff members to be interviewed by each group of students. The center houses 14 staff members and additional full-time and part-time volunteers. The physical structure provides for several activity areas including: a reception area, 5 single occupancy staff offices, 3 multiple occupancy staff office areas, 2 small classrooms (1 filled to capacity with GED computers), conference room, child care room, staff break and work room, storage space, and restrooms. The variety of spaces offered students a unique opportunity to design a space that is relatively small in scale. However, the number and kinds of activities carried out in the space allowed students to develop comprehensive programs (O'Mara, 1985) that were based on user needs and design analysis. They prepared orthographic drawings including floor plans and elevations, perspective renderings, and material and furnishing specifications for each space.

A significant component of this project was the data collection process. Students were required to administer an Occupant Survey (Preiser, Rabinowitz, & White, 1987) to each staff member. This standardized instrument assesses the quality of the building's success in terms of the user's health, safety, security, functionality, and psychological comfort. Each student interviewed at least two of the staff members. The overall building quality was rated highest on the indicators "maintenance," "aesthetic quality of exterior," and "quality of building materials for floors and walls." It was rated lowest on the indicators "amount of space," "adaptability to changing uses," and "aesthetic quality of interior." The interviews identified the need for storage, a more spacious and quiet area for the GED computer room (with a work area for students and demonstration area for the instructor), and a more aesthetically pleasing interior environment.

In addition, students recorded measurements of all furnishings, fixtures, and equipment, space clearances, and window and door openings within each space. Students also kept a log of time spent interviewing, measuring, and commuting to the site (approximately 30 minutes from campus). During the ten-week term the course instructor lectured in class on aspects of theory, programming, building occupancy, and codes information for non-residential environments.

After completing the final project, students formally presented their design solutions in a meeting that included the entire staff of the center, the director of the university service learning partnership, the landlord of the building, and members of the



press. The project was well publicized in articles written for the local newspaper, the statewide outreach publication, and the university faculty and staff monthly publication.

Results

Each staff member was asked to complete an evaluation of the designs that the students presented. The staff members indicated that the most successful aspects of the design projects were the function and aesthetic recommendations for the public areas, e.g., the GED computer room, conference room, break room, and child-care space. The staff had concerns about the design solutions that did not account for staff privacy needs. In particular, they did not support the recommendation to move several staff from single to multiple occupancy offices with work spaces separated by moveable partitions. This finding supports previous research on territoriality and privacy noting that workers in an office setting prefer secure, independent, and private, individual spaces (Schooler, 1999; Sundstrom, 1987). In addition, one student group did not recognize the security risk of housing the bookkeeper/receptionist in the central entry area. Although this design solution was problematic, the oversight reinforced the importance of detailed research of client needs prior to the design development process (Cherulnik, 1993).

Students completed a university service learning (Partners in Community Service) evaluation form after the course was completed. Very high ratings were given on the following criteria: “the service learning component contributed significantly to the overall quality of the course;” “the service learning experience enhanced my learning of course material and concepts;” “the service learning experience improved my workplace skills;” and “my professor prepared me well for my service learning placement.” Moderately high ratings were given to the following criteria: “because I took this course, the likelihood that I will engage in other community service has increased,” “the course work prepared me well for my community service placement;” and “because this course combined course work with community service, my understanding of my role as a citizen improved.” Student responses to open-ended questions included the recommendations that the site be closer to the campus community and that they be permitted to have more time with clients. They noted the benefits of the project to be “learning how to know what people need and what questions to ask,” “working on a ‘real’ project and working with such a wonderful institution,” “The presentations were the best experience. It taught me to be on my feet and prepared for anything.”

One year after the presentations, students were interviewing for professional internships in various sectors of the interior design field. They noted repeatedly that the professionals commented on the importance of their participation in the service learning project for their professional development.

Sixteen months after the final presentations, the course instructor met with the executive director of the family service center to assess the implementation of student recommendations. A number of the space recommendations were followed. The GED computer center was moved to a more compatible space and the former occupants were moved to an area that was arranged to meet the needs they identified in the Occupant Survey. Several aesthetic recommendations were also followed in the reception area. Public relations materials that describe the center's mission are also more evident in the reception area. Storage throughout the center has become more centralized and accessible to all users. There is an adequate amount of space presently for the staff members, however, the number of clients serviced by the center has increased since the project was completed.

The executive director noted that the most valuable outcome from the service learning project was to observe the vision for the center's physical environment through the eyes of the students. The project generated excitement among the staff members as students made recommendations for economical and functional use of space and application of design elements to make the space a family friendly environment. The executive director also noted that the students gave excellent professional presentations of their design work. The primary drawback of this project is that the center has not been able to implement suggestions that require significant financial resources because it is a private, non-profit agency. Some suggestions can be completed over time as is done in many design proposals.

Discussion

The results of this project demonstrate that although filling an identified community need, students in a service learning course were able to achieve academic and community service goals. This type of experience is one way to meet the FIDER (2000) goal of helping students to understand the designer's ability to affect people and their environment. From the reports of interior design students who are seeking employment after graduation, it also appears that employers are valuing these experiences as they select new employees.



The interdisciplinary associations on the part of the interior design faculty continue. For example, the project director joined other partnership faculty and the family service center's executive director in an invited presentation to the annual conference of the Alabama Association of Social Workers. The project director has continued to research both rural and urban child care settings and has assisted her interior design program colleagues in developing their own service learning projects.

The partnership between the university and the rural family service center has become a model for other university-community partnerships in the state. Funding resources have been directed to the center based on their work with students and faculty in building sustainable programs that meet actual community needs. In reflecting on this project and looking to the future, the words of Wolf (1996, p. iv) capture the essence of the project, "Through service learning we discover the ordering power of the fundamental models of understanding which have shaped our thinking throughout our history. This knowledge enables us to better participate in the political, ethical, and human-centered life of the community. This philosophy asserts that it is the interface between academic disciplines and the wider community that shapes the future of higher education in the next millennium."

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Using Service Learning in Academic Courses

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Abstract

Service learning is a pedagogical strategy with benefits for students, faculty, the community, and the academic institution and is particularly relevant for students in family and consumer sciences. This paper describes the essential elements for using service learning in academic courses, including collaboration between members of the academic institution and the community and the integration of the service learning project with course content. An example of a service learning course in human development and family studies is used to illustrate a three-phase approach to implementing service learning in academic courses.

In the past decade, many institutions of higher learning have transformed their approach to undergraduate education. Techniques other than traditional lecture-notetaking-exam format have been developed in order to promote students' ability to make connections between theory and application (Stukas, Clary, & Snyder, 1999). Many of these teaching techniques rely on active learning, the premise of which suggests that students' learning is enhanced when they are active participants. Active learning often involves real world experiences, in which students are in direct contact with neighborhoods, community agencies, and local institutions (Allen & Crosbie-Burnett, 1992). One type of active learning, called service learning, requires that students become involved in service as part of a course requirement.

The theoretical basis of service learning may be traced to John Dewey. Whereas Dewey did not explicitly identify service learning, his philosophy of education suggested that learning best occurs through application and experience (Conrad & Hedin, 1991; Giles & Eyler, 1994). His philosophy also linked the institutions of community and education. Specifically, Dewey believed that educational institutions should be part of the community and provide opportunities for students to become good citizens by providing service, cooperating, and associating with others (Giles & Eyler, 1994). The same tenets underlie service learning.

In a recent review of literature, Stukas et al. (1999) describe the benefits of service learning for students, the community, and the

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academic institution. For students, service learning may improve self-esteem, promote understanding of diversity, and foster career development. Evidence also suggests that service learning within academic courses encourages more active involvement in learning and enhances understanding of course material (Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; Miller, 1994). Service learning has benefits for the community, which typically is the recipient of the service. Price and Martello (1996) identify different types of service that may be provided, including those of vital value (e.g., food, shelter), social value (e.g., support for children, families, or relevant systems and organizations), cultural value (e.g., artistic, ideological, or political issues), and personal value (e.g., enhancing recipients' awareness and understanding). Service learning also has potential benefits for the academic institution. Service to the community enables a college or university to cultivate a positive image, which often lends itself to fundraising, enrollment, grants, and contracts (Stukas et al., 1999). Service learning also is a means to implement education reform. The Carnegie Foundation, for instance, has recommended that academic institutions improve the educational experiences of undergraduate students by providing greater opportunity to engage in active learning, develop professional skills, and enhance citizenship (Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University, 1998). Each of these recommendations may be addressed through service learning.

Service learning is a particularly useful strategy for teaching students enrolled in family and consumer sciences because these students must be well informed as to theory and research, as well as develop an applied understanding and skills for working with children, individuals, and families. Many academic programs in the field of family and consumer sciences require a practicum or internship, but these experiences typically occur at the end of a student's academic experience. Clearly, opportunities for applying course material are needed earlier in the student's college career (Ehrlich, 1995). The use of service learning within academic courses is one avenue for providing such applied learning opportunities.

This paper describes the use of service learning within academic courses. First, the essential components of service learning courses are addressed. These include collaboration between members of the academic institution and community and the integration of service learning with course content. Next, an example of a service learning project within a human development and family studies course is described. Specifically, we

present the three-phase approach to implementing service learning courses and explain how this process was utilized in a specific academic course.

Essential Components of Service Learning Courses

In order to be successful, service learning within an academic course should meet two criteria: (a) it equally benefits the provider and recipient of the service and (b) it includes an equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that occurs (Furco, 1996). Each of these is addressed in detail below.

Collaboration: New Roles and Relationships

The first criterion suggests that multiple parties are involved in the development and implementation of service learning courses. Indeed, service learning requires that new, collaborative relationships be crafted among faculty, students, the community, and the academic institution (Altman, 1996). Collaboration is a process of participation through which people, groups, and organizations work together to achieve desired results (Bergstrom et al., 1995). Collaborations range in structure from informal to formal depending on participants' goals. Regardless of structure, the critical element of collaboration is a shared vision or purpose; it is this commonality that brings members together (Bergstrom et al., 1995). Addressing the shared vision (e.g., how to best prepare students and provide the community with resources in family and consumer sciences) often requires that individuals, organizations, and institutions rethink previously separate roles.

Faculty roles. When utilizing service learning as a pedagogical tool, faculty must reconsider the organization and content of the academic course. Rather than traditional lecture format, the teaching/learning process may assume other forms, such as guest speakers from the community, small and large group discussions, student presentations, and assignments in which students reflect on and evaluate their service learning experiences (Clawson & Couse, 1998; Currie, Scholl, Parlin & Squibb, 1984). We also have found it useful to acquire input from the community when designing a course and, in particular, the service learning component. For example, faculty might contact representatives of community agencies, arrange for them to speak in the course, discuss community needs with them, and work with them in coordinating students' experiences (Clawson & Shin, 2000).

Student roles. The requirements of students also change when service learning becomes a part of the academic experience. Students must make a transition from passive note-taker to



active participant, both in and out of class. Planning and implementing a service learning project requires that students develop skills such as planning, networking, drafting proposals, making presentations, effectively communicating, and working collaboratively in teams with student peers and community representatives (Checkoway, 1996; Sax & Astin, 1997; Yelsma, 1994). Because students often struggle with group projects, faculty may need to guide them in successful group dynamics and help them find ways to divide their responsibilities so as to reflect the unique contributions of each group member (Walker, 1996; Yelsma, 1994). Students also may require assistance in developing the interpersonal and professional skills for interacting appropriately with members of the community.

Community roles. As collaborators in service learning, individuals and groups in the community must be willing to articulate their needs and how service learning might address them. Community recipients should have some control over the service they receive, such as what it is, when, where, and how it takes place (Nadler & Fisher, 1986). At the same time, community professionals must be open to the skills and knowledge students bring to their agencies. Because coursework provides students with knowledge in theory and recent research, service learning applications should be of high quality (i.e., have a sound theoretical and empirical basis) (Sax & Astin, 1997). Service learning, then, may enhance the functioning of existing agencies and organizations within the community. However, collaborating in service learning projects in some ways adds to the responsibilities of community professionals. Their work load may increase as a result of giving presentations to a class, providing training, supervising, and mentoring for students who are novices in the profession, and evaluating the outcomes of the service learning initiative for their agency or organization.

Roles of academic institutions. Service learning collaborations have implications for the academic institution as well. Specifically, the institution must identify ways of supporting faculty who implement service learning in their courses, as this pedagogical tool requires a great deal of time both inside and outside the classroom. One valuable resource provided by many academic institutions is a campus volunteer or community service office. Clawson and Couse (1998) describe the various functions performed by this office, such as assisting students with necessary paperwork (e.g., obtaining university permission for events, reserving rooms or equipment), publicizing service learning initiatives, providing transportation to and from off-campus community sites, and locating potential donors or sponsors for

service events. This office also guides faculty as to the legal implications of service learning requirements in courses and coordinates with community agencies in making explicit issues such as on-site supervision and liability insurance for volunteers (Clawson & Couse, 1998).

Service learning initiatives potentially lead to unique partnerships in which all participants learn, teach, and problem solve (Altman, 1996). Whereas its structure may vary, collaboration promotes the success of service learning. Without collaboration, students do not have authentic experiences in applying their coursework and developing professional skills. Moreover, an opportunity to address a social issue in the community is lost.

Integration of Service Learning with an Academic Course

The second criterion indicates that service learning must be thoroughly integrated with the academic course (Furco, 1996). Service learning courses require more of faculty than sending a group of students into the community to complete a required number of hours. Whereas such an experience may have its value, volunteer hours typically are treated as an “add-on” to an existing course outline, and therefore have limited effect on students’ learning (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Raskoff, 1994). In contrast, properly designed service learning courses enhance the meaning and impact of course content for students (Sax & Astin, 1997). In order to do so, the service learning component must be integral to the course.

In designing service learning courses, we have found it helpful to consider Altman’s (1996) typology of knowledge, which includes: (a) foundational knowledge of theory, content, and methodology of a discipline, (b) professional knowledge, including practitioner skills and vocationally oriented information and techniques, and (c) socially-responsive knowledge in which students experience firsthand the social issues in their community and have the knowledge and skills to act on these issues. The third type of knowledge depends on mastery of the first two. Indeed, foundational and professional knowledge should inform the student’s actions in the service learning experience that, in turn, develops his/her socially-responsive knowledge.

Service learning has been criticized as taking away from the time spent on building students’ foundational knowledge. It is our view, however, that foundational knowledge is a necessary prerequisite for any service learning initiative. That is, for service learning to be successful, students must possess the right tools—one of which



is a strong knowledge base in theory and recent research. Service learning also has potential to enhance students' foundational knowledge. For instance, when a topic is too far removed from students' own experiences (e.g., families in poverty), service learning provides a means for them to make connections between coursework and real people who confront the issue on a daily basis.

Service learning also allows students to develop and refine their professional knowledge and skills. Doing so is particularly important for family and consumer sciences students who often pursue careers in the helping professions. Some professional skills training should occur prior to the service learning experience, especially when students and community members come from different levels of social power or status in society (Stukas et al., 1999). Without appropriate guidance and practice, students may assume a "let us rescue you" approach to their work in the community. This approach to service learning typically is unsuccessful for both students and community (Clawson & Couse, 1998). We have found it useful to allocate class time for discussing and role playing strategies students might use in contacting community groups, identifying and evaluating community needs, and interacting with children, adults, and families in the community. When students have actual contact with the community during the service project, they may modify or refine these strategies, as well as acquire other professional skills.

To thoroughly integrate service learning with course content, the instructors must plan for facilitating students' foundational knowledge in the content area and professional skills for interacting with children, individuals, and families. With these tools, a student is equipped to gain socially-responsive knowledge through an experience in the community. Once students begin their community work, they likely will return to the classroom with questions that can be addressed with more foundational knowledge and professional training. Furthermore, students' community experiences are powerful examples to use throughout the term in order to facilitate all three types of knowledge. The relationships among foundational, professional, and socially responsive knowledge are complex; taking full advantage of this complexity allows service learning to be thoroughly integrated with the course.

An Example of Service Learning in an Academic Course

In this section, we describe a service learning project in the context of a course in human development and family studies. We begin with the collaboration developed with the community. Next,

we present the three-phase approach to service learning used in the course. These phases include research, implementation, and reflection. The section concludes with a summary of reflections of students and community partners.

The service learning project was implemented in an advanced undergraduate course in which 40 students were enrolled. The specific focus of the course was language and literacy in children and families. Approximately two-thirds of the students were majoring in child and family studies, with the remaining students representing various fields of study, including nursing, communications, and public relations. Prior to enrolling in this course, all students had completed at least two introductory courses—one in child development and one in family studies.

Developing the Collaboration

We had two academic criteria for the service learning component: (a) it must fit with the purpose of the course—to provide students with expertise on language and literacy in children and families and (b) it should provide students with hands-on experience with children, families, or individuals working with children and families. In order to identify a community need that service learning could address, we collaborated with several programs in the community. One partner was the Child Care Council, a local nonprofit agency with a mission to coordinate, assist, and strengthen child care services in the community. The Child Care Council assisted us in identifying three child-care settings, including a family child-care home, a child-care center, and an after-school program. These settings were selected because they represented varying models of child-care, the directors were interested in participating in the partnership, and all reported a need for materials and information for promoting literacy (Clawson & Shin, 2000).

With our community partners, we designed a service learning project focusing on literacy development. Specifically, students assessed the selected center's needs for literacy-promoting materials and activities and then addressed these needs by gathering materials and conducting appropriate activities with children, parents, and teachers. Our collaborative team saw this project as meeting the academic criteria mentioned above, as well as addressing a genuine need in the community.

Three-Phase Approach to Service Learning

The service learning project was integrated into the academic course using a three-phase model of research, implementation, and reflection (Clawson & Couse, 1998).



Phase 1: Research. In the first phase, students conduct research on the social issue. Research allows the student to develop foundational knowledge about the topic. In the current project, class lectures and discussions focused on literacy, and students became familiar with theoretical and empirical information concerning literacy development. Class time was allotted for analyzing and discussing books, toys, and activities in terms of their effectiveness in promoting literacy. Additionally, students were given assignments in which they were required to use library, Internet, and other resources in order to become familiar with national, state, and local trends in literacy.

Also during this phase students may conduct community research, such as interviewing community professionals and gathering information in the forms of brochures, booklets, or videotapes from state or local agencies, nonprofit organizations, medical centers, and other agencies (Clawson & Couse, 1998). We arranged for students to talk with the Child Care Council and the directors of the child care centers in order to learn about literacy at the local level and resources available in the community.

After three weeks of background research, students were divided into three teams, and each visited one of the participating child-care settings. Teams assessed the literacy needs of each setting, examining the quantity, quality (e.g., developmental appropriateness, gender and cultural sensitivity, overall condition), and accessibility of existing literacy materials. Furthermore, students observed children's use of the existing materials and how parents and teachers facilitated children's literacy development. Students also talked with parents, teachers, and directors to gain a better understanding of what these individuals saw as the literacy needs of the child-care setting.

Each team then consolidated its observations and interviews in a class presentation. These presentations are best scheduled five to six weeks into the semester in order to allow students sufficient time to gather information, yet still have enough time in the semester to complete the service learning project and reflect on it (Clawson & Couse, 1998). Teams also made recommendations for literacy materials and activities most appropriate for the particular child-care setting. Presentations are effective learning strategies in that they allow students to give feedback to each other (Berke & Hamon, 1997). In the current project, for example, students in the audience gave helpful suggestions and identified potential resources as each team presented. Additionally, because each of the child-care settings varied in meaningful ways (e.g., ages and numbers of children served, number and qualifications of teach-

ing staff), presentations allowed students to learn about differences in literacy needs and child care in the community.

During this phase, the instructor serves as a resource person and facilitator (Clawson & Couse, 1998). We shared our expertise in the subject matter through lectures, discussion, and class assignments. We also helped connect students with the community by inviting those involved in the collaboration to speak to the class or arranging times for students to visit the child-care settings. Finally, we encouraged students to stay focused on the issue and the current phase of the project. As noted by Clawson and Couse (1998), students may try to circumvent the research phase and begin planning for the actual service project. Our task is to assist them in developing foundational knowledge first, then using that knowledge to inform the service.

Phase 2: Implementation. During the second phase, students implement the service project. In the current project, a collaborative team of faculty and community representatives identified the project that would be implemented by the class. However, other courses may require that students design their own service projects. In the latter scenario, it is helpful for students to submit a written proposal of the project prior to implementing any service. The proposal should include a thorough description of the project to be undertaken, its timeline, and how it will be evaluated (Clawson & Couse, 1998).

Every proposed project, whether developed by students or a collaborative team of individuals from the academic institution and community, should be evaluated using two questions. The first concerns whether the project is reasonable in terms of time and resources (Clawson & Couse, 1998). With respect to time, we have found that identifying due dates for projects to be proposed, implemented, and evaluated ensures that all students are working in the same phase. This allows greater opportunity to connect course content with the service learning application. In addition, instructors may need to assist students in identifying appropriate resources. In the current project, students initially planned to donate their own childhood books and purchase new books. We encouraged them to examine the limitations of these approaches and consider other ways of acquiring literacy materials. Class time also was set aside to help them develop strategies and coordinate their efforts in soliciting donations of literacy materials from publishers, merchants, campus organizations, and members of the community (Clawson & Shin, 2000). We believe that using class time for these activities is appropriate because students' professional skills are developed.



The second question to consider with any service learning project is whether it abides by all university and community policies (Clawson & Couse, 1998). The campus volunteer or community service is a helpful resource. In the current project, this office assisted with transportation to and from the child-care settings, provided clarification in issues surrounding liability to students and directors of the child-care settings, and assisted in publicizing the literacy drive to the university and surrounding community.

As donations were received, teams of students identified those items that best fit with the recommendations made for each child-care setting. Additionally, students evaluated materials based on their foundational knowledge. That is, donations were screened in terms of appropriateness, gender and cultural sensitivity, and potential for promoting literacy development. During this second phase, class time should be set aside to discuss students' progress, successes, and challenges in implementing the service project. Moreover, connections must be made between their service efforts and course content. In the present course, a number of class discussions centered on new donations, such as computer software and videotapes featuring popular media characters. We encouraged students to use their foundational knowledge to evaluate whether such materials would indeed promote literacy.

Also during this phase, students planned how literacy materials would be presented to each child-care setting. Rather than simply dropping-off the materials, students were required to implement activities with children, parents, and teachers in order to introduce the new materials and demonstrate their proper usage. We believe that interaction with the community is an integral component of service learning. It is this interaction that enhances the meaning of course content and allows students to apply their foundational knowledge (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Sax & Astin, 1997). Furthermore, demonstrating the use of the literacy materials to children, parents, and teachers at the child-care settings allows students to develop their professional skills. Again, this aspect of a service learning project must be well integrated into the course. In the current project, class time was designated for students to plan and practice ways of introducing and using the donated materials. Activities included having students model interactive methods of reading and create reading and writing activities for children and adults. After each team's literacy activities had been proposed and approved, directors at the child-care settings were contacted, and times were set for students' actual implementation (Clawson & Shin,

2000). We recommend that field requirements be completed at least two to three weeks before the end of the term to allow sufficient time for the final phase of the project.

Phase 3: Reflection. In the third and final phase, students reflect on and evaluate the service learning experience. Reflection may take a variety of forms, including writing, discussions, and class presentations (Sax & Astin, 1997). Regardless of its form, reflection is essential in successful service learning. Indeed, Dewey's educational philosophy suggests it is through reflection that the learner comes to understand, use, and transfer knowledge from experience (Giles & Eyler, 1994).

We require that students reflect on their experiences through class presentations and individual writing. First, each team presents to the class the outcomes, successes, and/or failures of the service project (Clawson & Couse, 1998). In the current project, teams reported on their experiences presenting the literacy materials at the child-care settings. Students also were expected to demonstrate their foundational knowledge by providing examples of the concepts discussed in the course and their professional skills by summarizing the strategies they used while interacting with children and adults at the child-care settings.

Clawson and Couse (1998) encourage instructors to invite to presentations those individuals from the university or community who have assisted in the service learning project. Doing so may lend a more professional atmosphere to the presentations. It also allows members of the community to voice their reflections on the experience, which may improve future service learning initiatives and enable students to better understand the viewpoints of those served (Kraft, 1996).

Each student also is required to write a paper describing his/her roles in the project, intended and actual outcomes of the service project, connections to course readings and discussion, and insights into his/her own personal and professional growth as a result of the experience (Clawson & Couse, 1998). An individual reflection paper has a number of advantages. First, it provides students with an opportunity to convey what they have learned and reflect on their own contributions (Han, 1995). Second, when group projects include an individually graded component, students are more likely to work cooperatively within their groups, thereby increasing the likelihood that the project will be a success (Walker, 1996). Third, instructors may find these papers informative in revealing what students gained from service learning and how the course and instructor role might be



modified in the future (Clawson & Couse, 1998).

A complete analysis of students' reflections on the current project is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is useful to examine several predominant themes that were evident in the reflections. Nearly half of the students ($n = 19$) described how the service learning project had enhanced their foundational knowledge, specifically their understanding of literacy development. Many students ($n = 25$) indicated that the service learning project had helped them to develop professional skills, and five students stated that the experience confirmed their career choice to work with children and families. A number of students commented on the positive experience of collaborating with classmates ($n = 11$) and connecting with the community ($n = 18$). Furthermore, over half ($n = 24$) described a feeling of personal satisfaction from participating in the project. However, not all reflections were positive. Six students described their dislike of group projects, and four were uncomfortable with the locations of the child-care settings.

Our community partners in the collaboration also reflected on the service learning project, and their views overall were quite positive. All viewed the students' efforts in addressing literacy needs as effective and appreciated the enthusiasm with which students approached the project. The directors of the participating child-care settings ($n = 3$) liked having input into what students would be doing, in contrast to simply having students placed at their facilities. Teachers at the child-care settings ($n = 7$) were asked for feedback as well. Many ($n = 5$) mentioned the new ideas and energy the students brought to the child-care setting and indicated how much the children benefited from the project. All teachers were pleased with the quantity and quality of the literacy materials, although some ($n = 3$) had hoped for more of certain types of materials (e.g., videotapes, computer games). Other negative feedback concerned how some students did not pre-arrange visits ($n = 2$), that their presence was distracting to children ($n = 3$), and that some had food, drink, or gum with them ($n = 2$). Finally, it should be noted that directors and teachers at all three child-care settings indicated interest in participating in future service learning projects and serving as sites for other student placements.

Student reflections and feedback from collaborative team members are helpful to faculty in determining the success of service learning. In the current project, student reflections suggested that the service learning project met the academic goals we had set, and feedback from directors and teachers indicated that the community benefited from the service. We also can use these data for improving and refining future service learning initiatives. Specifically, based on students' reflections,

it may be that students need more assistance in managing group dynamics and arranging transportation. Additionally, teachers' comments suggest that students would benefit from training in how to conduct themselves professionally in the field.

Conclusions

In conclusion, although there is no rigid template of a service learning course (Altman, 1996), collaboration between members of the academic institution and community and thorough integration of the service learning project with course content enhance the likelihood of success. Collaboration allows the service learning project to meet academic criteria as well as address a real need in the community. Integration of service learning into the course facilitates students' development of foundational knowledge, professional skills, and appreciation for the applied experience (i.e., socially-responsive knowledge). One approach to use in integrating service learning within a course requires that students conduct background research, implement a project, and then reflect on their experience. Whereas the focus of the course described in this paper was language and literacy development, we have found that this three-phase model can be used and adapted across a variety of courses and topics.

Service learning within academic courses has potential benefits for students, the community, and the academic institution. It is particularly appropriate for students in family and consumer sciences, whose professional goals require that they are able to apply foundational knowledge and utilize well-developed professional skills with children, individuals, and families.

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Implementation of Service Learning in Higher Education and the Occurrence of Reciprocity

Nweze E. Nnakwe

Abstract

The purpose of this project was to incorporate service learning into working with low-income families and to determine the occurrence of reciprocity of service learning for students and the community sites. Reciprocity in this case is the mutual interchange of service and learning between the students and the community. Thirteen community site supervisors and thirty-one students who enrolled in a Community Nutrition course completed a program that integrated community service into an academic course. The results show that ninety percent of the students believed service learning should be included in future courses and the time commitment for the service learning experience was appropriate. One hundred percent of the community site supervisors said they would continue to participate in future service learning projects. This project may serve as a model for integrating community service in future academic courses.

Introduction

Several institutions have discussed, pondered, argued, and waffled over the importance of university community relationships and their relevance to academic core and mission. As a result, several questions emerged. For example, what forms should these partnerships take? Is this scholarly work? How do we avoid being overwhelmed by community needs? Why and how should we apply our intellectual energies to community issues (Holland & Gelmon, 1998)? In service learning, students participate in a service activity for a nonprofit organization and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (McCarthy & Tucker, 1999; Jerrold, 1997; Bringle & Hatcher, 1996, Nnakwe, 1999). Service learning is hardly an add-on experience that allows students to do good for the community; rather it is a form of experiential learning. As an experiential activity tied to course objectives, service learning projects can be extremely useful and relevant to many disciplines (Boss, 1994). Giles and Eyster (1994), and Holland and Gelmon (1998) reported that students who provided community

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service as part of a course showed a significant increase in their beliefs that people can make a difference and that they should be involved. These responses demonstrated an enhanced commitment to perform volunteer service the following semester. They also found that students became less likely to blame social service clients for their misfortunes and more likely to stress a need for equal opportunity. According to Holland and Gelmon (1998) some faculty are skeptical about the appropriateness of applying knowledge to community issues and express concern about losing their scholarly agendas to nonacademic interests. Questions are raised about the relationship of this new kind of scholarly work to more traditional scholarly priorities. However, faculty and administrators alike see the potential for enhancing community relations, student learning, and overall scholarly performance of the institution through applied scholarship and various forms of community-based learning.

Several authors have indicated that service learning will help broaden liberal arts education by bringing the community into the classroom to educate undergraduates and address social issues at the same time (McDaniel, 1994, Jarosz & Bogart, 1996). According to Serow (1991) community service helps students develop empathy. It can help students learn to deal with differences and can often bring students into contact with those who are different from themselves.

Effective partnerships use knowledge-based collaborations in which all partners have things to teach each other, things to learn from each other, and things they will learn together. An effective partnership builds the capacity of each partner to accomplish its own mission while also working together. If mutual awareness of benefit to self and others is not recognized, then service learning has fallen short as an educational tool. Failure of the recipient to perceive what has been given as a service invalidates the experience for all. Holland and Gelmon (1998) stated that successful partnerships focus on mutual benefits. Greene (1998) reported that reciprocity of benefit is a concept deeply rooted in the idea of education through service. Thus the objectives of this project were to integrate service learning into working with low-income families and determine the occurrence of reciprocity of the service learning for students and the community sites.

Methods and Procedure

The community service learning experiences were integrated into six weeks of a fall semester Community Nutrition course. This course is a senior level course, required for all Food and Nutrition/Dietetic students. Service learning was integrated into

the course content, assignments, and in-class and out-of-class activities. Thirty-one students completed the program, which combined an academic course with fieldwork.

Identification of community needs and community organizations to meet the needs

To determine the duties, needs of the community, and schedule the student's activities at the sites, the author worked collaboratively with community health and food assistance agencies: State health departments, center for health and human services, anti-hunger advocacy organizations, congregate meal programs, food pantries, soup kitchens, and other community-based agencies. Site supervisors responded to a questionnaire at the end of the semester to determine the occurrence of reciprocity of service learning.

Community course integration

This project involved two steps. First, students worked in pairs to carry out various service activities at food assistance program sites. Students administered the Radimer/Cornell food insecurity questionnaire to estimate the prevalence of hunger and food insecurity in individuals participating in the food assistance programs. Using an evaluation form, site directors/supervisors gave feedback on students' service performance.

Before working at the sites, community outreach professionals trained students on how to work with vulnerable populations. The students were also trained on how to administer the Radimer/Cornell questionnaire. The training and preparation took two three-hour class periods. Students spent three class periods at food assistance program sites and one class period for discussion. The students kept a reflection journal/log of thought provoking experiences, the quality of their interactions with the community partner(s), and what they learned during the interactions. This information was used for class discussions and later published on the university's web site by the students. The students also wrote a paper to discuss the agency where they worked, their experiences at the community sites, and government food assistance programs in the United States.

Students served a total number of 1800 clients. The students were assessed for carrying out their duties at the sites, completing the pre- and post-tests, administering at least five questionnaires, publishing their journal/log on the university web site, and writing a term paper relating their experiences working in government agencies providing food assistance to vulnerable populations.

At the beginning and the end of the semester, a questionnaire by Plous and White (1995) was used as pre- and post-test measures



and was administered to determine the students' attitudes and knowledge of food insecurity/hunger and homelessness. In this questionnaire, students were asked to indicate whether they believed the American public was "too worried" or "not worried enough" or whether the public expressed the "right amount of concern" about hunger and homelessness. They were asked the same questions about their beliefs. Students were also asked to indicate whether they would contribute money, volunteer time, talk to others, and read about the issues (responses were rated on a 9-point rating scale with end points labeled less than most and more than most). In addition, the students responded to a questionnaire to determine the reciprocity of the service learning. The responses were scored on a 5-point scale with 1 meaning strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neutral, 4 agree, and 5 strongly agree.

This exploratory study generated data from all thirty-one students participating in the service learning experience and thirteen site supervisors. Thus, the total population served as the sample for data collection. Scores on the pre- and post-tests concerning the students' attitudes and knowledge of food insecurity/hunger and homelessness were statistically compared by t-test. The scores on the reciprocity of the service learning were also calculated using percentages and descriptive statistics from the SPSS computer package. Differences were considered significant at $p < 0.05$.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 and Figure 1 present the mean scores of the pre and posttests and the questions about world hunger and homelessness.

Concern ratings

The students' concern about world hunger and homelessness increased significantly after the service learning at $p < 0.001$ and $p \leq 0.03$, respectively.

Figure 1. Mean Score of the Responses to World Hunger and Homelessness

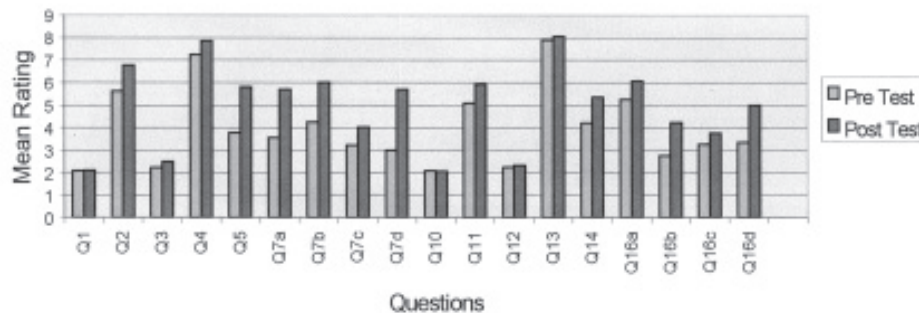


Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Pre and Posttests to the Questions on World Hunger and Homelessness.

	<i>Pre test</i>	<i>Posttest</i>	<i>p<value</i>
Q1 Do you think the American public is too worried, not worried enough or not worried about world hunger?	2.13	2.17	-
Q2 Compared with other people of your age and sex, how concerned are you about world hunger?	5.17	6.60	0.001
Q3 Do you feel you are too worried, not worried enough, or express the right amount of concern about world hunger?	2.23	2.27	-
Q4 As social issues go, how important is world hunger?	7.13	7.63	0.050
Q5 How active have you been in working to end world hunger?	4.07	6.10	0.001
Q7a How frequently do you contribute time and money to a hunger or relief organization?	3.93	5.93	0.001
Q7b How often do you donate food to feed hungry people?	4.97	5.93	0.030
Q7c How often do you give money to a hungry person on the street?	3.33	4.13	0.020
Q7d How often do you talk to others about world hunger?	3.40	5.47	0.001
Q10 Do you think the American public is worried, not worried enough or not worried about homelessness?	2.30	2.10	-
Q11 Compared with other people of your age and sex, how concerned are you about homelessness?	5.60	6.33	0.030
Q12 Do you feel that you are too worried, not worried enough or express the right amount of concern about homelessness?	2.43	2.23	-
Q13 As social issues go, how important is home?	8.23	8.23	-
Q14 How active have you been in working to end homelessness?	5.13	5.90	0.040
Q16a How frequently do you contribute food, clothing, or money to a group to fight homelessness?	5.63	6.40	0.050
Q16b How frequently do you volunteer at a shelter for the homeless?	3.17	5.97	0.001
Q16c How often do you give money to a homeless person on the street?	3.53	3.83	-
Q16d How often do you talk to others about homelessness?	4.27	5.43	.005
Q16e How often do you read books and articles about homeless?	3.67	5.27	.001

Activism ratings

The students' interest to volunteer, make donations, and talk to others about ending world hunger and homelessness increased significantly after the service learning experiences. These were statistically significant at $p < 0.001$, $p < 0.03$, and $p < 0.003$, respectively. These ratings indicated that students felt the need to become more involved in community issues after their fieldwork experience.



Importance

The mean score for the posttest on the importance of world hunger and the desire to read books and articles about homelessness increased significantly at $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.001$, respectively. Very few students expressed any negative feelings about the service learning requirement or the work itself. The results of this study provide incentive for universities to engage students in service learning, expand the educational agenda, and build community partnerships that are mutually beneficial even when limited in intensity and duration.

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of the students' perceptions of the benefits of service learning. Questions addressed whether service learning helped them to understand the concept of the course better, heightened their desire to learn, made the course more enjoyable, and whether they would like to enroll in other courses that included service learning.

Table 2. The Mean and Standard Deviation of the Occurrence of reciprocity by Students.

	*Mean	Standard Deviation
1. The service learning experience has helped me to understand the course concepts better.	4.4	0.8
2. Course material about the Food Assistance Program was more meaningful after the service learning experience	4.3	0.9
3. The service learning experience made this course more enjoyable	4.5	0.8
4. The service learning experience was an educational experience.	4.7	0.8
5. The service learning heightened my desire to learn	4.3	0.9
6. I would like to enroll in other courses that include service learning experience.	4.1	1.0

* A high score indicates strongly agree

1= Strongly disagree

5 = Strongly agree

Ninety percent of students suggested that the instructor should include service learning in the course in the future. Before service learning, the interest level in community service was 26% high, 55% moderate and 16% low. After service learning, the interest level increased by 36% very high and 61% high. The difference was statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. Ninety

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Occurrence of Reciprocity by Community Sites.

	*Mean	Standard Deviation
1. The students met my expectations associated with this project.	4.5	0.5
2. The students met their own expectations associated with this project.	4.1	0.7
3. The students provided a valuable service for my agency.	4.2	0.1
4. This experience proved to be a win-win situation for the students and my agency.	4.4	0.9
5. The faculty member had provided an adequate overview of the project for the students before they arrived at my agency.	4.6	0.5
6. The faculty member maintained a sufficient level of communication with me throughout the project	4.7	0.5

* A high score indicates strongly agree
 1= Strongly disagree
 5 = Strongly agree

percent of the students stated that the time commitment for the service learning experience was appropriate.

Winniford et al. (1995) examined the traits and motivations that attract college students to, and keep them involved in, volunteer service organizations. Findings indicated that many students saw egoistic rewards as important to their continued involvement and were motivated by the sense of satisfaction they received and by the affiliation and friendship that they maintained. Social obligation did not play a particularly important role in students' initial or continued involvement in these organizations.

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation of the community supervisors' response to questions pertaining to the reciprocity of student activities: 53% of the community supervisors strongly agreed and 31% agreed that the students met their expectations; 62% of the supervisors stated that the experience was a win-win situation, and that the students' performance was helpful, and 32% said it was very helpful; 100% of the site supervisors said that they would participate in future service learning projects. Sustainability in service learning is very important and it is directly associated with continued ongoing sense of reciprocity related to the exchange of knowledge and expertise.



Considering the responses of the students and the community site supervisors, reciprocity of benefit was established both in students and community sites. Others have reported on reciprocity demonstrating that students and service recipients experienced increases in competence and reduced feelings of isolation (Calabrese and Schumer, 1986). Gorman, Duffy, & Heffernan (1994) also reported a significant difference between the pretest score of students with service experience and students who had engaged only in reflection on ethical issues. Greene (1998) investigated the occurrence of reciprocity between service learning students and service recipients in two conditions of service learning. Thirty-six occupational therapy students enrolled in two occupational therapy programs. Sixteen participated in service learning with older adults living in nursing homes, and twenty were involved in service learning with individuals with disabilities residing in community settings. It was found that all students visiting older adults and all students involved with individuals with disabilities expressed an awareness that the service learning experiences benefited them. Ninety-four percent of the older adults and one hundred percent of individuals with disabilities stated that they benefited from the service learning experiences.

Most students have learned about hunger and poverty through media stories that combine impersonal sets of statistics about suffering with sensational images from faraway places. This service learning project put students in direct contact with vulnerable populations in the community.

The following journal entries and comments by students provide insight into the profound impact of service learning on the students:

- “Volunteering at these area soup kitchens really makes you feel good about yourself and makes you feel as though you are making a difference.”
- “It was fun and interesting to participate in the discussion about the dietary needs of the participants.”
- “I felt grateful for what I have and how lucky I actually am. It is hard to realize at times . . . [that there are] less fortunate citizens living in your community.”
- “I enjoyed my experiences helping at these sites and think everyone should try to become involved as often as possible.”
- “I felt like I was helping to serve hungry people and I was someone new for them to talk to and tell stories to.”
- “This experience helped me to learn the basic fundamentals of the programs. I may be able to use the knowledge I learned in future situations when someone is in need of such assistance.”
- “While at the site I had a warm feeling in my heart.”

- “I began to realize that these people were there for all different reasons and were not any different than people that I knew or have known. This opportunity made me realize that I should not take things for granted and that I should not complain so much about the hard things in my life.”

Recommendation for future integration of community service into teaching this course

Due to the diversity and dynamic nature of the outcomes of this project, the author plans to include more readings dealing with service learning as part of the course assignments and to expand the community experience by including more service learning sites. Establishing concrete community partnerships is essential to the success of service learning.

Conclusion

Service learning projects can take many forms and be beneficial to both the students involved and to the community. The results of the study showed that students’ interest in solving social problems increased significantly. Service learning experiences made students more aware of the needs of the community. In addition, one hundred percent of community site supervisors would continue to participate in the service learning projects.

This study also showed that it is possible to integrate service learning into a college course to provide reciprocal benefits, even when limited in intensity and duration. Involvement with service learning may be an important part of a faculty member’s overall contribution to his or her institution. Service learning offers faculty new ways to satisfy expectations regarding teaching, research, and service. Overall, service learning activities present an opportunity to reinforce classroom content while building community partnerships and providing a valuable service to the community.

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Students' Perceptions of Service Learning Participation in a College of Health and Human Sciences

Ann P. Blackwell

Abstract

Perceptions of service learning participation are assessed using a sample of students in the College of Health and Human Sciences at the University of Southern Mississippi. Comparisons based on gender and school affiliation are also reported. Students responded to specific statements regarding the value of service learning, attitudinal changes resulting from service learning participation, and the effect of service learning on the students' academic course of study. Results of the study indicate strong support for service learning participation at the university level. Participants report that service learning is a powerful curricular tool that can be used to improve academic work and address real needs in the community.

Introduction

The concept of colleges and universities emphasizing service to the community is not new. In fact, commitment of post-secondary education to service can be traced to colonial times when colleges were founded and influenced by religious denominations (Grieve, 1991). Early educational entities encouraged service as a means of meeting the needs of society and perpetuating the existing culture (Dougherty & Hammack, 1990; Rudolph, 1977). Education for service was actually viewed as an obligation of colleges and universities during this period of history (Robson, 1985).

Colleges and universities have recently re-emphasized the concept of service. In fact, service at the post-secondary level has received a great deal of attention as a result of Ernest Boyer's vision of a *New American College* (1994). In the new American college, university students engage in meaningful community service during the college years to produce a more holistic and significant college experience. Students are encouraged to connect the university experience with the world beyond the campus and evaluate their potential for making a difference in the community.

Boyer (1990) further addresses the role of service at the university level in *Scholarship Reconsidered*. He describes the "scholarship of application" in which university students and faculty use knowledge gained through study and research

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to address community needs. Boyer contends that this type of scholarly service is “particularly needed in a world in which huge, almost intractable problems call for the skills and insights only the academy can provide” (1990, p. 23). He clearly distinguishes this type of service from “citizenship” activities. In the scholarship of application, service activities are connected with one’s specific field of knowledge and relate to one’s professional activities.

Boyer’s description of scholarly service is exemplified in the principle of service learning, a form of experiential learning that has “taken off in higher education as an important component of the college experience for students” (Miller, 2000, p. 255). Service learning is the integration of an academic curriculum with actual service activity. It enhances what is taught in the classroom by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the larger community (Berson, 1994). Through service activities, students make a connection between all aspects of their education and the impact that this education has on real needs in our society (Butler, 1994; Dillon & Van Riper, 1993; Ehrlich, 1995; Perrone, 1993; Smilow, 1993).

Service learning provides an avenue through which students can become actively involved in their communities. Through this involvement, students are encouraged to become lifelong, active participants in the community and identify themselves as change agents. They can leave the university eager to engage in political and cultural systems in their environment. In essence, students learn that their lives can make a difference; they can improve quality of life in communities through individual acts of civic responsibility (Anderson, 1993; Dillon & Van Riper, 1993; Kelliher, 1993; Perrone, 1993; Purpel, 1998). The National and Community Service Act of 1990 promotes this concept and encourages integration of student community service, volunteerism, and service learning in the college curriculum (Brown, 1993).

Service learning is distinguished from other educational initiatives by the connection of service in the larger community with academic outcomes established in the classroom. Service opportunities are used as a curricular tool to reinforce classroom content. The result is powerful pedagogy. Service learning projects transform classroom content into useful understanding for life (Anderson, 1993; Dillon & Van Riper, 1993; Perrone, 1993; Smilow, 1993). The fact that community problems can be addressed (McCarthy & Tucker, 1999) and social responsibility can be fostered concomitantly represents additional dividends (Butler, 1994).

Numerous educators hail the benefits of service learning participation (Anderson, 1993; Brown, 1993; Conrad & Hedin, 1991; Ellis, 1993; Hargrove, 1993; Nathan & Kielsmeier, 1991). There is limited information, however, concerning the views of students. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of university students regarding participation in service learning. A secondary purpose was to compare students' perceptions based on gender and school affiliation.

The focus of the research was limited to courses with a service-learning component in the Schools of Family and Consumer Sciences, Social Work, Nursing, Human Performance and Recreation, and Community Health in the College of Health and Human Sciences at the University of Southern Mississippi. Because the College of Health and Human Sciences is comprised essentially of "service" disciplines, the integration of academic content and service is viable. Opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skill in specific settings and with specific audiences abound. The challenge for faculty is not identifying needs or audiences, but rather implementing policies and procedures for efficacious results. This study was designed to evaluate efficacy in terms of student perspective.

Methodology

Subjects

This study was limited to students enrolled in a semester course with a service-learning component in the College of Health and Human Sciences at The University of Southern Mississippi ($n = 142$). Most of the respondents were females (78.2%) classified as senior level students (69.7%). Ages of respondents ranged from 18 to 37 years old, but the majority of participants (73.3%) reported ages between 18 and 25. The number of respondents was fairly evenly distributed among the five schools involved in the study. Twenty-eight percent indicated affiliation with the School of Family and Consumer Sciences, representing the largest group. Students surveyed in the School of Nursing comprised 26 percent of the respondents, and students in Social Work made up 20 percent of the study. Students in the School of Community Health made up 14%, while students in the School of Human Performance and Recreation comprised the smallest group of participants according to school affiliation (10.6%).

Instrumentation

A survey instrument was developed by garnering ideas from Dutton (1993). Students were asked to respond to specific



statements regarding the value of service learning, attitudinal changes resulting from service learning participation, and the effect of service learning on the students' academic course of study. Twelve structured statements were rated using a 4-point Likert scale.

Content validity was determined through review of the literature. Reliability was ascertained through pilot testing; a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .81 was determined.

Results

Twelve statements were designed to ascertain students' perceptions of participation in service learning. Mean scores were computed using the following values: 1 – strongly disagree,

Table 1: Mean Scores for Statements 1-12

Number and Text of Statement	Mean Score
1. The service I did through this class helped me to see how academic background can enhance quality of life.	3.51
2. The service I did through this class helped me to better understand the lectures and readings required for this class.	3.27
3. The service I did through this class helped me to grow intellectually.	3.38
4. The service I did through this class helped me to grow emotionally.	3.39
5. The service I did through this class challenged my attitudes about people.	3.46
6. The service I did through this class changed my attitudes about people in a positive manner.	3.36
7. The service I did through this class was beneficial to the community.	3.50
8. I would have learned more in this class if more time were spent in the classroom rather than doing service in the community.	1.89
9. The idea of combining service and course work should be practiced in more classes at the university.	3.25
10. I was already involved in doing service in my community before taking this course.	2.54
11. This class has made me more interested in doing service than I was before taking the class.	3.20
12. I will continue to do service after this course is finished.	3.25

2 – disagree, 3 – agree, and 4 – strongly agree. Statements with a mean score above 3.0 designate strong agreement by participants. Statements with a mean score below 2.0 indicate strong disagreement by students. Mean scores for statements 1-12 of the survey instrument are provided in Table 1.

The data reveal that students strongly agreed with the ten statements designed to elicit a positive response. Statement 1 received the highest mean score of 3.51 followed closely by statement 7 with a mean score of 3.50. Statement 8, designed to elicit a negative response, recorded the lowest mean score of 1.89.

To compare students' perceptions according to gender, a t-test with a 2-tail probability was utilized.

Results revealed that responses to five of the survey statements were significantly different. Male participants consistently reported lower mean scores for the survey statements than female respondents. See Table 2.

Comparison of students' perceptions of service learning based on school affiliation revealed that students in the School of Family and Consumer Sciences responded differently to four of the survey statements. Table 3 reports mean scores for statements 1, 4, 7, and 11 and reveals that students in the School of Family and Consumer Sciences responded with consistently higher mean scores.

Table 2: T-Test and Mean Scores by Gender for Statements 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11

Variable	Mean Scores and T df p
3. The service I did through this class helped me to grow intellectually.	2.68* 140 .008 Male (Mean = 3.10; SD = .746) Female (Mean = 3.46; SD = .644)
4. The service I did through this class helped me to grow emotionally.	3.51* 140 .001 Male (Mean = 3.00; SD = .730) Female (Mean = 3.50; SD = .686)
5. The service I did through this class challenged my attitudes about people.	3.80* 140 <.001 Male (Mean = 3.10; SD = .746) Female (Mean = 3.57; SD = .566)
6. The service I did through this class changed my attitudes about people in a positive manner.	2.90* 140 .001 Male (Mean = 3.06; SD = .629) Female (Mean = 3.44; SD = .642)
11. This class has made me more interested in doing service in my community than I was before.	2.09* 140 .038 Male (Mean = 2.97; SD = .706) Female (Mean = 3.27; SD = .713)
*p < .05	



Discussion

Students' Perceptions of Service Learning Participation

Students in the College of Health and Human Sciences at The University of Southern Mississippi strongly support the concept of service learning at the post-secondary level. The study revealed consistent agreement from students regarding positive results of service learning participation. In fact, 85.3% of the students indicated that service learning should be practiced in more classes at the university level. This compares positively with the study done by Dutton (1993) in which service learning participation garnered supportive remarks from respondents.

Overwhelmingly, participants reported that service learning participation strengthened the connection between academic background and the impact it has on quality of life. 138 students (97.1%) agreed with the assertions of Butler (1994) and Ehrlich (1995) that knowledge and skills acquired in class can be used in volunteer service to address real needs in our society. Interestingly, this hallmark of service learning was the highest rated concept in the study.

In addition, participants lauded service learning as a powerful curricular tool that can be used to reinforce classroom content. 132 students (93.0%) acknowledged that the service performed through the class helped them to grow intellectually. This supports the assertion by Nathan and Kielsmeier (1991) that student intellectual development is accelerated by service learning participation. In addition, 89.0% of the respondents reported that

service learning participation enhanced their understanding of lectures and readings required for class. This grasp of the relationship between theory and reality is a critical by-product of service learning participation (Smilow, 1993).

Table 3: Mean Scores by School Affiliation for Statements 1, 4, 7, and 11

Variable	School	Mean Score
1. The service I did through this class helped me to see how academic background can enhance quality of life.	FCS	3.71*
	SW	3.21*
4. The service I did through this class helped me to grow emotionally.	FCS	3.64*
	CH	3.05*
7. The service I did through this class was beneficial to the community.	FCS	3.71*
	SW	3.24*
11. This class has made me more interested in doing service in my community than I was before.	FCS	3.53*
	SW	2.86*

Note. FCS=Family and Consumer Sciences; SW=Social Work; CH=Community Health.
* $p < .05$

Students in the study also confirmed additional benefits derived from involvement in service learning. For example, 93.0% of the participants revealed that the volunteer service performed through class helped them to grow emotionally. They experienced changed attitudes and broadened their perspective regarding people in the world. These findings strongly support the work of Conrad and Hedin (1991), Ellis (1993), and Hargrove (1993).

An additional benefit of service learning was posited by Berson (1994) who reported that community concerns can be addressed at the same time that students experience intellectual and emotional growth. This view was strongly supported by participants earning the second highest rating of the study. Almost all (96%) of the students indicated that the service they performed was beneficial to the community.

One final component of service learning participation targeted in the study involved encouragement of students to become lifelong, active citizens in the community. In this manner, quality of life in communities is improved through individual acts of civic responsibility (Ehrlich, 1995; Purpel, 1998). The majority of respondents reported that service learning participation made them more interested in doing volunteer service than they were prior to taking the class. Additionally, 89.2% of the participants indicated that they would continue to do service after the course was completed. These findings support the premise established by Kelliher (1993) and Perrone (1993) that service learning participation instills in students the belief that their lives can make a difference. Through the service experience, students conclude that their knowledge and skills represent valuable resources for social improvement (Gonzalez, Wagner, & Brunton, 1993).

Comparison of Students' Perceptions of Service Learning Participation

Female students reported higher mean scores for five of the survey statements. These findings are congruent with research concerning female development. The research reveals that women define themselves through attachment to others. It is through connections with other people that women discover themselves and their potential (Knudson-Martin, 1994). Females actually gain autonomy through connection to others and opportunities to care for others (Gilligan, 1982). Benson, Harris, and Rogers (1992) also determined that satisfying social commitments are more critical to a woman's than to a man's identity development. As a result, women respond differently to opportunities in which they interact with and assist others. Opportunities for attachment,



connection, and commitment to others are abundant through service learning participation.

With regard to school affiliation, several differences were noted in the results of the study. Students in the School of Family and Consumer Sciences reported significantly different mean scores than students representing other schools in the study. Because the mission for professionals in the field of Family and Consumer Sciences is to apply scientific principles to practical problems in order to improve quality of life for individuals and families (Blankenship & Moerchen, 1979), the connection between academic content and service is stressed throughout undergraduate classes. The service learning experience provides an opportunity to cement the theory by combining knowledge and skills with actual service to a community group. The higher mean scores validate the connection established by students between academic content and volunteer service. The higher mean scores are an indication that these students experienced the efficacy of service learning through their participation with specific community groups. In addition, students in Family and Consumer Sciences are typically female. As discussed earlier, studies in female development have established that women define themselves and experience growth through connections with other people (Knudson-Martin, 1994).

Limitations

Although this research makes a contribution to the literature regarding students' perceptions of service learning participation at the university level, limitations exist. The population for the study was restricted to students enrolled in classes with a service learning component in the Schools of Family and Consumer Sciences, Social Work, Nursing, Community Health, and Human Performance and Recreation at The University of Southern Mississippi. Because the study was limited to one semester's offerings, results of the study reflect students' perceptions of service learning based only on courses and instructors in place that semester. Also, gender differences in programs may have caused an interaction effect.

Survey methodology was utilized in this study. Therefore, the data collected were dependent on the validity of the instrument itself. In addition, the survey relied on self-reported data provided by respondents. The researcher relied on the assumption that participants provided candid responses to survey questions.

Recommendations for Future Research

The population for this study was limited to students enrolled in a semester course with a service-learning component in the College of Health and Human Sciences at The University of

Southern Mississippi. It would be beneficial to include students in other disciplines as well as students attending other universities. By increasing the total population, comparisons could be made among disciplines and regions. It would also be interesting to include private colleges in the population in order to compare perceptions of students attending state supported institutions and students attending privately supported programs.

A longitudinal study would provide data regarding the impact of service learning participation on lifelong commitment to volunteer service. A majority of participants indicated that they would continue doing service after completion of the course. A longitudinal study would confirm this outcome of service learning participation.

Conclusions

Based on the findings that revealed consistent agreement among participants regarding the results of service learning participation, claims made by proponents of service learning regarding its impact on students, the classroom, and the community are accurate. Students reported that the integration of academic curriculum with actual service activity represented a powerful pedagogy. Students' academic work improved, students' perceptions regarding people and volunteerism were challenged and changed, and real needs in the community were affected. Administrators, faculty, and others involved in education at the post-secondary level should advocate service learning as a viable experiential learning tool.

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Author's Note

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Assessment of Service Learning: An Often Overlooked Vital Link

Allen Martin

Abstract

Service learning is an increasingly popular pedagogy in the family and consumer sciences and is often highly praised for its benefits to the student, the learning organization, and the community. This article looks at the qualities of service learning assessment and gives an example of a service-learning course addressing the needs of at-risk youth and examples of service learning assessment strategies.

One of the most important, but often overlooked, components of any service-learning project is assessment. Assessment, as defined by Merriam-Webster (1986), is to determine the rate or amount of something or to make an official evaluation. In the case of service learning, there is a need to incorporate measures to assess both learning and service. This article looks at the qualities of good assessment. Additionally, examples of the assessment strategies for a specific service-learning course are illustrated.

Proper assessment of a service-learning course is imperative as the results provide feedback for the educator to refine and improve the course over time. Eyler and Giles (1999) documented positive cognitive and affective change in a nationwide study of service learning. Moreover, it is important to realize that appropriate assessment will provide program directors and other practitioners with the empirical support to help promote service-learning efforts.

Assessment options can be viewed as a continuum or hierarchy. At a basic level assessment can measure how well students master the primary concepts in the course, students' reactions and feelings, or affective measures in the form of changed attitudes or beliefs. Assessment of a service-learning project can measure the application of skills in a practical setting. At a more advanced level, assessment can be used to measure the degree to which a learner can synthesize and analyze the material being covered and to judge the effectiveness of a program in terms of improved performance of the community agency being served.

Assessing skills (knowledge and application) is straightforward. Traditional tests and quizzes covering the course content will accomplish the needed assessment for acquisition of knowledge and the ability to apply the knowledge.

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Assessing reactions and feelings and enhanced learning (synthesis and analysis) are particularly important in service learning, as service learning involves both cognitive and affective components. By their very nature, these advanced forms of learning are more complicated and require more planning on the part of the educator or person conducting the assessment.

To maximize the utility of assessment, an assessment plan must be integrated into the course from the very beginning. This assessment plan should include the following: well-written, purposive learning objectives incorporated into the course syllabus; classroom time devoted to discussing the pedagogy of service learning before the students begin their work with the community agency; and higher order methods of assessment must be conducted throughout the service-learning experience. Additionally, assessment processes should be designed to ensure the assimilation of multiple sources of assessment data.

Assessment Qualities and Principles

Carter-Wells (1996) stated that successful assessment programs and policies are guided by the following principles:

- Assessment should feed back information to the learner to guide future learning.
- Assessment should be based on multiple forms of evidence of learning.
- Assessment strategies and activities should draw on the affective and cognitive domains of learning.
- Assessment should be referenced to specified learning outcomes.
- Assessment practices should support the overall development of students as well as measure progress toward specific learning goals.
- Self-assessment should be included with the documentation of learning.

Angelo (1999) echoed many of these points but adds some that are specifically applicable to service learning. Angelo stated that, if learning is what really matters most, assessment practices should help students develop the skills, dispositions, and knowledge needed to engage actively—intellectually and emotionally—in their academic work. Assessment should be designed to assure that students are able to set and maintain realistically high, personally meaningful expectations and goals. Assessment should be designed so that students become explicitly aware of their values, beliefs, preconceptions, and prior learning and be willing to unlearn when necessary. Lastly, Angelo stated that assessment should be structured so that students can find connections to and real-world applications of what they are learning.

Assessment Example

A supervised field study course is used to introduce the concept of service learning in the Consumer Affairs program at the California State University, Northridge. The course is open to senior Consumer Affairs students who have had courses in family resource management, consumer issues, family finance, and financial counseling. If the course were to be given a formal name, it would be titled: Using Service Learning to Address the Needs of At-Risk Youth: An Independent Living Skills Program.

Objectives/Purpose of the Course

The goal of the “Independent Living Skills Program” is to teach at-risk adolescent boys and girls residing in a foster group setting the basic skills they need to function independently in society. Historically, a large percentage of the residents of this program have ended-up in adult correctional institutions soon after being emancipated from their foster-care environment, due in part to a lack of independent living skills. The purpose of this program is to reduce the number of at-risk youth who fail financially or enter adult correctional institutions because of their inability to obtain a job, keep a job, and manage a household.

Description of the Program

Senior Consumer Affairs students participate in a service-learning course wherein they develop and deliver independent living skills programming. The community partner in this example is the nonprofit organization, “Children are Our Future.” This organization runs 21 foster homes for teens in the areas served by this University. The “independent learning skills” program is divided into nine sections, each lasting between an hour and an hour and a half. Pairs of undergraduate students conduct the sessions weekly. They present the material in an interactive format using a variety of pedagogy such as videos, skits, in-class worksheets, homework, student participation, and workbook activities. The foster students’ input is solicited by administering a questionnaire that measures what they themselves would like to learn before the program begins. The topics that the students indicate are of most interest are incorporated into the program presentations to give the foster students a sense of ownership of the programming.

Typical topics to be covered in the course include:

- Budgeting
- Career Choice
- Interviewing Skills
- Credit
- Money Management
- Auto Shopping



- Apartment Shopping
- Insurance
- Consumer Rights

Course Learning Objectives

In this service-learning class, an attempt is made to spell out course learning objectives in a clear manner. Excerpts from this service-learning course syllabus are detailed in Table 1. This table illustrates how each set of learning objectives is paired with appropriate assessment strategies. As indicated earlier, assessment strategies fall along a continuum with basic concepts like knowledge and application at one end and more advanced

Learning Outcome	Assessment Strategy
Knowledge	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the population that you are assisting (i.e., "at-risk teens"). • Identify the demographic characteristics of this population. • Describe the role of the agency with which you are collaborating (i.e., "Children Are Our Future") within the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities in class for students to orally present and share their findings from their intern site, as well as other service learning opportunities they might envision with their clients. • Assign writing projects on the above topics. • Develop a problem-based learning scenario (i.e., How would the clients deal with the disappearance of the agency? What would be the impact of that on the client and the community?) • Creative exercises to develop fact sheets, thumbnail sketches, or flow charts of the agency.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define career options and extract transferable skills from service to career. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective journal writing assignments, or • Oral presentations on the topic. • Have students perform self-assessment of their transferable skills. • Career search strategies with volunteer organization or non-profit management.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of their agency's role in the structure of national, state, and local government as well as their community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written projects
Application	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate and apply time management techniques learned in a previous course "Family Resource Management" to curriculum development activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-written thorough lesson plans.
Analysis	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the mission and organizational structure of the service learning community partner. • Construct a product that conveys this mission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student developed high-quality and effective brochures, pamphlets, and public service announcements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique the issue of whether or not service learning should be mandated for all college students as part of learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class debate, culminating in a discussion on various positions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze what an individual's role in service and citizenship play in a democratic society. • Analyze what impact the agency has within the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write analytical paper. • Conduct a mock public forum or debate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the role of interest groups, media, and public opinion in affecting legislation that might impact your community agency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written projects • Role playing as a lobbyist
Synthesis	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate a plan for your agency to improve services, increase funding, or expand its mission using your understanding of governmental opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student written projects

concepts such as synthesis and analysis at the other. This table demonstrates how an effort is made to assess students in all areas of learning with a variety of assessment techniques.

Examples of Assessment Strategy Assignments

There are several recognized types of assignments that work well for assessing service learning. These include written and oral presentations, reflective journal writing, problem-based learning, critical incident papers, sense-making techniques, and critical thinking projects. Appendix A contains examples of assessment strategies for each of these projects.

Written Assignments and Oral Presentations

The purpose of these assignments is to equip the student with necessary communication skills. Writing assignments and oral presentations encourage students to organize their thoughts and integrate information. Prospective employers indicate that students with refined oral and written communication skills are in high demand.

Reflective Journal Writing

Journal writing has historically been the tool most often associated with assessing the reflective nature of service learning. According to DeAcosta (1995), journals provide students with a space for active, regular, systematic thinking about what they are learning. It is a tool that can be used by the student to monitor self-awareness and to keep track of goal attainment and progress. Journal writing also prepares and refocuses the student for discussions. It helps the student explore and gain insight into ideas and feelings, helping students chart and summarize personal exploration.

Problem-Based Learning

The purpose of this project is to have students develop and demonstrate their ability to solve real-world problems. This technique provides a case scenario with a problem pinpointed for the student. This exercise works best if the student can identify with the situation at hand. It is important to realize that individual perspectives and prior knowledge will determine what each person perceives as a problem.

In essence, the facilitator asks a series of questions that will guide the students into critically thinking about the situation, discussing the problem, and addressing the issue presented in the scenario. Problem-based learning offers students structured



opportunities to connect common sense with technical or institutionalized forms of reasoning and action (Roschelle, 1999).

Critical Incident Paper

The purpose of this project is to help students realize that “real-life” events can bring about powerful change in them as human beings (Tripp, 1993). Critical incident techniques describe the “shifts” in learning that take place at a significant turning point for the student. These are insights or “aha” moments that produce higher-order levels of learning.

To implement this technique, it is important to develop a series of questions so that students will recognize and appreciate as critical an incident that occurred to them at the internship site. The students are asked to focus on what they actually did, rather than what they “generally do” or “might do.” Sometimes this is an optional part of a multi-part assignment because not all students face a critical incident at the internship site.

Sense-Making Techniques

The goals of this project are to make explicit connections between prior knowledge and service learning and to identify alternative views and perspective transformation. Sense-making techniques assume that, when people encounter some new and novel problem that represents an obstacle, they seek information to make sense and somehow integrate this situation into their lives in a meaningful way.

This technique should allow the student to pull from life experiences, previous course work, and other resources to explain or make sense out of a new situation or problem (Weick, 1995). Often a sense-making technique will allow a student to understand how one’s judgment or ability to “make sense” can be compromised or clouded in the face of negative or distressing events that are accompanied by strong emotions.

Critical Thinking Project

The goals of this critical thinking project are to (a) find analogies and other kinds of relationships between pieces of information, (b) determine the relevance and validity of information that could be used for structuring and solving problems, and (c) find and evaluate solutions or alternative ways of treating problems (Beyer, 1985).

There are several teaching strategies that help with this project. First, promote interaction among students as they learn. Second, ask open-ended questions that do not assume one right answer. Third, allow time for students to reflect on questions and

problems. Finally, teach for transfer of knowledge and generalizability into other learning experiences. This technique works well at the end of the service-learning experience.

Conclusion

Service learning is increasingly recognized as an accepted pedagogy. However, to garner the resources necessary to do the best job possible and to design the best experience possible for the students, the faculty, and the community agency involved, an assessment plan must be in place. This plan must be in place from the beginning, it should be tied to specific learning objectives, and it should have multiple components.

Appendix A

Oral Presentations or Writing Projects Assessment Strategy

1. Complete the assigned oral or written project, as assigned.
2. Keep in mind that your work will be scored using the following criteria:
 - Did the student make persuasive arguments?
 - Did the student use appropriate data and information to support his/her argument?
 - Did the student define and organize the main points of the presentation?
 - Is the presentation clear and concise?

Reflective Journal Writing Assessment Strategy

1. Keep a journal for the time specified.
2. In your journal entry, focus on your goals, and address:
 - What has happened,
 - How you feel about it,
 - What is your response to what happened, and
 - What you have learned about yourself.

Problem-Based Learning Assessment Strategy

Case Scenario

You will be working with teenagers residing in a group home setting this semester. These teens have been removed from their guardian or natural family for a variety of reasons. Many of these teens have previously had trouble with the police and the school system. Currently, they have all of their financial and physical needs met by their foster home setting. Historically, when these teens are emancipated upon turning eighteen, many have failed to successfully ease back into society as independent adults.



Questions

1. Imagine that you are in charge of a group of students who are to develop a plan to deal with this problem.
 - How would you determine what topic should be taught?
 - What would be the first things you would do as you tried to develop your plan?
2. Imagine you're holding your first classroom meeting with these students.
 - What would you first say to the group?
 - What do you think your student peers would talk about at this first meeting?
3. We have been talking about the problem generally. Focus specifically on what causes the problem.
 - What do you think causes this problem?
 - How did you come to hold these opinions?
 - How do you know that those are the causes?
 - On what do you base your view?
 - Can you ever know for sure if your position is correct? Why?
4. Others have different points of view about the factors related to this problem.
 - How do you decide which view is right when experts disagree?
 - When people have different opinions about causes, is one right and the others wrong? Explain.

Critical Incident Paper Assessment Strategy

1. Describe a specific behavioral event that took place at your service-learning site that had relevance or importance to you to the point you would call it “critical.”
2. Answer the following questions about that event:
 - What led up to the event?
 - What were you thinking and feeling?
 - Who was involved?
 - What did you do?
 - What was the outcome?
3. Why would this event qualify as “critical” to you?
4. In what way did it affect you?
5. How did it change your thinking?
6. Describe other impacts of the event.

Sense-Making Technique Assessment Strategy

1. Identify a new or novel problem to which you were exposed during your service-learning experience.
2. In what way did it conflict with the way you have always made sense of the world?
3. In what ways was this experience unexpected or disturbing?
4. How did you explain to yourself that this problem exists in a way that is consistent with your prior experience, values, and relationships?

5. Brainstorm a list of variables that contribute to this problem and/or maintain this problem.
6. What are some “gaps” or “bridges” that can help you understand how this problem came to be? or How might they be addressed by mobilizing and engaging communities?

Critical Thinking Assignment Assessment Strategy

1. Construct, identify, or frame social problems confronted during the service-learning experience.
2. Brainstorm about events or circumstances that contribute to the problem or the need for the agency/service-site.
3. Generate a list of action steps that would address or impact the problems and their potential impact(s).

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Editor's Message

This issue of *FORUM* demonstrates the state-of-the-art of service learning in family and consumer sciences. Not only do we profess to enable communities, we do it. The authors provide the evidence by documenting three characteristics of service learning.

Servicing. Service projects have been organized to solve, or make a contribution toward solving, a problem or to build community capacity.

Linking. Service projects meet a genuine community need and achieve academic goals.

Learning. Service projects provide opportunities for learning and understanding the complexity of community issues and the broader social, political, and economic contexts. Reflection reinforces the connection between service and curriculum content.

Although the efforts described herein are but a few examples of the theory and practice of service learning in family and consumer sciences, we are pleased to offer this issue as a resource for professionals interested in beginning or enhancing service learning programs. Service learning offers the opportunity to take leadership in improving community well-being and shaping societal change—ultimately important to enhancing the quality of the environment in which individuals and families function.

It seems to this observer that continuing attention to research is needed to facilitate our understanding of how to combine service, critical reflection, and subject matter knowledge to achieve increased knowledge, enhanced learning skills, significant impact on communities, and commitment to social justice. Agendas for undergraduate, graduate, and professional research abound in this domain. Carry on!

DM