

FACULTY GUIDE TO SERVICE LEARNING



Florida | Campus Compact

Course Construction

July 2004

FLORIDA CAMPUS COMPACT

325 John Knox Road
Building F, Suite 210
Tallahassee, Florida 32303

Greetings:

It is with pleasure that Florida Campus Compact offers this Faculty Guide to Service-Learning. This is a compilation of materials relevant to the implementation of service-learning in the academic curriculum. It includes helpful information needed to understand the essential elements of service-learning and the best practices of service-learning course construction.

This guide is not intended to be an all-inclusive publication on the pedagogy of service-learning, which can be more thoroughly researched on the web and through other avenues suggested herein. Rather, we have taken the liberty of synthesizing various articles and other resources in an effort to provide a succinct tool for faculty interested in implementing course-based service-learning. Some of the articles that follow offer varying perspectives on the nuances of service-learning. But, all in all, this handbook is intended to be a compilation of best practices and a practical and useful “how to” guide for new and seasoned faculty seeking to integrate service into the academic curriculum.

Florida Campus Compact would like to recognize and thank the many practitioners and researchers who have enhanced the field of service-learning, making this publication and many other important initiatives possible. For a more in depth understanding of this topic, please visit our web site at www.floridacompact.org, which offers discipline-specific information, links to other service-learning publications, access to members of the Florida Campus Compact Consulting Corps, and training opportunities through Florida Campus Compact conferences, workshops and site visits.

Thank you for your interest in service-learning!

Sincerely,

Dee Dee Rasmussen
Executive Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-Learning: A Balance Approach to Experiential Education By Andy Furco..... 05-09

GLOSSARY OF TERMS/ACRONYMS..... 11-13

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)..... 15-17

What is Service-Learning?

Is this just another feel-good excuse to water down academic standards?

Will Service-Learning use a lot of outside class time?

Does Service-Learning take too much class time?

How do I evaluate the students' performance?

Should Service-Learning be a requirement of the course?

Should students be allowed to choose their own service site?

Should there be a minimum number of hours that students will be expected to serve?

Are there risks or liability issues?

How can involvement in Service-Learning strengthen my professional research?

BENEFITS OF USING SERVICE-LEARNING..... 19-20

FOUR MYTHS ABOUT ACADEMIC SERVICE-LEARNING..... 22

CONSTRUCTING A SERVICE-LEARNING COURSE

Four Basic Principles to Constructing a Service-Learning Course..... 24

Six Models of Service-Learning..... 25-26

Ten Steps to Develop and Execute a Service-Learning Strategy..... 27-30

Service-Learning Course Development Guide..... 31-34

Checklist for Integrating Service-Learning into Courses..... 35-36

REFLECTION

Thoughts About Reflection..... 38-39

Selecting and Using Reflection Activities..... 40-44

FINAL THOUGHTS

Advice on Constructing a Service-Learning Course..... 46

Principles of Good Practice in Service-Learning Pedagogy..... 47-49

Faculty Guide to Service Learning, Course Construction, compiled on July 1, 2004 by Saul Magana, Associate Director, and April Lupo, Outreach and Development Coordinator, Florida Campus Compact.

What is Service-Learning?

Service-Learning: A Balanced Approach to Experiential Education

The Service-Learning Struggle

For over a quarter of a century, education researchers and practitioners have struggled to determine how to best characterize service-learning. In 1979, Robert Sigmon defined service-learning as an experiential education approach that is premised on "reciprocal learning" (Sigmon, 1979). He suggested that because learning flows from service activities, both those who provide service and those who receive it "learn" from the experience. In Sigmon's view, service-learning occurs only when both the providers and recipients of service benefit from the activities.

Today, however, the term "service-learning" has been used to characterize a wide array of experiential education endeavors, from volunteer and community service projects to field studies and internship programs. By perusing schools' service program brochures, one realizes that the definitions for service-learning are as varied as the schools in which they operate. While some educators view "service-learning" as a new term that reveals a rich, innovative, pedagogical approach for more effective teaching, others view it as simply another term for well-established experiential education programs. As Timothy Stanton of the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University once asked, "What is service-learning anyway? How do we distinguish service-learning from cooperative education, internship programs, field study and other forms of experiential education?" (Stanton, 1987). The National Society for Experiential Education, which for years has focused on various types of experiential education programs, broadly defines service-learning as "any carefully monitored service experience in which a student has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what he or she is learning throughout the experience." (National Society for Experiential Education, 1994).

The Corporation for National Service provides a narrower definition that sees service-learning as a method under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs, that [are] integrated into the students' academic curriculum or provide structured time for [reflection, and] that enhance what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community..." (Corporation for National and Community Service, 1990). The confounding use of the service-learning term may be one reason why research on the impacts of service-learning has been difficult to conduct.

In 1989, Honnet and Poulsen developed the Wingspread Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning (Honnet & Poulsen, 1989, Appendix B). While these guidelines offer a useful set of best practices for service oriented educational programs, they are not solely germane to service-learning and could easily serve as best practices for other types of experiential education programs (e.g., internships or apprenticeships). Similarly, the Association for Service-Learning in Education Reform (ASLER) has compiled a set of common characteristics of service-learning that help program directors determine whether their programs are meeting the overarching service-learning goals (ASLER, 1994 Appendix A). Again, while these characteristics are very useful in helping practitioners develop effective service-learning programs, they do not provide a definitive characterization of service-learning. ASLER characterizes service-

learning as method of learning that enables school-based and community-based professionals "to employ a variety of effective teaching strategies that emphasize student centered [sic.] or youth centered [sic.], interactive, experiential education... Service learning places curricular concepts in the context of real-life situations... Service-learning connects young people to the community, placing them in challenging situations ...(ASLER, 1994). One could easily contend that other approaches to experiential education (i.e., internships or field education) purport to do the same. So then, how is service-learning different from other approaches to experiential education?

Developing a Definition

According to Sigmon, "If we are to establish clear goals [for service-learning] and work efficiently to meet them, we need to move toward a precise definition." (Sigmon, 1979). Recently, Sigmon attempted to provide a more precise definition of service-learning through a typology that compares different programs that combine service and learning. This typology broadened his earlier "reciprocal learning" definition to include the notion that "service-learning" occurs when there is a balance between learning goals and service outcomes. Herein lies the key to establishing a universal definition for service-learning (see Figure 1).

In this comparative form, the typology is helpful not only in establishing criteria for distinguishing service-learning from other types of service programs but also in providing a basis for clarifying distinctions among different types of service-oriented experiential education programs (e.g., school volunteer, community service, field education, and internship programs).

FIGURE 1: A SERVICE AND LEARNING TYPOLOGY (Sigmon, 1994)

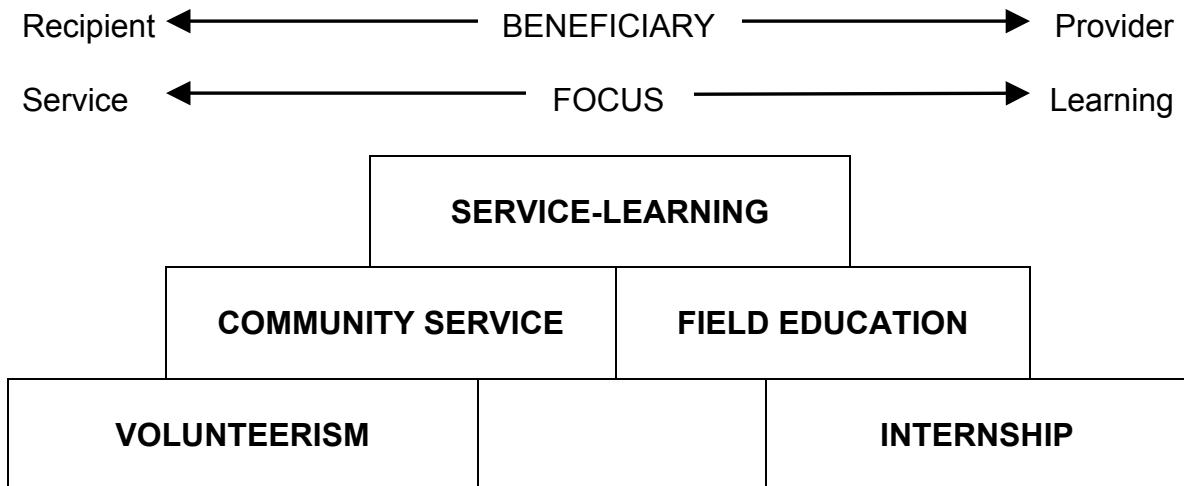
Service-LEARNING:	Learning goals primary; service outcomes secondary
SERVICE-learning:	Service outcomes primary; learning goals secondary
service learning:	Service and learning goals completely separate
SERVICE-LEARNING:	Service and learning goals of equal weight and each enhances the other for all participants

Distinguishing Among Service Programs

To represent the distinctions among various types of service programs, a pictorial is offered that presents an experiential education continuum upon which various service programs might lie. The pictorial is based on both Sigmon's earlier "reciprocal learning" principles and his most recent typology. Where each service program lies on the continuum is determined by its primary intended beneficiary and its overall balance between service and learning (see Figure 2).

As the pictorial suggests, different types of service programs can be distinguished by their primary intended purpose and focus. Each program type is defined by the intended beneficiary of the service activity and its degree of emphasis on service and/or learning. Rather than being located at a single point, each program type occupies a range of points on the continuum. Where one type begins and another ends is not as important as the idea that each service program type has unique characteristics that distinguish it from other types. It is that ability to distinguish among these service program types that allows us to move closer toward a universal definition of service-learning. Using the pictorial as a foundation, the following definitions are offered for five types of service programs.

FIGURE 2: DISTINCTION AMONG SERVICE PROGRAMS



Volunteerism

Volunteerism is the engagement of students in activities where the primary emphasis is on the service being provided and the primary intended beneficiary is clearly the service recipient.

According to James and Pamela Toole, the term volunteerism refers to "people who perform some service or good work of their own free will and without pay" (Toole & Toole, 1992). The inherent altruistic nature of volunteer programs renders them as service focused, designed to benefit the service recipient. A prime example is a school-based program in which student volunteers occasionally or regularly visit the local hospital to sit with Alzheimer patients who need some company. The primary intended beneficiaries of the service are the Alzheimer patients (the service recipients), and the focus of the activity is on providing a service to them. Although the student-volunteers may receive some benefits from the experience (e.g., feeling pleased with themselves) as well as learn something in the process, these outcomes are clearly serendipitous and unintentional. As the hospital visits of the student volunteers become more regular and as the students begin focusing more on learning about Alzheimer's disease, the program moves toward the center of the continuum to become more like community service (or even service-learning).

Community Service

Community service is the engagement of students in activities that primarily focus on the service being provided as well as the benefits the service activities have on the recipients (e.g., providing food to the home-less during the holidays). The students receive some benefits by learning more about how their service makes a difference in the lives of the service recipients.

As with volunteer programs, community service programs imply altruism and charity. However, community service programs involve more structure and student commitment than do volunteer programs. School-based community service programs might include semester-long or year-long activities in which students dedicate themselves to addressing a cause that meets a local community (or global) need. Recycling, hunger awareness, and environmental improvement are all forms of community service causes

around which students have formed organizations to formally and actively address the issue. While the students' primary purpose for engaging in the service activity is to advance the cause, their engagement allows them to learn more about the cause and what is needed to be done to ensure the cause is dealt with effectively. As the service activities become more integrated with the academic course work of the students, and as the students begin to engage in formal intellectual discourse around the various issues relevant to the cause, the community service program moves closer to the center of the continuum to become more like service-learning.

On the opposite side of the continuum lie internship programs.

Internships

Internships programs engage students in service activities primarily for the purpose of providing students with hands-on experiences that enhance their learning or understanding of issues relevant to a particular area of study.

Clearly, in internship programs the students are the primary intended beneficiary and the focus of the service activity is on student learning. Students are placed in internships to acquire skills and knowledge that will enhance their academic learning and/or vocational development. For many students internships are performed in addition to regular course work often after a sequence of courses has been taken. Internships may be paid or unpaid and take place in either for profit or nonprofit organizations. For example, a political science major might engage in an unpaid summer internship at a city hall to learn more about how local government works. Although the student is providing a service to the city hall office, the student engages in the internship primarily for his/her benefit and primarily for learning (rather than service) purposes. Similarly, a legal studies student may have a paid summer internship that allows that student to learn more about how a law firm operates. The student's primary motivations for partaking in the program-to learn legal skills and make some money-are clearly intended to benefit himself/herself. As both these students place greater emphasis on the service being provided and the ways in which the service recipients are benefiting, the closer the internship program moves toward the center of the continuum and becomes more like field education (and service-learning).

Field Education

Field Education programs provide students with co-curricular service opportunities that are related, but not fully integrated, with their formal academic studies. Students perform the service as part of a program that is designed primarily to enhance students' understanding of a field of study, while also providing substantial emphasis on the service being provided.

Field education plays an important role in many service oriented professional programs such as Social Welfare, Education, and Public Health. In some of the programs, students may spend up to two years providing a service to a social service agency, a school, or health agency. While strong intentions to benefit the recipients of the service are evident, the focus of field education programs tends to be on maximizing the student's learning of a field of study. For example, students in Education programs may spend up to one year as student teachers to hone their teaching skills and learn more about the teaching process. Because of their long-term commitment to the service field, students do consciously consider how their service benefits those who receive it.

However, the program's primary focus is still on the student teachers' learning and their overall benefit.

Service-Learning

Service-learning programs are distinguished from other approaches to experiential education by their intention to equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service as well as to ensure equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring.

To do this, service-learning programs must have some academic context and be designed in such a way that ensures that both the service enhances the learning and the learning enhances the service. Unlike a field education program in which the service is performed in addition to a student's courses, a service-learning program integrates service into the course(s). For example, a pre-med student in a course on the Physiology of the Aging might apply the theories and skills learned in that course to providing mobility assistance to seniors at the local senior citizen center. While the program is intended to provide a much needed service to the seniors, the program is also intended to help the student better understand how men and women age differently, how the physical aging of the body affects mobility, and how seniors can learn to deal with diminishing range of motion and mobility. In such a program, the focus is both on providing a much-needed service and on student learning. Consequently, the program intentionally benefits both the student who provides the service and the seniors for whom the service is provided. It is this balance that distinguishes service-learning from all other experiential education programs.

Conclusion

While conceptually, this pictorial can assist in bringing us closer to a more precise definition of service-learning, it is obvious that many gray areas still exist. What about the field education program or community service project that is located near the center of the experiential education continuum? How might we distinguish these programs from service-learning? I might argue that no experiential education approach is static; that is, throughout its life, every experiential education program moves to some degree along the continuum. Thus, at a particular point in time, a community service program may be farther left of center appearing to have greater focus on the service and its benefit to the recipient. At another point in time, the same program might appear to have an equal emphasis on service and learning, providing benefits to both the recipients and providers of the service. It is this mobility within program types that suggests that to fully distinguish service-learning programs from other forms of experiential education approaches, one must first determine a program's intended focus(es) and beneficiary(ies). From there, every service program's continuum range can be gauged to determine where it falls among the myriad of experiential education endeavors.

Source:

Furco, Andrew. *“Service-Learning: A Balanced Approach to Experiential Education.”* Expanding Boundaries: Service and Learning. Washington DC: Corporation for National Service, 1996. 2-6.

Glossary of Terms/Acronyms

Glossary Of Terms/Acronyms

Commonly used terms/acronyms in the field of service-learning.

Academic Component: The classroom portion of service-learning that is generally facilitated by an instructor. While in the classroom, students discuss and/or write about their community service experience as it relates to the goals and objectives of the course.

AmeriCorps: A national service program available to youth and adults 17 years of age and older. In return for serving their communities, participants can earn money toward their college education.

Agency: The establishment, organization or local charity that hosts the community service work. Community service is generally performed at not-for-profit or governmental agencies; when community service is performed at a school, the school is considered the agency.

Beneficiary: The individual, agency, group or community who receives services directly from the community service participant and/or who benefits from services provided.

Chief Academic Officer (CAO): A generic term for the officer in an institution of higher education or academic medicine with specific responsibility for instructional and research affairs. The CAO usually reports directly to the chief executive officer (variously titled president, chancellor, rector, or vice chancellor) of the university, college, or academic medical center in question. In many research universities and colleges in the United States and Canada, the CAO holds the title of provost or "vice president for academic affairs."

Character Education: The effort to develop "good character" in students through the practice and teaching of moral values and decision-making; this is often an intentional outcome or bi-product of service-learning.

Civic Engagement: Individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy.

Community-Based Organization (CBO): A nonprofit agency or local charity that is representative of the community which it serves, generally through the provision of human and other community services.

Court-Ordered Community Service: Also known as community restitution or community service orders, court-ordered community service involves the assignment of persons convicted of criminal acts to nonprofit or governmental agencies. Community service orders usually specify a number of hours over a time period established by the court and is imposed as an alternative to incarceration.

Community Service Director (CSD): The person on a campus charged with coordinating student volunteerism and/or service-learning initiatives.

Direct Service: Work directed at the achievement of the agency's primary mission that often involves the provision of services directly to agency clients. Preparing meals at a soup kitchen, cleaning up a neighborhood playground, working as an aid in a childcare center, and tutoring are all examples of direct service.

Indirect Service: Provision of skills and/or work to help an agency perform its functions or to impact upon issues of concern to the agency and the clients/community who it serves. Examples of indirect service include setting up a computer program for agency use, helping with clerical tasks or research for HIV/AIDS for an agency that works in the field of HIV prevention and education.

Intergenerational Program: Programs that bring together participants of different ages. While applicable to relationships between any two generations, the term "intergenerational" today is generally used to connote relationships between children/adolescents and older adults. Intergenerational service brings together youth and adults to work jointly on service projects using the talents and energies of each group to complement and support the other.

Learn and Serve America: A national initiative available to states and localities that integrate service or volunteer work with learning. Learn and Serve America programs have been implemented through schools (K-12 School-based programs), community agencies (Community-Based Organization programs) and colleges and universities (Higher Education programs).

Mandatory Service: Community service which is required as part of an academic program, usually required for graduation from high school and some colleges. School-mandated community service may set required hours, type of service and/or duration. This type of community-service is to be distinguished from court-ordered service defined above.

Mentoring: Mentoring refers to a one-to-one relationship between a more experienced person and a younger person involving mutual commitment, caring and trust. While not a requirement, many mentoring programs encompass community service-learning activities. Mentors help identify opportunities and/or work along side young people in volunteer activities.

Not-for-Profit Agency: A non-governmental organization whose purpose is to address human, environmental and other community concerns and needs. Most not-for-profit agencies are tax-exempt, tax-deductible, and classified as 501(c)(3) institutions. Not-for-profit agencies cannot sell stock, declare dividends or pay their officers or directors other than through salary.

School-to-Work: A system of school-based learning, work-based learning and activities connecting the two in order to prepare youth for the high wage, high skill careers of today's and tomorrow's global economy.

Reflection: Contemplation and consideration regarding the significance of the community service work performed; evaluation of the value and meaning of the specific

community service as it relates to a larger context. Structured reflection can take place on an individual or group basis, and is a process that makes meaningful connections of the students service experience to the course content, the community issues, one's values, and the impact on both the individual performing the work as well as the larger society. (Some say this is the learning part of service-learning!)

Service: Work done for the benefit of another person, group of persons, community or agency.

Service-Learning: A teaching method that combines community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility. Service-Learning programs involve students in organized community service that addresses local needs, while developing their academic skills, sense of civic responsibility, and commitment to the community.

Stipend: A modest payment to volunteers to help offset the costs of service.

Volunteer: A person who donates or gives his or her time and talents to provide services to other people, or to the community-at-large.

Volunteer Site Coordinator: An individual who recruits, trains and supervises volunteers. May also be referred to as a community service site supervisor.

Source:

These definitions have been compiled from various sources and/or conventional wisdom in the field.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is service-learning?

Service-learning is a teaching method that combines community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility. Service-learning programs involve students in organized community service that addresses local needs, while developing their academic skills, sense of civic responsibility, and commitment to the community.

Is this just another feel-good excuse to water down academic standards?

Academic credit should never be given for service, only for learning. If applied properly, this pedagogy is actually more rigorous than the traditional teaching strategies. Students are not only required to master the standard text and lecture material, but they must also integrate their service experience into that context. This is a high-level skill requiring effective reflection techniques designed to accomplish academic as well as affective outcomes. It is important to emphasize that incorporating service-learning does not change what we teach, but how we teach it. With this change comes a new set of challenges for both the student and the teacher.

Will service-learning use a lot of outside class time?

Time is needed to plan and set up the logistics of a service-learning class, to respond to individual students, and to work through the unanticipated challenges of site visitation. There are ways to minimize the impact of the time by garnering assistance from community agency staff, former students, and teaching assistants. The amount of time required is lessened as community-learning partnerships develop over time.

Does service-learning take too much class time?

The faculty member is still in charge of how class time is used. Students can reflect on the experience outside class through journals and logs, and more formal papers. Research, however, indicates that devoting time in class to discussing experiences that emerge from the service experience will increase student learning and satisfaction with the course. If the students' experiences become text for the class, then they will integrate what they are learning as they dialogue, make connections to course materials, and learn from the experiences of others.

How do I evaluate the students performance?

Service-learning is often defined with an emphasis on learning. Many professors do not change their evaluation technique, but assume that the service heightens student learning, and that monitoring the service contribution is all that is necessary. On the other hand, you might have specific papers devoted to reflecting on the experience, and grade those for analysis, critical thinking, and other standards normally used. Faculty who utilize service-learning must generate data documenting the impact that this pedagogy has on student learning. Otherwise, the question "why should I utilize service-learning if it doesn't work any better than what I am already doing?" is a legitimate one. There are a number of outcomes that can be assessed. These include: impact on student learning and student development, impact on the agency, impact on those being served, and impact on faculty development.

Should service-learning be a requirement of the course?

This question honestly does not have a “correct” answer. Practitioners of service-learning are probably divided evenly between those who think it should be required and those who think it should be optional. Regardless of how service-learning is used, the goal should be to provide a steady momentum, a gentle nudge, and a not-so-well-worn path for students to follow. We must not *mandate* personal and civic growth but should instead nurture and steer students toward the rewards of service and civic engagement. To assist with deciding which direction to go, a few helpful hints are provided below:

Required within a course: All students are involved in service as an integrated aspect of the course. If service-learning is required, it must be clearly stated at the first class meeting, and a clear rationale as to why should be provided. If all students are involved in service, it is easier to design course work that integrates the service experience with course objectives (i.e. class discussions, writing assignments, exam questions).

Optional within a course: Students have the option to become involved in the service-learning project. They can choose to replace a normal portion of the coursework with the service-learning component. For example, a traditional research paper can be replaced with an experiential research paper or personal journal that documents learning from the service experience. To “entice” students to choose the service-learning, some instructors have made the traditional research paper rather cumbersome and lengthy so that the time involved in either option is about the same.

Should students be allowed to choose their own service site?

This varies with the type of project. An English professor who assigns a persuasive paper may let her students choose their own site, with her approval. An automotive repair class may choose to create their own service opportunity serving the elderly or disadvantaged in car repair. An ESL professor may have his students read to a designated kindergarten class. Other professors may have specific requirements for a particular project and will choose the site without student input. Whatever method is chosen, the important thing to remember is to verify that the site is a safe and appropriate environment for service-learning.

Should there be a minimum number of hours that students will be expected to serve?

It depends. Just as the length of a research paper varies from course to course, so too does the amount of service. As a rule of thumb, the more often a student works on the project, the more benefit is derived from the service experience.

Are there risks or liability issues?

Program directors, faculty and others involved in administering service-learning programs often raise concerns about their legal responsibilities. Sometimes these concerns prevent a program from being initiated for fear that someone will sue in case of an accident. Florida Campus Compact has created a short publication entitled, “Negligence Liability Issues For Florida’s Service-Learning Programs,” that addresses many of the legal concerns around service-learning, and suggests strategies to limit liability exposure. It is available in print through the FCC office or online at www.floridacompact.org under the category “Resources.”

How can involvement in service-learning strengthen my professional research?

Many professional academic associations now include sessions on experiential education at national and regional conferences. The International Conference on Service-Learning Research and other associations such as the National Society for Experiential Education and the American Association of Higher Education hold annual conferences and provide opportunities to present papers on service-learning and the scholarship of engagement. Also, publishing opportunities exist for professional journals, such as the “Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning” and other discipline-specific journals. Involvement in service-learning can augment and redirect one’s professional research interests, especially when a strong partnership is created with the community agency. Service-learning can contribute to research by engaging students in action research and applied research projects.

Source:

Florida Campus Compact has compiled and synthesized this information from various sources and/or conventional wisdom in the field.

Benefits of Service-Learning

Benefits Of Service-Learning

Students

Strengthens student understanding of academic curriculum and improves comprehension and retention of course content.

Engages students in active learning that demonstrates the relevance and importance of academic work for their life experience and career choices.

Broadens perspectives on issues of diversity and enhances critical thinking skills.

Improves interpersonal skills that are increasingly viewed as necessary in achieving success in professional and personal spheres.

Assists in confirming career choice/career expectations.

Develops civic responsibility through active community involvement.

Increases awareness of current societal issues as they relate to academic areas of interest.

Provides students with the chance to address societal/agency issues.

Provides students with an opportunity to have practical experience of coursework.

Faculty

Creates new areas for research and scholarship, and increases opportunities for professional recognition and rewards.

Enriches and enlivens teaching and learning.

Provides a unique and more exciting way to address course content.

Transforms students into engaged and invigorated participants.

Compels students to use critical thinking skills.

Allows faculty to assume a unique mentoring role with students.

Allows faculty to use the classroom as a way to consider the public application of their discipline while addressing societal issues and teaching students the value of service and civic engagement.

Campus

Extends campus resources into the community and reinforces the value of the scholarship of engagement.

Improves recruitment/retention through student involvement in service-learning activities.

Supports the institutional mission.

Builds reciprocal partnerships with the local community.

Increases awareness of the needs of local agencies and communities.

Community

Provides substantial human resources to meet educational, human, safety, and environmental needs of local communities.

Provides access to collegiate resources, both intellectual and physical/labor.

Allows community agencies to be exposed to new ideas/techniques.

Shapes tomorrow's civic leaders by fostering civic participation and the value of service.

Allows the energy and enthusiasm of college students to meet community needs.

Provides organization staff with a unique mentoring opportunity.

Leads to greater campus-community partnerships.

Source:

This information is a compilation of various service-learning research findings.

Four Myths About Academic Service-Learning

Four Myths About Academic Service-Learning

Myth #1 – The Myth of Terminology: Academic service-learning is the same as student community service and co-curricular service-learning.

Academic service-learning is not the same as student community service or co-curricular service-learning. While sharing the word “service,” these models of student involvement in the community are distinguished by their learning agenda. Student community service, illustrated by a student organization adopting a local elementary school, rarely involves a learning agenda. In contrast, both forms of service-learning (academic and co-curricular) make intentional efforts to engage students in planned and purposeful learning related to the service experiences. Co-curricular service-learning, illustrated by many alternative spring break programs, is concerned with raising students’ consciousness and familiarity with issues related to various communities. Academic service-learning, illustrated by student community service integrated into an academic course, utilizes the service experience as a course “text” for both academic learning and civic learning.

Myth #2 – The Myth of Conceptualization: Academic service-learning is just a new name for internships.

Many internship programs, especially those involving community service, are now referring to themselves as service-learning programs, as if the two pedagogical models were the same. While internships and academic service-learning involve students in the community to accentuate or supplement students’ academic learning, generally speaking, internships are not about civic learning. They develop and socialize students for a profession, and tend to be silent on student civic development. They also emphasize student benefits more than community benefits, while service-learning is equally attentive to both.

Myth #3 – The Myth of Synonymy: Experience, such as in the community, is synonymous with learning.

Experience and learning are not the same. While experience is a necessary condition of learning (Kolb, 1984), it is not sufficient. Learning requires more than experience, and so one cannot assume that student involvement in the community automatically yields learning. Harvesting academic and/or civic learning from a community service experience requires purposeful and intentional efforts. This harvesting process is often referred to as “reflection” in service-learning literature.

Myth #4 – The Myth of Marginality: Academic service-learning is the addition of community service to a traditional course.

Grafting a community service requirement (or option) onto an otherwise unchanged academic course does not constitute academic service-learning. While such models abound, this interpretation marginalizes the learning in, from and with the community, and precludes transforming students’ community experiences into learning. To realize service-learning’s full potential as a pedagogy, community experiences must be considered in the context of, and integrated with, the other planned learning strategies and resources in the course.

Source:

Service-Learning Course Design Workbook. Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, Summer 2001.

Constructing a Service-Learning Course

Four Basic Principles To Constructing A Service-Learning Course

Designing high quality, community-based assignments requires faculty to reflect purposefully upon four basic principles:

1. **ENGAGEMENT** – Does the service component meet a public good? How do you know this? Has the community been consulted? How? How have campus-community boundaries been negotiated and how will they be crossed?
2. **REFLECTION** – Is there a mechanism that encourages students to link their service experience to course content and to reflect upon why the service is important?
3. **RECIPROCITY** – Is reciprocity evident in the service component? How? “Reciprocity suggests that every individual, organization, and entity involved in the service-learning functions as both a teacher and a learner. Participants are perceived as colleagues, not as servers and clients.”
4. **PUBLIC DISSEMINATION** – Is service work presented to the public or made an opportunity for the community to enter into a public dialogue? For example: Do oral histories that students collect return to the community in some public form? Is the data students’ collect on the saturation of toxins in the local river made public? How? To whose advantage? Is the data students’ collect from water or exotic plant samples shared with the local environmental agency, or other proper venues? How?

Source:

Heffernan, Kerrissa. *Fundamentals of Service-Learning Course Construction*.
Providence, RI: National Campus Compact, Brown University, 2001.

Six Models Of Service-Learning

Whether creating a new course or reconstructing an existing course using service-learning, faculty should explore the appropriate models of service-learning. Although it can be argued that there are many models of service-learning, these six categories can be used to represent most of them:

“Pure” Service-Learning: These are courses that send students out into the community to serve. These courses have as their intellectual core the idea of service to communities by students, volunteers, or engaged citizens. They are not typically lodged in any one discipline.

Disciplined-Based Service-Learning: In this model, students are expected to have a presence in the community throughout the semester and reflect on their experiences on a regular basis throughout the semester using course content as a basis for their analysis and understanding. Disciplined-Based Service-Learning can take one of the following forms:

- Independent, “4th credit” option: An individual student or a group of students negotiate with the instructor to define parameters of the service component and ways to document the learning derived from the service experience. An “Independent Readings and Research” component can be used as an additional credit. Some departments create a “service-learning option” credit so that a student’s involvement in service-learning is officially documented on the transcript.
- One-time class service project: Some course objectives can be met when the entire class is involved in a one-time service project. Arrangements for service projects can be made prior to the semester and included in the syllabus. This model affords the opportunity for faculty and peer interaction because a common service experience is shared. One-time projects have different learning outcomes than ongoing service activities.
- Ongoing service project: An individual student or a group of students performs service during the course of the semester. These placements can either be assigned by the instructor or chosen by the students.

Problem-Based Service-Learning: According to this model, students (or teams of students) relate to the community much as “consultants” working for a “client”. Students work with community members to understand a particular community problem or need. This model presumes that the students will have some knowledge they can draw upon to make recommendations to the community or develop solutions to the problem. Problem-Based Service-Learning can take the form of an independent/4th credit option, a one-time class service project or an ongoing service project.

Community-Based Action Research: Similar to an independent student option for the student who is highly experienced in community work. In this model, students work closely with faculty members to learn research methodology while serving as advocates for communities. The results of the research are communicated to the agency so that it can be used to address community identified needs. Service research projects can

support the ongoing community based research of faculty. It's a great option for graduate work.

Capstone Course: Service-Learning is an excellent way to build upon students' cumulative knowledge in a specific discipline and to demonstrate the integration of that knowledge with real life issues. Upper-class students can explore ways their disciplinary expertise and competencies translate into addressing community needs. Service-learning in Capstone Courses can take the form of an independent/4th credit option, a one-time class service project or an ongoing service project.

Service Internship: Like traditional internships, these experiences are more intense than typical service-learning courses, with students working as many as 10 to 20 hours a week in a community setting. As in traditional internships, students are generally charged with producing a body of work that is of value to the community or site. However, unlike traditional internships, service internships have regular and on-going reflective opportunities that help students analyze their new experiences using disciplined-based theories.

Source:

Enos, S.L., & Troppe, M.L. (1996). *Service-learning in the curriculum*. In *Service-learning in higher education: Concepts and practices*, edited by B. Jacoby and associates. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 156-181.

Heffernan, Kerrissa. *Fundamentals of Service-Learning Course Construction*. Providence, RI: National Campus Compact, Brown University, 2001.

Service-Learning: How To Do It

10 Steps to Develop and Execute a Service-Learning Strategy

1. Consider the courses you teach and determine how community service might be helpful in enriching learning in that discipline. Service-Learning can be effectively used in every academic discipline. Some applications require a little more imagination than others and often the best are not immediately obvious. At this point, don't worry about whether they will work. **Brainstorm about the application potential to your course.** Think about how your course content connects with the community, and what kinds of volunteer opportunities might be available at the linkage point.

2. **Contact your campus Service-Learning Center or service-learning faculty liaison to discuss and identify community placements** that offer experiences that are relevant to your course. With a variety of possible placements, you will probably succeed in finding a number of sites. Then, based on your own experience, you can choose the best opportunities for presentation to your students. *(If your campus does not have such resources, you might contact the volunteer agency in your county.)*

3. With service sites or activities in mind, **consider your goals and motives** in using the application. What are you trying to accomplish for your students, yourself, and the community? Review your course objectives to determine those that can be linked to service. Before going further, list two or three specific and measurable service and learning goals and objectives for your initiative. Be clear at this point on your desired destination. "If we don't know where we're going, we're likely to wind up someplace else."

4. Based upon your motives, goals, and objectives **choose a course service option.** Decide how you will incorporate community service into your course. Course service options can range from a one-time special project (Habitat for Humanity, Special Olympics, bay clean-up) to a 40+ hour volunteer commitment to an agency. You can offer the option as extra-credit, an alternative to a library research paper or other required project, or a requirement for course completion. For those who choose to make service-learning a course requirement, promotion or advertisement of your course and its service component will attract students who are motivated to learn in this way.

5. Once you have chosen how service will be incorporated, review and **alter your course description and syllabus to reflect the change.** To be successfully integrated, the service experience must be more than just an add-on to an already full syllabus. Identify some readings that might tie the service to specific objectives. Allocate some class time for discussion of the experience even if all students do not participate. By consciously committing to integrating service, up-front and in writing, you are on your way to a successful implementation.

6. On the first day of class, **explain and promote the ideas behind including service-learning in your class.** Explain the twofold benefits to the student and the community. Make your commitment very clear and encourage students to take advantage of the opportunity for both the personal and academic growth that service affords. Make the decision to volunteer easy and provide specifics on the locations, hours, and length of commitment of each service option. Have student handbooks and handouts available to

describe service-learning and opportunities available. For those offering more extensive long-term commitments, be sure to get your students placed in service early.

7. Work with students to develop specific service and learning objectives for their volunteer experiences. Students must be guided in their development of these objectives so that they are clearly linked with the academic objectives of your course. Most students are not skilled in developing objectives and are not familiar with your specific course learning objectives or how to link them to a seemingly non-academic experience. Typically students will develop more affective objectives (improve self-esteem, feel better about the community) or general non-course related objectives (improve the community, learn about hospice care, learn how to build a house). To improve fulfillment of your courses' academic goals, you must help them link the service to specific course objectives. In a business course, students working with Habitat for Humanity might learn about managerial communication, or "just-in-time" supply strategies. For a psychology course, the objective might be understanding the dynamics of group formation or gender roles and functioning in a project.

In some cases you may wish to delay this step until after students have been oriented to their volunteer placements so that they have some idea of what kinds of service they will be doing. In other cases, where you are familiar with the placement, you can have them do this prior to the service. Some faculty prescribe the learning and service objectives up-front as a critical step in assuring the effectiveness of the service-learning in enriching student learning of course material. This step requires creativity and focus, but success here will lead to better learning.

8. Teach students how to harvest the service experience for knowledge. Experiential learning requires that we learn where we are. We can learn a variety of things in many different situations depending on the questions we are asking. Many of our students are not skilled in this practice. With their learning objectives in mind, students must be taught to focus on these objectives and related questions as they participate in the service setting (participant observation). While the math student is working on a Habitat for Humanity project, she thinks about the algebra or geometry used in developing the architectural plans. The business student may listen to workers' communication patterns and draw conclusions about the managerial structure as he helps patients into the pool at the rehabilitation center. The human relations student observes families interacting as she delivers mail to the hospice patients. Because many students lack experience and confidence in learning in non-traditional, non-classroom environments, we must teach them these skills.

One word of paradoxical caution here: while we do want our students prepared and oriented to service, we must be careful not to over prepare them for their service experience. We all enjoy the adventure of discovery, and we can destroy that for our students by telling them exactly what to expect. Then their experience becomes a comparison instead of an adventure. Give them a good overview and set them free.

9. Link the service experience to your academic course content through deliberate and guided reflection. The practice of reflection is what combines the learning to the service. We cannot assume that learning will automatically result from experience. If it did, we'd all be a lot wiser, wouldn't we? Like us, our students may not learn from their experience. They may even learn the wrong thing or reinforce existing prejudices. Reflection helps prevent this from occurring.

Reflection can be in the form of journals, essays, class presentations, analytic papers, art work, drama, dialogue, or any other expressive act. The key to effectiveness is structure and direction. The nature and type of reflection determines its outcome. An unstructured personal journal or group discussion is a great way to elicit affective disclosure. More specific academic outcomes will result from structuring these exercises with specific curriculum related questions. For example, a biology student might be directed to comment on ecological balance in her journal account of an exotic plant removal project at the Dallas Arboretum. Written reflection is a productive approach which helps improve basic communication skills; at the same time, it leads to critical thinking about the academic focus (through questions) you have prescribed. It is the most common and the least intrusive in terms of taking up class time.

A more powerful, and in many ways more effective approach is the purposeful dialogue or the reflective class session. This dialogue provides an opportunity for students to share experiences and exchange ideas and critical insights about the information being shared. To achieve academic outcomes, the dialogue (while spirited and free) should be bound by the learning objectives of the course. The faculty member must serve both as a facilitator to maintain the flow of ideas and as a commentator who jumps on the relevant item and develops it into a teachable moment. This is not an easy task; but with practice, the rewards are great. When we seem to be losing control, the process can be threatening; but, it is often at these critical moments that the real learning occurs. The real advantage of the reflective session over the written forms is its power to develop a sense of community, which is one of the general goals of service-learning. Whatever form of reflection is chosen, it is important to do it early in the experience to assure that students understand the process. It should then be followed up regularly to monitor their progress. This type of deliberate and guided reflection is what leads to academic learning, improved service, and personal development. From the description of the learning cycle presented earlier, we know that reflection is the key element in creating meaning. This topic requires more than can be presented here, so you are encouraged to read further in this handbook for more information on reflective strategies and techniques.

10. Evaluate your service-learning outcomes as you would any other academic product. Remember, students are being graded on the academic product, not their hours of service. Many of us feel uncertain when it comes to evaluating or assessing the outcomes of experiences we did not completely structure or present. By designing flexible measures, however, you can use the same standard used in evaluating any other written or oral presentation: Did the student master the course material? This is the only way to assure academic integrity of the strategy.

You may also wish to utilize formative and summative research techniques to measure your success in achieving your objectives. Formative assessment can be achieved through reading student journals with an eye toward answering your initial questions (Are they learning algebra? Is their writing more alive? Is the service setting appropriate?). Periodic quick surveys can provide specific answers to issues such as student satisfaction with the process, utility of experimental techniques, etc. Summative techniques might be employed to compare learning outcomes for service-learning sections with those from traditionally taught sections. For quantitative research, you could collect data on the number and type of people served by your students and the number of hours provided. Collecting stories and gleaned information related to your objectives is a possible qualitative approach. The opportunities for research in the area

of service-learning abound, and any contribution to this body of knowledge will help us improve and expand the application of the strategy.

Source:

Faculty Service Learning Starter's Guide. Gainesville, FL: Office of Community Service, University of Florida.

Service-Learning Course Development Guide

The following guide is a helpful resource to use when developing a service-learning course. The questions and suggestions offered allow faculty members to thoroughly think through the course development process.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Course: _____ Number of Students Anticipated: _____

- What are some of my reasons for wanting to incorporate service activities into my teaching? Which are most important to me?
- What are my expectations that students will learn to observe, analyze, interpret, synthesize, and evaluate community phenomena in light of concepts and theories presented in class?
- In what way will service promote the understanding of course content?
- How will I help make the link between course content and the field experience? (classroom discussions, films, videos, routine writing assignments, end-of-course exams, papers)
- Will service be mandated for all students or will it be an option?

A: DEVELOPMENT OF COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE SERVICE-LEARNING COMPONENT

It is crucial that specific learning outcomes for students are identified. The number of learning outcomes you select will depend on the amount of time students will be involved in service. Learning outcomes for a student in a regular class with a service component may include as few as two or three. The following types of outcomes are provided to help stimulate thinking.

KNOWLEDGE / UNDERSTANDING:

- Knowledge about specific course-related information, to be determined on a course-by-course basis in conjunction with each instructor
- Acquisition of information, concepts, ideas
- Knowledge about specific community problems/issues: major aspects and characteristics of the issues, causal and correlated factors, associated issues, and the nature of agencies/groups dealing with the issues
- Skill in particular subject matter (discipline)

COGNITIVE SKILLS BEYOND INFORMATION ACQUISITION:

- Critical thinking, applying information to problem solving situations, analyzing information and concepts
- Synthesizing information
- Seeing patterns and relationships
- Data analysis
- Preparing reports

- Specific course-related cognitive skills, to be determined on a course-by-course basis in conjunction with each instructor
- Tacit learning skills (the nuances that can't be fully explained in a book or lecture but are often the most important of all)

PROCEDURAL SKILLS:

- Information-gathering skills, i.e. techniques to use in learning from experience (observing, interviewing, thinking for one's self)
- Appropriate and accurate application of information for goal-attainment and, specifically, how course-related information applies to a specific community issue
- Verbal proficiency in articulating/presenting information related to community issues, research information

SOCIAL SKILLS:

- Concern for the welfare of others, a broader circle of people for whom one feels concern and responsibility
- Leadership
- Cooperative collaboration (specifically with culturally diverse people)
- Conflict resolution
- Ability to establish and maintain productive and constructive working relationships with off-campus organizations
- Public speaking

ATTITUDES / VALUES / SELF-CONFIDENCE:

- Conscious formulation and/or clarification of personal values or feelings
- Value and strive to be persistently reflective
- Value and support social justice
- Indicate motivation for, and intent to engage in, active and substantive life-long learning
- Enhanced appreciation for the value of, and level of interest in, the course subject matter
- A high level of altruism, especially regarding level of commitment to improving social conditions
- Broad and consistent tolerance of others/points of view, and willingness to accommodate them via mutually acceptable compromise
- Think in terms of the personal convictions that will be affected by this experience and identify opinions, attitudes or feelings that students may hope to clarify
- Strong belief in the value of personal community involvement for socially constructive purposes

PERSONAL GROWTH:

- Self-esteem, sense of personal worth, competence and confidence
- Self-understanding, insight into self
- Self-direction, personal motivation
- Independence, autonomy, assertiveness
- Sense of usefulness, of doing something worthwhile
- Personal power, belief in ability to make a difference

- Openness to new experiences, ability to take risks and accept challenges
- Ability to take responsibility, acknowledge and accept consequences of actions
- Capacity to be productive, persevere even in difficult tasks
- Willingness to explore new identities, unfamiliar roles

B: DEVELOPING THE SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

- What sorts of placements am I looking for that will help students integrate their course work with their service opportunities? Is there any particular age, socio-economic group, ethnic group, gender or other demographic profile on which I am trying to focus?
- What expressed community need(s) will be addressed in my service-learning plan?
- Do I have personal connections in the community that I can use?
- What risks or dangers will students be exposed to while participating in off-campus service?
- Will students have a voice in where they are placed and what they will be assigned to do?
- What do the agency staff who will supervise my students need to know in order to provide the best experience possible?

C: PREPARING STUDENTS FOR FIELD WORK

- What does a service learner need to know/be aware of before entering the community?
- How can I help my students learn to "read" their placement sites as "texts?"
- What do the service learners need to know about the issue(s) and population(s) with whom they will be working?
- Do I want students to serve individually, in pairs, in small groups, as the entire group?
- How will students be prepared for the evaluation process?
- Who will orient students to their community assignments?
- If there are potential risks involved, how will students (1) be informed of them and (2) asked to submit a waiver or release that acknowledges they have been informed of the risks?

D: MONITORING STUDENTS' WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

- Who will students report to at the sites?
- How will I know if students are going to their sites or not?
- How will I know if they are useful or not?
- How will I know what kinds of problems students are having in the community and what additional kinds of support they might need?
- How will I know if there are unanticipated outcomes of the student community service and if any of these have negative consequences for students or the communities they are serving?
- Will anyone visit volunteer sites, communicate with volunteer coordinators, volunteer at a site where students are serving?

E: REFLECTION/CRITICAL ANALYSIS

- How will students assess the relationship between course content and their service-learning experiences? (e.g. a list of questions is provided which requires the student to make the connections between what they are reading and what they are seeing in the field)
- How will I teach the purpose and value of reflection as critical to the service-learning process?
- How will on-going reflection be facilitated?
- How will the community be involved in the students' reflection process?

F: ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

- How will I measure whether service-learning objectives were met or not?
- What role will projects, journals, or class discussions play in evaluation?
- What expressed community needs were addressed? What was the impact?
- Who will have a role in assessment: faculty, community, and/or people served?
- Will students evaluate the agency site? When will evaluation occur?
- What will be done with evaluation data?

G: IDENTIFYING FUNDING NEEDS

- Will extra funding be needed to make my service-learning option a success?
Would it be helpful?
- How much would it take?

Source:

Service-Learning Course Development Guide, Cal Poly State University, 1997.

Checklist for Integrating Service-Learning into Courses

Although there are several, good definitions for service-learning, the more appropriate question might be, “what makes a strong service-learning course?” A quick search of the Internet will produce several resources that identify best practices, syllabi construction guidelines and campus engagement assessments. Many are well detailed and very comprehensive. However, finding a short, “at-a-glance,” checklist that a faculty member can use to quickly determine whether their course meets the basic elements of service-learning isn’t as easy to locate.

Pulling from several resources, Florida Campus Compact has devised a checklist that can be used to quickly determine if a course could be considered “service-learning.” It is by no means the definitive word on what constitutes service-learning. It’s simply a tool that can be used to assess whether a course has addressed the basic elements of service-learning. The checklist consists of four parts. By answering a few “yes” or “no” questions, the user can determine if any essential elements are missing.

Defining the Service-Learning Component

Does the Service-Learning Component:	Yes	No
Use “community service” that is tied to the goals and objectives of the course without compromising academic rigor?		
Provide academic credit for the learning, not the service?		
Provide students the opportunity to learn and develop through active participation in service experiences?		
Contain service activities that meet actual needs that have been identified by the community itself?		
Help to foster active citizenship and moral development in students?		

Defining the Course Goals and Objectives

Do the Course Goals, Objectives and Syllabi:	Yes	No
Provide educationally sound learning strategies to maximize community-learning experiences?		
Present course assignments that link the service placement to the course content?		
Include service as an expressed goal?		
Provide students with service experiences that allow them to use newly acquired skills and knowledge?		
Minimize the distinction between community learning and classroom learning?		
Clarify the responsibilities of the student and faculty concerning the service experience (i.e. transportation, time requirement, support)?		
Specify how students will be expected to demonstrate what they have learned from the service experience (i.e. journals, presentations)?		

Defining the Community Role

Does the Community-Based Organization (Placement Site):	Yes	No
Orientate/prepare students, at the beginning of the service, for the uniqueness of community learning?		
Have the opportunity to incorporate SITE-DEFINED needs into the goals and objectives of the service experience?		
Have an opportunity to discuss possible student roles/activities with faculty or campus staff <i>prior</i> to the service experience?		
Have a clear understanding of the limitations of planning long-term projects around an academic calendar (i.e. students are usually available for no longer than a semester)?		
Have the opportunity to discuss with faculty or campus staff how to have a successful partnership with a college/university?		

Defining the Reflection Component

Does the Reflection Component:	Yes	No
Provide structured opportunities for students to reflect critically on their service experiences?		
Include the analysis of any data collected by students?		
Encourage students to link their service experience to course content?		
Allow students to link what is learned during the service experience with possible societal obligations they may have during their career (i.e. what obligations does a chemist have in producing products that are "safe")?		
Encourage students to reflect upon how service experiences can be beneficial (i.e. personal growth, meeting societal need)?		
Include an opportunity for the public dissemination of the students' findings/summaries/reports?		

Source:

Saul Magana, Florida Campus Compact, 2004.

This checklist was adapted from the following:

- *Introduction to Service-Learning Toolkit*. Campus Compact, 2000.
- Heffernan, Kerrissa. *Fundamentals of Service-Learning Course Construction*. Campus Compact, 2001.
- *Service-Learning Course Design Workbook*. Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 2001.

Reflection

Thoughts About Reflection

What is reflection and why is it important?

What has your experience taught you about civic responsibility or the demands of democratic citizenship? Without reflection, participants are too busy "getting things done" to ponder what the purpose of their work really was. Students often see service as a requirement for a grade, or as a job - a mere stepping stone for their career. Service by itself doesn't lead one to contemplate connections to their coursework, issues of democracy or citizenship, or even issues related to the place they are providing service. Service programs rarely ask students to reflect on what it all means. Service provides a golden opportunity for people to learn about themselves, their communities, and their nation; but, it doesn't happen automatically.

Citizenship is about figuring out how to do things with fellow citizens. It's about articulating your viewpoints while listening to others. Most of all it is about the critical connection between doing and thinking. Contemplating the connection between service and democracy provides people with wisdom that will follow them from their service experience. They become citizens, critical of the contemporary world - poised always to help solve community problems and ask the questions that prevent democracy from stagnating.

John Dewey: *Experience happens; it is unavoidable. Yet the problem for teachers is how to make meaning out of experience.* Reflective activity is an intentional endeavor to discover specific connections between something which we do and the consequences which result. Reflection provides the methodology that will translate experiences into cognitive and effective knowledge. Education must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experiences.

David Kolb: *Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.* Reflection is critical to the discovery and internalization of knowledge. It should begin at the start of the process and be integral to all phases of the activity itself. It is not something to be saved to the end. Through the process of reflection, students analyze concepts, evaluate experiences, and form opinions -- all in the context of the curriculum.

Aldous Huxley: *Experience is not what happens to a man: it is what a man does with what happened to him.* Reflection engages students in conscious, intentional and critical thinking for the examination of their service experiences. Reflection provides opportunities to: develop critical thinking skills; gain a better understanding of self, service site, societal problems, and course content; strengthen civic literacy and capacity; foster an appreciation of cultural diversity; and, examine personal, academic, and occupationally related issues.

Effective Reflection:

- is structured, guided, and purposeful
- is a regularly occurring activity
- includes components that can be evaluated based on well defined criteria
- links service objectives to course objectives by integrating the service experience with course learning

- includes both private and public reflection
- fosters civic responsibility

The essence of reflection is the act of pondering and contemplating on an experience to increase one's understanding of that experience through thoughtful insights. It allows for connections to be made to prior knowledge and experiences and for a more profound understanding of the new experiences.

Effective, Critical Reflection is:

- 1) **Continuous**: Maintains a coherent continuity over the course of the experience; it includes reflection before, during, and after the experience.
- 2) **Connected**: Links service to the intellectual and academic pursuits of the students, synthesizing action and thought.
- 3) **Challenging**: Asks students to engage issues in a more critical way.
- 4) **Contextualized**: Is appropriate for the setting and context of a particular service-learning course or program; the environment and material for reflection correspond in a meaningful way to the topics and experiences that form the material for reflection.

REFLECTION: WHY DO IT?

(Harry Silcox, *A How To Guide To Reflection*, pages 112-113)

1) **Academic Learning**:

- Improved basic skills
- Better learning of subject matter
- Higher level thinking and problem solving
- Learning to learn from experience

2) **Personal Development**:

- Awareness of changes in oneself
- A sense of community
- Taking charge of life (by being able to learn from experience)

3) **Program Improvement**:

- Improved service (learning specific skills, solving problems, devising problem solving strategies, etc., that enhance service being provided)
- Improved program (ongoing feedback from participants regarding how to make a program better)

Source:

Adapted from *Faculty Guide to Service-Learning*, Florida Campus Compact, 2002.

Selecting And Using Reflection Activities

The key to selecting reflection activities is to look critically at the kinds of ideas, exercises and experiences that connect with each individual in the group. Naturally, any group will contain a mix of Theorists, Pragmatists, Reflectors and Activists (see below). Meeting the needs of all learning style preferences at different times should be a priority.

<p>An Activist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is oriented towards action • Acts first, considers the consequences later • Approaches life with “I’ll try anything once” philosophy • Focuses on the present • Tackles problems by brainstorming • Thrives on challenge; bored by implementation • Is primarily concerned with a need to adapt learning to own life situations to make more of what is learned 	<p>A Reflector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ponders experiences and observes • Seeks data and considers thoroughly • Postpones decision-making until data is available • Watches and listens before offering own opinions • Acts within a larger framework and after considering all angles • Is primarily concerned with creating personal meaning out of experience
<p>A Theorist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches problems using vertical, step-by-step method • Pulls together disparate facts into cogent theories • Seeks perfection • Prizes rationality and logic • Dislikes flippancy and uninformed decision-making 	<p>A Pragmatist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tries and tests ideas, theories and techniques • Acts quickly and confidently to implement ideas • Dislikes ruminating and open-ended discussions • Displays practical problem-solving and decision-making skills • Sees problems as opportunities

Certain types of activities fit naturally into learning style preference categories. In order to ease the process of selecting reflection activities for any project or course, we have categorized the activities in this guide according to the four basic types consistently mentioned by student interviewees: Reading, Writing, Doing and Telling. Each method has its own inherent strengths and weaknesses and tends to meet the needs of certain learning styles better than others. The next few pages should offer some guidance for recognizing and managing the strengths and weaknesses of various reflections methods so as to connect with the broad range of learning styles that make up your group. Use this information to guide your selection of reflection activities.

Reading: *Literature and Written Materials*

<p>'<i>Theorists</i>,' who learn the best through abstract conceptualization tend to read literature and materials as a learning strategy. These readings usually provide rational and logical models and theories that help students make sense of their experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case Studies• Books about social issues• Government documents• Professional journals• Classic literature	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Increases understanding of a particular issue* Allows students to read various perspectives on an issue* Helps students prepare for service* Activity is self-paced and can be done almost anywhere
<p>Guidelines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Use a variety of sources.2) If possible, have students create their own reading lists.3) Always debrief readings orally or in writing.4) Draw clear links between the reading and the service experience.	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Materials can become quickly outdated* Professional journals can be difficult to read and understand* Students may have difficulty applying their readings to their experience* Some students avoid lengthy reading

Writing: *Written Exercises*

<p><i>'Theorists'</i> and <i>'Reflectors'</i> tend to use writing as a way to reflect on experiences and integrate experiences with models and theories. <i>'Pragmatists'</i> will use writing to propose practical ideas or projects that evolved out of learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Journals and logs• Reflection essays• Self-evaluation essays• Portfolios• Analysis papers• Case studies• Grant proposals• Press releases• Drafting legislation• Letters to other students/clients/self/politicians• Published articles (newspapers, newsletters, journals)• Volunteer/Agency training manuals	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Students practice writing skills* Students are forced to structure thoughts and present them in an articulate way* Provides permanent records which students can revisit at future times* May provide real service by producing something that community groups need
<p>Guidelines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Assign a combination of structured analytical writing and unstructured narrative writing.2) Provide extensive feedback on content and style.3) Allow students to reflect on feedback they receive.4) Ensure confidentiality of journals.5) Consider assigning some writing that will not be evaluated for a grade.6) Design projects to produce actual products community groups can use.	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Is not interactive* Assignments tend to be time consuming* Requires extensive feedback* Some students stated that they "wrote what the professor wanted to hear" rather than what they honestly thought

Doing: *Projects and Activities*

<p>'<i>Activists,</i>' tend to learn by involving themselves actively in a particular project or exercise. Projects use the strengths of all learning styles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simulations• Conducting interviews• Art journals• Role playing• Collecting photos, creating slide presentations• Watching movies/videos• Presentations involving dance, music, or theatrics• Planning public relations events for the agency• Analyzing or creating agency budgets• Program development	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Is conducive to group projects* Engages multiple skills and learning styles* Allows students to be self-directed* Often involves "real work" for community group, rather than academic exercise
<p>Guidelines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Provide or have students establish goals for each activity.2) Engage students in reflection throughout the various stages of the activity.3) Encourage use of various learning strategies and styles.4) Provide constructive feedback.5) Debrief each activity.6) Refer students to community experts for technical assistance on projects.	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Generally requires extensive monitoring and feedback* Requires thorough debriefing if critical reflection to occur* Weakens control over outcome* Time frame must be monitored closely

Telling: *Oral Exercises*

<p>'<i>Activists</i>,' tend to reflect and learn through speaking and oral presentations in order to effect change and impact a particular group of people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus groups• Informal discussions• Formal class discussions• Presentations• Talking to other students• Recruiting other volunteers• Teaching a class• Cooperative learning• Story telling• Individual conferences with faculty or project sponsor• Legislative testimony	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Allows for practice of oral presentation skills* Provides opportunity for dialogue* Allows for expression with nonverbal behavior as well* May challenge students' observations and assumptions
<p>Guidelines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Provide constructive feedback.2) Videotape formal presentations when possible for feedback.3) Establish a climate where each member of a group is expected to participate.4) Provide clear instructions for group processes (Cooperative Learning, Nominal Group Technique, etc.).	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Some students have difficulty with public speaking* No permanent record is created, unless videotaped* Facilitator needs conflict management skills

Source:

Eyler, Janet; Giles, Dwight E.; Schmiede, Angela. *A Practitioner's Guide to Reflection in Service-Learning: Student Voices and Reflections*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University, 1996.

Final Thoughts

Advice for Constructing a Service-Learning Course

Point 1: Make sure that the course goals and objectives are realistic.

It is important that course goals and objectives are clearly stated but that is not enough. They must also be realistic. Often, too much is promised and expected from students within the confines of a semester. In this context, consider very carefully what all of us know to be the two calendar system of teaching made up of (a) the university's "official" academic calendar, and (b) the students' personal calendar (e.g. part-time work, family responsibilities, campus events). Faculty should consider both when planning courses. In service-learning, these calendars are now joined by the added consideration of "real world" calendars of the community which prove to be every bit as significant when engaging students in meaningful community-based learning. Aim high, but be realistic.

Point 2: Make sure that advance planning has taken place with the community agency to effectively integrate service-based learning with course goals and objectives.

Depending upon circumstances peculiar to each course, it is important to plan well in advance of the term in which the course is offered. Including community representatives in the planning process proves to be critical in achieving course goals and objectives. Community representatives need to be given the opportunity to explain what they would like service-learning students to accomplish. In planning, consider such issues as student transportation, agency supervision, monitoring, evaluation, lines of communication, issues of liability, and end-of-term celebration. Plan ahead, plan carefully, and be prepared to be flexible as you go.

Point 3: Make sure that provisions have been made for evaluation and assessment.

Key in meeting the "Principles of Good Practice in Community Service Learning Pedagogy" (Howard, 1993) is educational assessment (*see following section*). Specific and identifiable steps should be taken to assure that testing/evaluation instruments have been designed and gauged to the service learning experiences. Testing/evaluation must meet the service and learning objectives. How can ongoing classroom assessment provide feedback to improve upon the service and learning experience? Will community partners be engaged in the assessment and evaluation processes, and, if so, in what ways will they be involved? Have steps been taken for the instructor to assess her/his progress in the course, and make necessary adjustments to improve upon the course design to better meet objectives?

Source: Contributed by Richard Balkema, Valparaiso University.

Principles Of Good Practice In Community Service Learning Pedagogy

Principle 1: Academic credit is for learning, not for service. Credit in academic courses is assigned for students' demonstration of academic learning. It should be no different in service-learning courses. When service is integrated into an academic course, the course credit is assigned for both the customary academic learning as well as for the utilization of service as part of the course learning.

Principle 2: Do not compromise academic rigor. Academic standards in courses are based on the challenge of readings, presentations, assignments, and examinations. These standards ought to be sustained when including a service-learning component. We advise against compromising the level of expectations for students enrolled in service-learning courses. In fact, a service component may enhance the rigor of a course because, in addition to having to master academic material, students must also learn how to learn from service experience and merge that learning with academic learning. These are challenging intellectual activities, commensurate with rigorous academic standards.

Principle 3: Set learning goals. Establishing learning objectives for students is a standard to which all courses ought to be accountable. It should be no different with service-learning courses; in fact, it is especially necessary and advantageous to use them with these kinds of courses. With the addition of the service community as a learning context, there occurs a multiplication of learning paradigms (e.g. inductive learning, synthesis of theory and practice) and learning topics (e.g. the community, the population). To sort out those of greatest priority-as well as to best take advantage of the bounty of learning opportunity offered by service-requires deliberate planning of the course learning goals.

Principle 4: Establish criteria for the selection of service placements. To optimize community service on behalf of course learning requires more than merely directing students to find a service placement. Faculty who are deliberate about establishing criteria for selecting community service placements will find that students will extract much more from their respective service experiences. Three essential criteria for selecting service placements. A) The range of service placements ought to be circumscribed by the content and context of the course (e.g. homeless shelters and soup kitchens are learning-appropriate placements for a course on homelessness, but placements in schools probably are not). B) The duration of service must be sufficient to enable the fulfillment of learning goals (e.g. a one time two-hour shift at a hospital will do little for learning in a course on institutional health care). C) The specific service activities and contexts must have the potential to stimulate course-relevant learning (e.g. filing papers in a warehouse may be of service to a school district, but it will offer little to stimulate learning in a course on elementary school music).

Principle 5: Provide educationally sound mechanisms to harvest the service learning. Learning in any course is realized by the proper mix and level of learning formats and assignments. Our goal is to maximize students' service experiences on behalf of the course learning. Mechanisms must be employed which both facilitate the students' learning from their service experience and enable its use in course learning. Assigning students to serve at a community agency-even a faculty-approved one-

without a mechanism in place to "harvest the learning," is insufficient to contribute to course learning. Experience, as a learning format-in and of itself-does not constitute learning, nor does a mere written description of one's service activities. Learning interventions that instigate critical reflection and analysis of service experience are necessary to enable service learning to be harvested-and to assure academic learning. Therefore, in order to help insure that service does not underachieve its role as an instrument of learning, careful thought should be given to learning activities that encourage the blending of experiential and academic learning. These might include discussions, presentations, and journal and paper assignments that provoke analysis of service experiences in the context of the course learning. Here, too, the learning goals set for the course will be helpful in informing the course learning formats and assignments.

Principle 6: Provide supports for students to learn how to harvest service learning. Harvesting the learning from service and utilizing it to realize course goals are learning paradigms for which most students are under-prepared. Faculty can help students realize the potential of service learning in the following ways: assisting students with the acquisition of skills necessary for gleaning the learning from the service experience; and/or by providing examples of how to successfully do so (e.g. maintaining a file containing past outstanding student papers and journals for current students to peruse).

Principle 7: Minimize the distinction between the students' service-learning role and their classroom-learning role. Classrooms and communities are very different learning contexts-each requiring students to assume a different learner role. Generally, classrooms provide a high level of learning direction, with students expected to assume mostly a learning-follower role. In contrast, service communities usually provide a low level of learning direction, with students expected to assume mostly a learning-leader role. For students to negotiate alternation between the learning-follower role in the classroom and the learning-leader role in the community places another learning challenge before them. Therefore, if students are expected to assume a learning-follower role in the classroom, a mechanism is needed that will provide learning direction for the students in the community (e.g. community agency staff serving in an adjunct instructor role); otherwise, students will enter the community wearing the inappropriate learning-follower "hat." In a corresponding manner, if the students are expected to assume a learning-leader role in the community, room must be made in the classroom for students to assume a learning-leader role; otherwise, students will enter the classroom wearing the inappropriate learning-leader "hat." The more we can make consistent the student's learning role in the classroom with her/his learning role in the community, the better the chances that the learning potential within each context will be realized.

Principle 8: Re-think the faculty instructional role. Because service learning necessitates a shift in the way(s) students learn, their teachers too, must re-think their roles. In service-learning courses, students are challenged to create new knowledge in new ways, whether as learning-leaders or learning-followers. Because students carry this new knowledge and these learning challenges back to the classroom, it behooves service-learning faculty to reconsider their interpretation of their classroom instructional role. Exclusive or even primary use of traditional instructional models interferes with the promise of learning fulfillment in service-learning courses. A shift in instructor role that

would be most compatible with these new learning phenomena would move away from information dissemination and move toward learning facilitation and guidance.

Principle 9: Be prepared for uncertainty and variation in student learning outcomes. In college courses, the learning stimuli and class assignments largely determine student outcomes. This is true in service-learning courses, too. However, in traditional courses, the learning stimuli (i.e. lectures, labs, and readings) are constant for all enrolled students; this leads to predictability and homogeneity in student learning outcomes. In service-learning courses, the variability in service placements necessarily leads to less certainty and hence, more heterogeneity in student learning outcomes. Even when service-learning students are exposed to the same presentations and the same readings, instructors can expect that class discussions will be less predictable and the content of student papers/projects will be less homogeneous than in courses without a service assignment.

Principle 10: Maximize the community-responsibility orientation of the course. One of the objectives of a service-learning course is to cultivate students' sense of community and social responsibility; designing course-learning formats and assignments that encourage a communal (rather than an individual) learning orientation will contribute to this objective. If course learning is privatized and understood as advancing only the individual, then we are implicitly encouraging a private responsibility mindset; an example would be to assign papers that students write individually and that are read only by the instructor. On the other hand, if the learning is shared amongst the learners, then we are implicitly encouraging a group-responsibility mentality; an example would be to share those same student papers with the other students in the class. This conveys to students that they are resources for one another, and this message contributes to the building of commitment to community and to civic duty.

Source:

Howard, Jeffrey; Galura, Joseph. *PRAXIS I: A Faculty Casebook on Community Service Learning*. Ann Arbor, MI: The OCSL Press, 1993.