Getting Started with Service-Learning and Community-Based Research

A Resource Packet

For more information and sample syllabi:

Campus Compact:  http://www.compact.org/syllabi/

National Service-learning Clearinghouse: http://www.servicelearning.org

Service-Learning and Civic Engagement National Research Directory:
http://gse.berkeley.edu/research/slrdc/resdirectory

National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement:
http://www.scholarshipofengagement.org/

Exemplary Syllabi Include:

1) Include service or community-based research as an expressed goal
2) Clearly describe how the service experience will be measured and the range of evaluation tools
3) Specify the roles and responsibilities of students in the placement and/or service project, (e.g., transportation, time requirements, community contacts, etc.)
4) Define the need(s) the service placement meets
5) Specify how students will be expected to demonstrate what they have learned in the placement/project (journal, papers, presentations)
6) Present course assignments that link the service placement and the course content
7) Include a description of the reflective process

Types of reflection:

- Journals (critical incident journals, key phrase journal, guided reflection journal, etc.)
- Research papers (experiential / reflection)
- Class presentation
- Class discussions
- Group work
- Portfolios

Prepared by: Jennifer N. Fish, Old Dominion University
### 5.1. Reflection and the Service-Learning Cycle

Sole & Toole (2001)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits and Challenges to Service-Learning</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Benefits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Working with unfamiliar populations reduces stereotypes and promotes tolerance</td>
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<td>• Promotes personal development, self efficacy, and leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increases feeling of community connection and civic responsibility</td>
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<td>• Deepens understanding of subject matter and complexity of social issues</td>
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<td><strong>Student Challenges</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of time given the demands of school, work, and family</td>
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<td>• Fear of working with unfamiliar populations and issues</td>
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<td>• Lack of convenient transportation</td>
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<td>• Inability to relate service with their coursework and/or the work of the organization</td>
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<td><strong>Faculty Benefits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Expands role of educator from giver of knowledge to facilitator of knowledge</td>
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<td>• Inspires and innovates teaching methods</td>
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<td>• Broadens areas for research and publication related to current trends and issues</td>
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<td>• Promotes democratic citizenship and leadership</td>
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<td>• Connects the community with curriculum and increases awareness of current societal issues as they relate to academic areas of interest</td>
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<td><strong>Faculty Challenges</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Research is viewed as most important aspect, leaving little time to coordinate work of students within the community</td>
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<td>• Fear of unknown and letting go of control of the classroom when the impact of service learning is not easy to quantify in short term</td>
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<td>• Lack of institutional and departmental support given to faculty</td>
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<td>• Lack of time to adequately revise and restructure course in order to fully integrate service learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Viewing service learning as soft, non-rigorous, non-academic learning or as an add-on, not an integral aspect of the course</td>
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<td><strong>Community Benefits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Opportunity to tap under-utilized volunteer base</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students often continue to volunteer beyond the end of the semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students are enthusiastic and motivated to learn and bring with them new insights, perspectives, and knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Extends community organization’s ability to address unmet needs</td>
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<td>• Creates opportunities for community organizations to help shape student learning</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community Challenges</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of time for preparation, training and supervision</td>
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<td>• Lack of benefit or even possible detriment resulting from short term volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Difficulty recruiting students to work with organization due to location or type of work needed</td>
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<td>• Difficulty defining opportunities that meet student, faculty, and community goal</td>
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Fundamentals of Service-Learning Course Construction

There are four basic principles (with related guiding questions) that should guide instructors in organizing and constructing a service-learning course:

- **Engagement:** Does the community component meet a public good? How do you know this? Were the needs or problems to which service-learning students are responding defined by the community partner(s)? When and how were those needs identified? How have campus/community boundaries been negotiated and how will they be crossed?

- **Reflection:** Is there a mechanism that encourages students to link their community-based experiences to course content and to reflect upon why the work they have done is important?

- **Reciprocity:** Is reciprocity evident in the community-based component? How? Reciprocity suggests that every individual, organization, and entity involved in the learning process functions as both a teacher and a learner. Participants are perceived as colleagues, not as servers and clients. (Jacoby, 1996, p.36)

- **Public Dissemination:** Are the results of student work presented to the public or made an opportunity for the community to enter into a public dialogue? For example: Do oral histories 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?

**Six Models of Service-Learning Course Design**

I. '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.

- **UNIV 290.** "Seminar in Community-based Service and Leadership" (Patrick Green) requires Loyola students to serve 40 hours at a non-profit community organization of the semester. The class meets every other week to balance the extra service commitment. Coursework focuses on philosophies of service and theories of community development and leadership.

II. Discipline-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.

- **HIST 391.** "Asian American History" (Ann Harrington) invites students to spend 20-25 hours working at one of five Asian-focused social services agencies in the Rogers Park area. Students' experiences working directly with Asian Americans give "real world" examples of concepts studied and discussed in class.

III. 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 a solution to the problem.

- **MGMT 335.** "Micro-Enterprise Consulting" (Michael Welch) sends advanced business students into the community to advise start-up enterprises in economically disadvantaged areas. Students draw upon concepts and theories learned in class in their consulting work, and bring problems they encounter back to the classroom for additional support.

IV. Capstone Courses: These courses are generally designed for majors and minors in a given discipline and are offered almost exclusively to students in their final year. Capstone courses ask students to draw upon the knowledge they have obtained throughout their course work and combine it with relevant service work in the community. The goal of capstone courses is usually either exploring a new topic or synthesizing students’ understanding of their discipline. These courses offer an excellent way to help students to transition from the world of theory to the world of practice by helping them make professional contacts and gather personal experience.

- PLST 395. “Polish Studies Capstone” is a requirement for all Polish Studies minors. Students focus on a specific issue or theme in Polish studies and complete a research project that integrates the minor with their major field. Additionally, the course contains a service-learning project of the student’s choosing that takes place in one of various institutions and organizations in Chicago’s Polish American community, including the Polish Museum and Library, Chopin Theatre, Polish Film Festival, Paderewski Symphony Orchestra and Polish American Association.

V. Service Internships: 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 ongoing reflective opportunities that help students analyze their new experiences using discipline-based theories. These reflective opportunities can be done with small groups of peers, with one-on-one meetings with faculty advisors, or even electronically with a faculty member providing feedback. Service internships are further distinguished from traditional internships by their focus on reciprocity: the idea that the community and the student benefit equally from the experience.

- PSYC 390. “Human Services Internship” (John Edwards) places advanced Psychology majors at human services organizations such as adolescent crisis groups, social service agencies, mental health facilities, educational intervention programs, abused or battered women’s groups and homeless shelters. Students give over 100 hours of service to the agency, and conclude the experience by preparing a portfolio integrating their experience with the major.

VI. Undergraduate Community-Based Action Research: A relatively new approach that is gaining popularity, community-based action research is similar to an independent study option for the rare student who is highly experienced in community work. Community-based action research can also be effective with small classes or groups of students. In this model, students work closely with faculty members to learn research methodology while serving as advocates for communities.

- SOCL 335. “Urban Semester Seminar” (Christina George/Phil Nyden), sponsored by Loyola’s Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL), connects undergraduate students with ongoing community-based research projects in and around the Chicago metro area. Many of these students are supported by CURL Fellowships, administered through Loyola’s Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (LUROP). Last semester, seminar students helped assess the effectiveness of the U.S. Veterans Administration’s new “St. Leo” supportive housing project for formerly homeless veterans on Chicago’s South Side by conducting extensive interviews of program participants, then quantifying and analyzing the resulting information in cooperation with graduate student, faculty, and staff research fellows.
Types of Community-Based Service-Learning Activities

There is no single way to “do” service-learning or structure a community-based experience. The following four types of activities offer some examples of how various agency missions, opportunities, and needs might interface with classroom learning objectives. It is by no means an exhaustive list, and should be used as a spur to instructors’ creativity.

Placement: In courses which include a service placement requirement, individual students or groups of students choose community agency sites (usually from a short list of appropriate options that have been chosen for their courses by their instructor in cooperation with Center for Experiential Learning staff) and work at these sites for a few hours per week throughout the semester, depending on the course requirements and the needs of the service site. The service they provide is the conduit to their learning, and thus functions as an additional “text” for the course, giving students access to populations or issues related to their course’s content. In return, the students provide needed assistance to their organizations and/or their clientele.

- For example, students in David Embrick’s “US Race and Ethnic Relations” class (SOC1 122) volunteer 20-25 hours at area agencies that are committed to fighting racism and other forms of discrimination and reflect on their experiences in light of in-class discussions of historic and contemporary racial and ethnic relations. Part of their assignment is to research and secure their own placement.

- Students in Gayle Roux’s “Health Care of Vulnerable Populations” class (HSM 230) offer 20-25 hours of service at area health care organizations that serve vulnerable populations, working with Center for Experiential Learning staff to obtain a placement that advances their individual career goals so as to help them see the relevance and practical application of class material to their specific areas of interest.

Presentation: Students in these courses take material they are learning in class and create presentations for audiences in the community, usually young people. The service learners work in small groups and choose from among several sites, which have usually been set up by the course instructor in cooperation with the Center for Experiential Learning staff. Sometimes instructors require students to do their presentations more than once (to give them the chance to evaluate and make adjustments), or have them present in class before going out into the community. In more complex designs, the entire class (or several classes working together) may collaborate to present an entire symposium, workshop, or community event that incorporates an array of student presentations.

- Students in Diane Schiller’s “Math for Elementary Teachers I” class and Linda Wold’s “Children’s Literature” class (CIEP 104 and CIEP 206/ENGL 206) are instructing older middle school students at Swift School about the mathematical power of exponents, then working with those more advanced students to develop theatrical presentations (based on math-themed children’s books) to convey the same material to younger students at the school.

- Students in “STEP (Solutions to Environmental Problems): Biodiesel,” team-taught by Nancy Tuchman and Alison Varty, prepare a Biodiesel Symposium at the end of each semester, inviting local high school science classes (as well as members of the general public) to visit their biodiesel lab and learn about the science behind biodiesel production and its benefits for the environment.

Adapted from Bobbi Timberlake, “Service Learning Faculty Handbook,” Marquette University, August 2007

To learn more about partnering with Loyola through the Center for Experiential Learning, or to contact the C.E.L. staff, visit: LUC.edu/experiential
Product/Agency Project: In some courses, service-learning students—working alone or in groups—produce a tangible result for their agencies, thus serving as volunteer “consultants” in response to agency-defined needs or goals.

- Students in Ann Marie Ryan’s “Secondary Methods: Social Studies” class (CIEP M60) are using a class curriculum design project to develop micro-units for inclusion in the Chicago Public Schools’ “My Chicago” summer enrichment curriculum, which will be offered to students from underperforming Chicago public high schools for the first time this summer. Members of the “My Chicago” staff are working with the students to ensure that the micro-units fit their broader program goals, and intend to hire some of the students as summer interns to help finalize and teach the new material.

- Students in “Community Radio Production” (CMUN 146) produce public service announcements for area non-profit organizations, saving them thousands of dollars in marketing costs.

Community Project: Working individually or in groups, service-learning students collaborate with community members to devise and implement a project that responds to community-defined needs using resources already present in the community. Such activities usually require a fairly high degree of organization, both on the part of the university class and the community partners, and may require more than one semester of involvement to complete.

- Students in a sequence of new SOWK classes proposed by Julia Pryce and Michael Kelly would collaborate with Big Brothers Big Sisters and two South Side charter schools to evaluate a UIC-developed positive youth development program that BBBS and the schools are considering adopting. Over the span of two semesters, Loyola students would serve as mentors to students in the charter schools using the UIC curriculum, assessing both their own subjective experiences and those of the students, as well as analyzing the schools’ and BBBS’ capacity to implement the program as designed. BBBS and the charter schools’ staff would likewise be engaged in ongoing evaluation of the new program. One proposed outcome of the course is a collaborative redesign of the UIC program by the charter school student mentees, undergraduate mentors, BBBS project supervisors, charter school staff, and Loyola faculty members.
Reflection: Helping Students Make the Connection

It is in reflecting upon their (hopefully well-prepared!) experiences in the field that students can begin to make connections between those experiences and the academic course content. In other words, it is in the reflecting that service becomes service-learning. The opposite is also true, however: a “service-learning” course which does not explicitly encourage and support student reflection on their experiences in light of the course’s academic content is not really a service-learning course at all.

The following are various techniques which instructors can use both to help students reflect on their experiences and also to assess the level of student learning in a course which employs a service-learning pedagogy. Employing a combination of these methodologies, both in and out of class, can maximize students’ and instructors’ opportunities to relate the service component to course content and thus deepen learning for all involved.

- **Discussion/Class-based Techniques**

In-class reflections should not be focused on the service aspect of students’ on-site experiences, but rather on the ways in which course concepts relate to those experiences. Discussions offer a forum which encourages students to process and relate what they are studying, doing, and learning, and provide instructors with opportunities to emphasize key concepts, challenge students’ thinking, and pose and address important questions raised by students’ remarks.

**Event reporting:** The instructor—often at the beginning of the class—asks students to share powerful, interesting, or illuminating incidents from their most recent time on-site (see “Critical incident report” below), and then uses these stories to raise questions and/or illustrate points that will be treated in that day’s class.

**Microcosm discussions:** In the classroom, students explore a broad concept or issue through a focused examination its impact on the organizations and communities which they are serving. (This is particularly effective when many or all of the students in the class are connected with the same service site.)

**Example-seeking:** Similar to a microcosm discussion, an instructor asks students to provide real-world examples (drawn from their service experiences) of concepts discussed in lecture or in a reading assignment.

**Question-seeking:** After introducing the day’s topic, the instructor invites students to share questions or concerns related to it which have occurred to them through their interactions on the service site, then presents material as a systematic response to students’ questions.

**Case studies:** Individuals/groups of students prepare a case study of a situation which they have encountered at the service site that illustrates an instructor-assigned topic, including a description of the context, the individuals involved, and a narrative of the controversy or event. These case studies are then read and discussed in class as a way of introducing or illuminating that class session’s material.

**Exit cards:** At the end of each class, students write and turn in a brief reflection on an index card, reflecting on content from the day’s class and explaining how this information relates to their personal service involvement. These provide instructors with a low-effort regular assessment tool for monitoring both students’ understanding of course content and their progress in integrating that content with their service experiences.

* Adapted from Bobbi Timberlake, “Service Learning Faculty Handbook,” Marquette University, August 2007, with additional material from the Service-Learning Center at Virginia Tech and Indiana Campus Compact.
Writing-based (out-of-class) Techniques

Individual written reflections allow students to process both the academic (course-related) aspects and personal impact of their service experiences. When assigned (and graded) at regular intervals through the semester, such reports can help instructors monitor individual students’ progress (both academically and personally) and offer valuable insights into their ongoing processes of learning and meaning-making. Because of the personal dimension of many of these assignments, instructors sometimes find them hard to grade; use of one of the following structures in combination with a clearly constructed rubric can be extremely helpful in this regard.

Reflective Reports: Though one of the most common forms of reflection employed in service-learning classes, reflective reports are often criticized by instructors as overly subjective and insufficiently academic. The following structures can help students to use their regular reports about their service experiences to more effectively make connections to course content and/or more substantive engagement in the issues raised by their community involvement.

- **Critical incident report:** The following set of prompts asks students to consider their thoughts and reactions and articulate the action they plan to take in the future: Describe a significant event that occurred as part of the service experience. Why was this significant to you? What did you learn from this experience? How will this incident influence your future behavior?

- **Three-part reporting:** Each weekly entry is divided into thirds: description, analysis, and application. In the top section, students describe some aspect of the service experience. In the middle section, they analyze how course content relates to the service experience. Finally, in the application section students comment on how their experience and the course content can be applied to their personal and professional life.

- **Highlighted session reports:** Before students submit their reflective reports, they reread their entries and, using a highlighter, mark sections of the reports that directly relate to course concepts and terms. This makes it easier for both students and the instructor to identify the academic connections made during the reflection process.

- **Key-phrase reports:** The instructor provides a list of terms and key phrases (drawn from course content) at the beginning of the semester for students to include in their reports throughout the semester. Evaluation is based on the use and demonstrated understanding of the terms.

- **Double-entry reports:** Students keep a notebook in which they describe their personal thoughts and reactions to the service experience on the left page, and write about key issues from class discussions or readings on the right page. Students then draw arrows indicating relationships between their personal experience and course content.

- **Dialogical Reporting:** Students submit reflective reports (in paper or via email) to the instructor for comments every two weeks. While labor-intensive for the instructor, this can provide regular feedback to students and prompt new questions for them to consider during the semester. Dialogue reports can also be read and responded to by a peer.

Directed writing: Directed writing assignments ask students to explicitly consider the service experience within the framework of course content. The instructor identifies a section from the assigned readings or class topic (e.g., quotes, statistics, key concepts) and structures a question that draws on students’ understanding of the material and their service experiences. These questions can be included in the syllabus. Students answer the question in 1-2 pages.

Online discussion forum: Students use the discussion forum feature on Blackboard, a class list-serv, or a student blog site to post, read, and respond to one another’s regular written reflections (of any of the sorts discussed above). This allows for greater peer-to-peer interaction, challenge, and support in processing both service experiences and academic content. Instructors can also participate in the online conversation to answer questions, challenge biases, and suggest new directions for reflection.
Weekly log: A weekly log is a simple listing of activities completed each week at the service site. This is a very basic way to monitor student work. When incorporated into a portfolio or similar final project, it can provide students with an overview of the contribution they have made on the site during the semester.

- **Project/Paper-based Techniques**

Final papers, presentations, or other projects are one of the best ways for students to reflect upon the synthesis of their service experiences and the course’s academic content, especially when used in combination with other, ongoing forms of reflection (either in - or out-of-class). Such final, summary assessments can be prepared by individuals or by groups, and can also be presented in class and/or at students’ community agencies (allowing students to incorporate audio/video material) if appropriate.

**Analytical Paper (Presentation):** Analytical papers focus on the students’ experience of serving in the community, and then relate that experience to course content in a systematic way. Such papers might include descriptions of the work students did on site, analyses of the agency where they worked and its response strategy to the social issues/communities with which it deals, evaluations of students’ personal service and the strengths and weaknesses of the agency, changes/improvements which the students would suggest for the agency’s operations, and an integration section in which students address how their service experience related to or conflicted with course concepts and affected their understanding of course materials, demonstrated the relevance/irrelevance of their studies in application to concrete situations in the community, and prepared them for further academic or professional engagement in course topics.

**Experiential Research Paper (Presentation):** An experiential research paper focuses on an aspect of the course content highlighted by students’ service experience, then relates students’ research on that topic back to those experiences in a pragmatic way. Students identify an underlying course-related issue which they have encountered in their service placement, then research and write a major paper about this issue (incorporating material from their on-site experiences as illustrations, etc.). Such papers may also include an applications section, in which students make recommendations to their agency and/or policy makers for future action based on their research.

**Portfolio:** Service-learning portfolios contain evidence of both processes and products completed and ask students to assess their work in terms of the learning objectives of the course. Portfolios can contain any of the following: service-learning agreement, weekly log, session reports, directed writings, photographic or other documentary material, products completed during the service project, etc. Students conclude the portfolio with an evaluative essay providing a self-assessment of how effectively they met the learning and service objectives of the course. A portfolio can also be done in electronic (web- or PowerPoint-based) form.

**Scrapbook:** A service-learning scrapbook is a final portfolio (see above) which also incorporates research (e.g., articles, abstracts, photos, annotated bibliographic citations) and documentation related to relevant current events into topics or issues raised by students’ service experiences and related to course content. Web-based formats are particularly effective media for service-learning scrapbook presentation.

**Community Presentation/Product:** Students demonstrate their mastery of course content by teaching or presenting it to community members at their service site in an appropriate format. Alternatively, they may use their knowledge/expertise/research to prepare a resource that can be used by their agency in its ongoing work in the community.

**Capstone Project:** Capstone projects (which are often associated with specifically-designated capstone courses) generally designed for majors and minors in a given discipline and are offered almost exclusively to students in their final year. Students must draw upon the knowledge they have obtained throughout their course work and combine it with relevant service work in the community. The goal of capstone courses is usually either exploring a new topic or synthesizing students’ understanding of their discipline. Such projects offer an excellent way to help students transition from the world of theory to the world of practice by helping them make professional contacts and gather personal experience.
Service-Learning Guidelines Template

One way to help students make the most of their service-learning experience is to give them clear written guidelines for that experience. Such guidelines should be included as part of the syllabus given to students at the beginning of the semester. While every instructor will construct her/his syllabus differently depending on the course content, the type of service activities used, and other factors, the following elements should appear somewhere in the description of the service component of a class taught using a service-learning pedagogy.

1. A brief paragraph explaining why you, the instructor, think that a community-based experience will enhance students' learning in this course

2. A brief, concrete, and specific statement of what you are expecting students to “put into” the experience, e.g. the total number of hours (best practices suggest at least 20 in a 3-credit class), the number of visits to a placement site, completion of a specific project, etc.

3. A clear statement of your objectives for the course, including your specific objectives for the community-based component of the class and an indication of how these relate to the overall academic objectives

4. Suggestions as to how students should go about gaining the knowledge, understanding, or experience you wish them to gain from their service experience, e.g. by observing what goes on around them (instead of only focusing on their tasks); by using all their senses while on site; by getting to know a particular person from a different racial or ethnic group, socioeconomic background, age or ability group, etc.; by interviewing staff members at the organization; by asking questions of the clientele; by talking with classmates in group sessions; etc.

5. A list of questions or issues that students should be considering—in class, at their service site, and/or while writing reflections or papers—that will draw connections between their community experiences and the course material. Some instructors like to invite students to develop these questions for themselves as a reflective exercise; others use them to structure various reflection assignments (see “Reflection: Helping Students Make the Connection” for some examples)

6. A clear identification of what you expect students to produce during or as a result of their service experience (NB: per best practices, students should be graded on what they learn—as demonstrated by assessments—and not simply for doing service), e.g. a paper comparing some element of their community-based experience with some aspect of the course content; an oral presentation using community experiences to illustrate course theory; an electronic portfolio that explores stereotypic portrayals of the agency’s clientele by examining the evolution of students’ personal experiences on site; etc.

7. Explain what/how you expect the students to contribute to their classmates' learning by sharing the fruits of their reflection, contributing to class discussions, working in groups, etc.

8. List any other expectations which you may have, including key dates, e.g. turn in a completed service-learning agreement by [date]; attend an agency-based orientation or Loyola-sponsored volunteer fair on [date]; submit a mid-semester progress report by [date]; participate in Center for Experiential Learning-sponsored program evaluations; etc.

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Quick Guide: Publishing & Presenting in Service-Learning

Source: Rachel L. Vaughn, Sarena D. Seifer, and Tanis Vye Mihalynuk, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, January 2004

Quick Guides are intended to provide a brief discussion and a short list of the best resources on a service-learning topic.

For additional resource lists on these and other service-learning topics visit the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse Website at http://www.servicelearning.org.

Service-learning is becoming increasingly prominent in higher education. Consequently, there has also been an increase in opportunities to publish and present in this field. This quick guide is intended to provide a synopsis of where and how to present and publish service-learning in higher education materials. For a more comprehensive review, refer to the NSLC fact sheet prepared earlier on this topic by Community Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH).

When deciding what areas to conduct research, publish, and / or present on, consider the following:

- What research areas interest you?
- What aspects of your current service-learning program could be published?
- What methods-qualitative or quantitative-will you use to publish and / or present your research?
- How will your research make a significant contribution to the field of service-learning?

In terms of publishing on service-learning research in higher education, determine who will be involved, how they will be involved, authors and order of authorship at the inception of the research. Keep in mind that measures such as protecting confidentiality and rights of human subjects should also be considered. Many journals will only publish research that has been approved by the higher education institution's Human Subjects' Review Committee. Remember to carefully follow instructions for manuscript submission (formatting, word limit, electronic or hard copy, etc.). In addition to the journals presented below, one of the best places to publish service-learning research is in your own disciplinary journal. This advances and legitimates service-learning within the field/discipline, as well as promotes your academic career.

When planning to present, be mindful of conference deadlines for submission of materials and applications. There are two annual conferences dedicated to service-learning as well as conferences that have special interest groups and workshops on this topic (see web resources below). And don't forget to submit service-learning abstracts to present at your own disciplinary
meetings and conferences!

Web Resources

Presenting Service-Learning Research and Practices

National Service-Learning Conference
http://www.nylc.org/

This conference highlights and promotes service-learning as a way of teaching and learning that builds academic and citizenship skills while renewing communities.

International Conference on Advances in Service-Learning Research
http://www.upa.pdx.edu/SLResearch06/

This international research conference is sponsored by more than twenty national organizations and foundations and convenes leading service-learning scholars and researchers to present new study findings, methodological and theoretical advances, and recently completed research agendas for studying various aspects of service-learning in K-12 education, teacher education, and higher education. For information on the 6th annual conference to be held at Portland State University, contact: slrsrch@pdx.edu

American Education Research Association
http://www.aera.net/

AERA hosts a special interest group (SIG) on service-learning and experiential learning. The SIG's purpose is "to bring together both researchers and practitioners to build and promote understanding of SL and experiential education for the betterment of the field." The SIG also sponsors presentations on service-learning at the AERA's annual conference.

National Society of Experiential Education
http://www.nsee.org/

The National Society for Experiential Education conference is in the autumn, the call for proposals carries a January deadline. The NSEE has a SIG devoted to service-learning and it an outstanding place to present service-learning research.

American Association of Higher Education
http://www.aahe.org/

The "Learning to Change" conference in the spring and the Assessment conference in the summer both provide forums for presenting service-learning research.
Publishing Service-Learning Research and Practices

Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning (MJCSL)
http://www.umich.edu/~mjcsl/

This is a national, peer-reviewed journal consisting of articles written by faculty and service-learning educators on research, theory pedagogy and other issues pertinent to the service-learning community.

Campus Compact Reader

Highlights the best writing on civic education and service-learning from sources around the country. Published in the fall, winter, and spring.

The Generator: Journal of Service-Learning and Service Leadership
http://www.nylec.org/generator.htm

Published by the National Youth Leadership Council, this journal of service-learning and youth leadership provides up-to-date information on service-learning methodologies, programs and initiatives.

Journal of Experiential Education (JEE)
http://www.aee.org/pubs/jee/njourn.html

Published by the Association of Experiential Education (AEE), this is a professional, peer-reviewed journal that publishes a diverse range of articles in subject areas including service-learning.

National Society for Experiential Education Quarterly
http://www.nsee.org/pubsandresources.htm

Articles from the field of experiential education, including service-learning, are featured in this quarterly newsletter.

Print Resources

Billig, Shelley and Andrew Furco, eds. Service-Learning Through a Multidisciplinary Lens.


This book explores the multidisciplinary dimensions of service-learning and the implications of these dimensions for the study of service-learning. Editors' introduction includes dimensions of service-learning research; and establishing norms for scientific
inquiry in service-learning. (Take special note of the article by Janet Eyler entitled, "Stretching to meet the challenge: Improving the quality of research to improve the quality of service-learning.")


This book's chapters focus on a broad range of topics that address a variety of research issues on service-learning in K-12 education, teacher education, and higher education. There are three categories of essays: theoretical issues regarding service-learning, the impact(s) of service-learning, and methodological approaches to studying service-learning. (Take special note of the article by Janet S. Eyler and Dwight Giles entitled, "Beyond surveys: Using problem solving interviews to assess the impact of service-learning on understanding and critical thinking.")


In this report by the Carnegie Foundation, Ernest Boyer argues for a broader understanding of scholarship that takes into account the scope of faculty activity more fully than does the traditional categories of teaching and research.


Ernest Boyer suggests that American education has moved away from its traditional commitment to public service and argues for a new commitment to service that he calls the scholarship of engagement.


"At A Glance" provides an excellent summary of the findings of service-learning research in higher education over the past few years. An annotated bibliography is included. This is the place to start for an overview of where the service-learning research in higher education stands today.


In this article, Andy Furco provides an overview of what is needed to advance the research agenda in experiential education, providing examples from the service-learning field.

This text offers a new paradigm for evaluating scholarship of engagement, a scholarship that better integrates the full range of scholarly activity, research, teaching and service. It includes discussion of changes in thinking about scholarship and ideas about developing criteria for evaluating a full range of scholarship and for documenting scholarly efforts. It also includes, as appendices, the Questionnaire for the National Survey on the Reexamination of Faculty Roles and Rewards and the results of that survey.

Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning. (Fall, 2000 Theme Issue).
Theme: Strategic Directions for Service-Learning Research.

Each article is devoted to a topic related to the theme, and responds to the question: "Where does service-learning research need to go to advance our knowledge and practice bases?"


This article examines ways that faculty can balance the community demands for scholarship of engagement and their institution's expectations regarding teaching and research with their own scholarly interests. It also explores the different perspectives among community, institution, and scholar, which create tensions in the implementation and design of outreach scholarship programs.


This article builds on the work of Ernest Boyer in calling for a "scholarship" of outreach in which the faculty service mission is directly tied to the field of knowledge and subject to the same requirements for rigor and accountability that apply to research scholarship.
Community Impact Survey

As a conclusion activity to the Service-Learning program at VCU, we ask for your opinion on how the semester progressed with the service-learning students. Please complete this evaluation regarding the service-learning program.

Agency name: ____________________________________________________________

Contact name: ____________________________________________________________

VCU course/semester: ______________________________________________________

1. Considering your overall experience with VCU service-learning students this semester, please comment on the following and please offer any suggestions for improvement.

   Attendance: _____________________________________________________________

   Work habits: ____________________________________________________________

   Professionalism: _________________________________________________________

   Willingness to learn new ideas and skills: _________________________________

   Overall performance: ____________________________________________________

2. What contribution have the students made to your organization?

   ________________________________________________________________

3. After working with service-learning students this semester, do you feel that your organization is able to provide students with an experience that enhances their course work? Why?

   ________________________________________________________________

4. Is your organization interested in hosting a service-learning class of students next semester? If no, why not?

   ________________________________________________________________

5. What questions do you have about the service-learning program?

   ________________________________________________________________

6. How can we continue to make this a positive experience for your organization?

   ________________________________________________________________

Please return completed survey to: Division of Community Engagement • Service-Learning coordinator
P.O. Box 843082 • 920 West Franklin Street • Richmond, Virginia 23284-3062

Questions: Contact the coordinator at (804) 827-8215