

Getting Started with Service-Learning

Campus Compact Mid-Atlantic
University of Maryland Baltimore
County

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25 THE SHRIVER CENTER AT UMBC



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF
BRIDGING CAMPUS & COMMUNITY

Reflection Questions

- (1) What is most exciting for you about SL?**
- (2) What is your biggest question about SL?**
- (3) What concern or doubt do you have about SL?**

Agenda

(1) What exactly is SL and what does it look like across disciplines?

(2) So what? or What are the benefits of SL to students, communities, and institutions?

(3) Now what? How do I get started with SL?

Definition of Service-Learning

“Service-learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve desired learning outcomes.”

– B. Jacoby, *Service-Learning in Higher Education*, 1996

Key Principle: Reflection



Key Principle: Reciprocity



Direct Service



Project-Based Service



Community-Based Research



Advocacy



What are the potential benefits of service-learning? For whom? How can they be achieved?



Students Gain

- **Empathy**
- **Sense of personal and social responsibility**
- **Cultural and racial understanding**
- **Collaboration**

Critical workplace skills!

Students Also Gain

- **Ability to act on complex problems**
- **Creativity and innovation to solve problems**
- **Ability to apply knowledge in new settings**
- **Strong sense of ethics and integrity**

Pro-Social Career Choice



Service-Learning Is Effective Because It Is...

- ▶ Active
- ▶ Authentic
- ▶ Relevant

Community Benefits

- ▶ Better service to clients
- ▶ Fresh approaches
- ▶ Enhanced research capacity
- ▶ Access to university resources
- ▶ Budgetary savings
- ▶ Advances organization goals
- ▶ Increases visibility
- ▶ Educates students about issues

Now What?

Getting Started with Service-Learning



Step 1. Clearly state learning outcomes.



Learning Outcomes

HESI 418J: Now What? Composing a Life of Meaning and Purpose

- **Demonstrate an understanding of the social issues that underlie hunger and food insecurity in local community and strategies being used to address them.**
- **Demonstrate the ability to work effectively with others to develop an action plan and to implement a successful collaborative project that meets a need identified by the community.**

Step 2. Envision service as text.

- **“Written” concurrently with course.**
- **Equal to written work in learning potential.**
- **Faculty determine “texts” for the course and how much “text.”**
- **Required or optional?**
- **Faculty provide structures for reading, analyzing and discussing “text.”**
- **Faculty evaluate learning from “text.”**

Step 3. Seek a match between course goals and community needs.



Working with Community Partners

1. Start early.
2. Provide a syllabus in advance.
3. Discuss what each brings and needs.
4. Ask the right questions.
5. Decide how you will communicate.

Step 4. Select other course content and activities.



Readings to Complement the Service

- **Intro to service-learning**
- **Community context**
- **Needs to be addressed**
- **Historical/theoretical perspectives**
- **Root causes of the need for service**
- **Knowledge and skills needed**

Step 5. Integrate critical reflection.



What is Critical Reflection?

Critical reflection is the powerful process of making meaning out of a purposeful combination of experiences and academic content.

It is the process of analyzing, reconsidering, and questioning one's experiences within a broad context of issues and content knowledge.

John Dewey's Definition

Critical reflection “is the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends.”

--*How We Think*, 1910

4 “C’s” of Critical Reflection

- **Continuous**
- **Connected**
- **Challenging**
- **Contextualized**

4 “C’s” of Critical Reflection

Continuous:

- Before
- During
- After

the service experience

4 “C’s” of Critical Reflection

Connected:

Builds bridges among:

- **Content learning**
- **Personal reflections**
- **First-hand experiences**

4 “C’s” of Critical Reflection

Challenging:

- **Poses old questions in new ways**
- **Reveals new perspectives**
- **Raises new questions**

IMPORTANT: Create a balance of challenge & support.

4 “C’s” of Critical Reflection

Contextualized:

- **Form and process guided by context**
- **Can occur in class or at service site**
- **May involve community members**
- **Consider critical incidents**

Reflection is critical when

- It is carefully and intentionally designed to generate learning by applying theory to practice, examining causality, and raising questions.
- It deepens learning by challenging simplistic conclusions, comparing different perspectives, and asking “why” iteratively.
- It documents student learning by producing evidence of learning for assessment.

Modes of Reflection

- **Speaking**
- **Writing**
- **Activities**
- **Media**

Step 6. Develop a plan to assess student and community outcomes.



Service-Learning Assessment

- **How will students demonstrate their learning?**
- **At what points will you assess learning?**
- **What will be the community partner's role in evaluating students?**
- **How will you determine grades?**
- **How will you determine the degree of success of the service-learning from the community's perspective?**

Psychology of Domestic Violence

Learning outcomes:

- Demonstrate understanding of the dynamics and effects of domestic violence.
- Demonstrate understanding of various approaches and their effectiveness.
- Analyze the effects of gender, culture, race/ethnicity, and SES on victims.

Psychology of Domestic Violence

Weekly service analysis papers

- **2 pages**
- **include multiple references**
- **maximum 1 paragraph on what occurred**
- **critical reflection on how service experience relates to readings**

Psychology of Domestic Violence

Grading service analysis papers:

- **4 points = Exceptional, thoughtful critique that integrates concepts and research into an analysis of the experience**
- **3 points = Very good, thoughtful critique that applies course concepts and research**

Psychology of Domestic Violence

Grading service analysis papers:

- **2 points = Average to below average analysis, does not thoroughly integrate course concepts and research**
- **1 point = Completed assignment, but did not provide a thoughtful analysis**

--O'Brien, K. M., PSYC 319D, University of Maryland

What Role Will Your Community Partner Play in Assessment?



Now What?

Composing a Life of Meaning and Purpose

Grades based on:

Class participation	25%
Two-page reflection papers	30%
Cumulative reflection	15%
Group project grade	30%
(15% individual grade; 15% group grade)	

TOTAL

100%

Step 7. Address issues unique to service-learning.



Service-Learning Definition: College Writing II

- **Credit-bearing, educational experience**
- **Service activity meets identified community needs**
- **Students reflect on activity to gain**
 - **further understanding of course content**
 - **broader appreciation of discipline**
 - **enhanced sense of civic responsibility**

Service-Learning Definition: College Writing II

- **Service meets community *and* learning goals**
- **Service provides for specific needs of underserved individuals/communities**
- **Service promotes civic engagement among all participants**

Rationale for Service-Learning: The Good Society (Anthropology)

- **Links theory to practice by giving students the opportunity to apply ideas to the real world.**
- **Brings community to the classroom and classroom back to the community.**
- **Guided reflection helps facilitate this linking.**

Rationale for Service-Learning: The Good Society (Anthropology)

- **Forces us to consider issues such as social justice, not as academic abstractions but as ongoing struggles that touch our lives, our community partners, and every citizen.**
- **Forces us to consider what it means to be a citizen and to participate in a democracy.**

– Dr. Arthur Keene, Dr. John Reiff, & Dr. David Schimmel, UMass Amherst

Manage the Process



Identify a back-up service site.

Syllabus example:

“No student will be asked to design for a community organization that creates a religious, political, and/or moral conflict. The student must inform the instructor immediately if there is a problem, and a reassignment will be issued that is similar in scope and complexity.”

Prepare students for service.



Manage logistics.

- **Tools and materials**
- **Training**
- **Dress and behavior**
- **Transportation**
- **Safety**
- **Risk management**
- **Security procedures**

Anticipate problems; stay in touch.



Get ready to handle the tough questions.



Final Reflection

- 1. What new idea, concept, or practice that you learned about today are you most excited to use in your teaching/work)?**
- 2. What was affirmed or validated for you today related to SL and your teaching/work)?**

**“Never let the things that matter most
suffer from the things that matter
least.”**

– Goethe

“ You could be the grain of sand that turns us in the right direction.”

--Pete Seeger

Thank you!

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