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ABSTRACT

This document contains three issues, each containing one article, from the American Association of Community Colleges' Service Learning Resource Guide. The first article, "Service Learning and Curricular Integration" (Robert Exley), discusses service learning and curricular integration. It outlines several steps in implementing service learning programs: (1) identifying course competencies to determine if the current design is the best fit for today's community college student; (2) identifying the competencies best suited to service learning; (3) determining student learning expectations; (4) using reflective teaching strategies; and (5) creating a course syllabus. The second article, "Integrating Reflection on Ethical Issues To Promote Civic Responsibility" (C. David Lisman), discusses how service learning experiences can be structured in a way that achieves civic literacy. Some suggestions are to: (1) clarify the concept of civic responsibility; (2) discuss ethics in the classroom; and (3) engage students in community service activities. Three ethics case studies are presented. The final article in this document, "The Service Learning Journal: Writing to Learn" (Joan Gilson and Nan Ottenritter), discusses the goals for service learning journaling, and how to evaluate these journals. Sample weekly assignments are presented, as is a sample journal entry. (EMH)

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Service Learning RESOURCE GUIDE

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May 1998

SERVICE LEARNING AND CURRICULAR INTEGRATION

by Robert J. Exley, Ph.D.

Introduction

His name was Joe, and my experience with him frustrates me even today when I remember it. He was a bright, articulate, and persuasive student in an Applied Leadership Theory course I was teaching for honors students. He was a typical community college student in many ways—a bit older, married with one child, working full-time, and taking three courses. He was that pseudo-intellectual whom many of the other students admired. He had no problem questioning the need for many of the class assignments as well as the validity of course content. I liked him for his contributions to the class. But I was disappointed in his unwillingness to genuinely enter into the course. Finally, I confronted him in class.

“Joe,” I stated, “you are a natural leader with your classmates. Why will you not accept your abilities and be the leader you are capable of being?”

“I don’t need this,” he angrily replied. Then he went on to say, “I don’t have time to be involved with others, and I don’t want anyone thinking that I am the source of answers to their problems. Please, just leave me alone!”

He was an experienced Emergency Medical Technician who wanted to become a Registered Nurse. He was extremely capable academically, but he was unable to accept his skills and abilities. He did complete my course and was subsequently accepted into the nursing program. He lasted less than a year. He dropped out of school with excellent grades in all of his courses. I do not know for certain, but I assume that he was unable to accept success and grew tired of other students looking up to him.

My course did not include service at that time. I used a variety of small group assignments and case studies. My failure with Joe did, however, light a fire in me

to find a way for my students to truly experience, in a way that would be unavoidable, the content of my leadership course. It led me to discover service learning, and I had to completely redesign the course. To do so, I had to deal with many questions and resolve numerous doubts.

- Is service learning about *what we teach* or is it about *how we teach*?
- Are we speaking of the *content* of the discussion or the *methods* used during a session when we emphasize the importance of reflection?
- How can I make the service learning component *an integral part of the course* and not just another add-on assignment?

These are but a few of the questions that come to mind when beginning to integrate service into the learning expectations of a course. Starting with the basics helps.

Remember the simple who, what, when, where, why, and how questions of curricular design. Who are we teaching? What content and information will we be teaching them? When is the most appropriate time to teach this in the context of their education? In what setting can students best learn this course material? Why is it important to teach this content and to teach them in this manner? And how can we be most successful in teaching this information?

The answers to these most relevant questions frame the use of service learning. Many semesters of trial and error, discussions with colleagues, research within the fields of experiential education and service learning, and the solicitation of genuine feedback from students produced the following strategies for integrating service into the curriculum.

JC 000 206



Getting Started: Identifying Course Competencies

To begin, overcome the natural belief “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” The best way to accomplish this is to undertake a naive review of the existing competencies and learning expectations in the course. Ask the really tough questions about the course as it is now designed: the who, what, when, where, why, and how questions.

Who and What

This comprehensive review will reveal the areas where your current design may not be the best fit for today’s community college student. For example, students today are far more consumer-oriented than those of just a few short years ago. Student consumers expect that the learning will be directly applicable to their immediate life interests. Students want to be able to see a visible connection between what they are learning and how that affects their daily lives. I call this the “test of connectivity.”

Many times, the course competencies and learning objectives are still relevant, but the means by which we are “teaching” and the student is “learning” fail to meet this test of connectivity. Service learning provides a process for helping the students see this connection. However, service learning is not an all-or-nothing teaching strategy, and curricular integration does not mean that you must abandon other methods of instruction.

How and Why

A very important aspect of curricular design is determining the most effective way for getting the message across. Research on effective teaching (Cruikshank, Bainer, and Metcalf 1995) emphasizes the importance of using a variety of teaching strategies in the course of instruction. Service learning is just one teaching strategy, but it works extremely well for many different disciplines and with many different personalities. One must be cautious and thorough when determining how best to use it with certain courses. A common mistake is to assume that service learning must mean a minimum of 20-30 hours of service per semester combined with regular classroom reflection sessions. Be aware that this is only one way to use service learning; many others exist. Although there are no magical formulas, certain principles determine the role and scope of service learning for a given course.

Identify the Competencies Best Suited to Service Learning

Once you have completed your review of the course and are satisfied with the competencies and learning objectives, it is time to decide which ones are most suited to the use of service learning. Remember that service learning requires the instructor to combine the use of service outside of the classroom with the learning experiences and assignments within the classroom. In short, competencies best learned via active learning are better suited than those that remain in a theoretical or intellectual mode. For example, a competency that requires the student to demonstrate rote memorization of content lends itself less to service learning than does one that demands the student demonstrate an applied comprehension of a concept.

Each instructor must determine the fit of service learning to the particular course. Keep in mind that the degree to which you use service learning is directly related to the course competencies and learning objectives you choose. The degree of importance of the course competency you choose may dictate the amount of service time required of the student. I have chosen to focus on service time because this seems to be the one consistently asked question by instructors new to service learning. However, the amount of time is secondary to the learning that you want to occur. It is the learning that matters most, and the most effective arena for that learning to occur is in the relationships and exchanges between and among you and the other students.

Table 1 illustrates how to restructure class time and identify academic products or assignments required from the student.

Student Learning Expectations

Once course competencies have been identified, the next step is to determine how to assess student learning in relation to the service requirement. You have the full range of options available to you for assessing student mastery of course content including objective and subjective examinations, oral reports, essay papers, pop quizzes, group projects, etc. As you do so, be sure that the assessment practice matches the degree of importance of the learning objective.

For example, when service is a small component of the course (four or five hours) and related to a competency of low importance, then the academic product (an oral report or one-page essay) should produce a minor grade in the grade book (equivalent to a pop quiz). How-

ever, if the same service component (four or five hours) relates to a highly important competency, then the classroom experience to facilitate this learning should involve a very significant academic product producing a major grade in the grade book (equivalent to a major exam).

Table 1. Service Time, Class Time, and Course Competencies

		AMOUNT OF SERVICE TIME	
		Low	High
DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE OF COURSE COMPETENCY	Low	The amount of class time used for discussion/reflection should be relatively small. The academic product could be a one-time essay or oral presentation.	The amount of class time used for discussion/reflection should be a moderate and consistent aspect of the class. Academic products include routine assignments such as a guided journal.
	High	The amount of class time used for discussion/reflection should be limited but intensely focused. Academic products are very specific based on clear learning objectives.	The amount of class time used for discussion/reflection should be significant and routine. Academic products demonstrate learning of clearly identified objectives.

Reflective Teaching Strategies

The appropriate use of reflective teaching strategies represents the most critical aspect in assuring the effectiveness of service learning. Harry Silcox, in his *A How to Guide to Reflection* (1995), provides a useful description of the various means for reflective teaching. He demonstrates how different strategies accomplish

different learning objectives. The instructor must identify the learning objectives first and then match the most salient reflective strategy to the desired outcome. Table 2 provides a brief description of the various types of reflective teaching that may be used with service learning.

Table 2. Reflective Teaching Strategies (from Silcox, *A How to Guide to Reflection*)

TYPE	PRIMARY RESULT	DESCRIPTION
READINGS/CREATIVE PROJECTS	Foster group bonding and leadership; facilitates directed learning	Specific assignments include essays, music, videos, artwork, etc.—both in class and out.
JOURNAL WRITINGS	Foster personal growth	Student maintains a regular journal that the faculty member reads and responds to.
DIRECTED WRITINGS	Foster directed learning	Student produces essays that address specific questions or issues required by the instructor.
“FEELINGS-ORIENTED” ORAL REFLECTION	Fosters group bonding and trust	Class members participate in a group discussion regarding their service experiences.
“STUDENT AS EXPERT” ORAL REFLECTION	Fosters citizenship, leadership, and cognitive learning	Student leads a classroom session providing a critique of a reading assignment or presenting a solution to a problem.
“COGNITIVE TEACHING” ORAL REFLECTION	Fosters leadership, directed learning, cognitive learning, personal growth, and critical thinking	The faculty member leads a teaching session that fosters critical thinking skills and problem solving.

The Course Syllabus

The course syllabus you create should clearly define the role of service in the course and how the service connects to the course content. The student deserves an explanation for why service is important to his or her learning. The description should include all information that the student needs to begin making the connection between his or her service, the course content, and daily living. The following is an example of a curriculum worksheet that I have found helpful when redesigning the Applied Leadership course following my experience with Joe.

Curriculum Worksheet

COURSE TITLE:

Applied Leadership Theory

COMPETENCY:

Personality and Self—each student will demonstrate a knowledge of his or her own personality tendencies and their impact on leadership effectiveness.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To foster group bonding and trust.

ORAL REFLECTION/FEELINGS:

Students participate in multiple class discussions on the various assignments.

READINGS:

The Endless Streetcar Ride Into the Night, and the Tinfoil Noose (Shepherd 1985). This essay deals with developing personal insight.

ACTIVITIES:

Myers-Briggs Personality Trait Indicator—each student completes this in class.

Stand and Declare—an in-class activity where students take a stand on an issue and defend their point of view.

ASSIGNMENT:

Philosophy statement or personal obituary—This one-page, in-class writing assignment requires the student to assess his or her personal values.

Note: This worksheet provides an example for only one of the competencies in the course and is geared to a specific learning objective from the first week of class.

Conclusion

Service learning is a serious and effective teaching strategy that can be successfully implemented with a little planning and design work, as long as you remember these steps:

- Review the existing course
- Identify key competencies
- Define student learning expectations
- Select appropriate reflective teaching strategies and
- Produce an informative syllabus.

These strategies can help nearly any faculty member keep a student like Joe engaged in learning and leadership.

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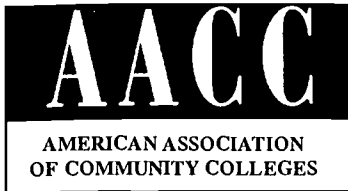
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Service Learning RESOURCE GUIDE

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INTEGRATING REFLECTION ON ETHICAL ISSUES TO PROMOTE CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

by C. David Lisman

One of the important goals of service learning is promoting civic responsibility. This outcome, however, is usually undefined, and consequently some people assume that it can be achieved just by having students do community service. While students who engage in voluntary service can be expected to become more connected with the community, that is not all one expects to happen under the rubric of attaining civic literacy. What more should happen and how can service learning experiences be structured in such a way as to achieve civic literacy?

Ethics and Civic Responsibility

It is important first to clarify the concept of civic responsibility. Drawing upon the civic republican or citizen democracy tradition of writers such as Barber (1984), Boyte (1989), and Sandel (1996), most faculty and administrators want their students not only to feel a greater connection with their community, but also to attain an understanding of the importance of creating sustainable democratic communities. This is citizen-driven democracy. To attain this goal, students need to acquire some civic skills, such as the ability to engage in continuous critical thinking or to engage in effective democratic decision-making activities (Lisman 1998).

Such skills can help students develop a civic conscience. To have a civic conscience is to become a democratic self, that is, to be a person who is disposed to consider what is in the best interests of all concerned in practical situations.

Ethics Discussion in the Classroom

One way to integrate ethics and civic responsibility into the classroom is to use a reflective component in which the instructor identifies the ethical dimensions of the course through presenting ethics case studies (see examples below). As applied to ethics, the case method attempts to provide concrete examples of ethical issues or dilemmas in which students can develop ethical insights as they analyze the case studies, gain practice in ethical decision-making, and choose a course of action.

A dilemma is an ethical situation in which two or more values or principles are in conflict or where it is difficult to apply a value or a principle to a situation. Ethics cases are essentially stories or vignettes in which individuals confront an ethical dilemma or decision. Case studies can be as simple as a few sentences in which an ethical conflict is presented. For example:

A medical doctor told his female fertility patients that he was providing anonymous donor sperm when, in fact, he was providing his own. Did he do the wrong thing?

A detailed case study can also be used, as shown on page 3.

Types of Ethical Dilemmas

Applying a valid principle to a new situation

Contrasting the right thing to do against one's perceived self-interest

Identifying a conflict between principles independently accepted as valid

There are three basic types of ethics cases that can be considered.

- *Application of a moral principle to a situation that is complicated by other factors*, such as technology. The use of animal organs in human transplants is an example of this kind of case. Leaving aside the difficult moral question of the ethics of harvesting such organs, inserting these organs in humans raises a serious ethical question. People believe strongly in the principle underlying such transplants, namely to uphold the Hippocratic oath and alleviate or prevent suffering. However, are there limits to what lengths modern medicine should go to carry out this purpose? If using animal organs does not present any serious health risk, are these transplants compatible with the dignity of individuals?

- *Conflict of self-interest against respecting the interests of others*. For example, someone has an opportunity to benefit from insider trading information in a stock deal, or a student is tempted to cheat on an exam. Research ethics involving issues of honesty is an important topic for the natural and social sciences and might be a good way to incorporate ethics discussion into any number of science and social science courses.

- *Conflicts of moral values or principles*. The euthanasia issue illustrates this type of ethics case. Most people agree on the underlying principles of respect for life and obligation to alleviate suffering, but euthanasia features these two principles in conflict. For example, someone who is suffering terribly from a terminal illness may wish to end his life and asks the attending physician to help. The physician may be torn between the commitment to saving life and the commitment to alleviating suffering. Which principle should get precedence—the right to life or the right to be free of needless suffering?

Many important questions of the day, and those within academic disciplines, are these types of dilemmas. Using the case study approach involves selecting personalized and contextualized examples of these three conflicts and providing an opportunity for students to analyze and discuss them.

Ethics and Service Learning

Boss's (1994) research has concluded that engaging students in community service activities can promote moral development. Faculty using service learning can assume that the curricular integration of service will contribute to moral development. But it can do so much more powerfully as faculty find ways for students to reflect upon the discipline-appropriate ethical dimensions of their service experience. Classroom ethical reflection also helps students understand the social responsibilities of professions associated with the academic content they are studying.

In a sociology course, ethical issues concerning racism or poverty can be highlighted. Students who may be serving in a soup kitchen or assisting the homeless could provide case studies of their experiences and the ethics dilemmas that they have confronted. Environmental issues, such as the conflicts of providing a sustainable environment against interests of economic development, can be discussed in conjunction with service projects in a science class. In a history course, students can gain research

Ethics Case Studies

The best ethics case studies for student reflection are real-life situations involving conflicts of interest or questions about the right thing to do in specific situations. Practice in discussing and reflecting on ethical dilemmas that simulate situations students may confront has two benefits. It will help prepare students to handle ethical situations that may arise during a service activity, but it also will introduce students to ethical issues relevant to the discipline they are studying.

Case Study A: Ethics and Social Science

A student working with a social caseworker learns that one of their clients is secretly playing in a band two nights a week and earning \$20 a night. Since the client is physically disabled and receiving full welfare benefits for himself and his family, he is required by law to surrender any other income to the welfare department. He is breaking the law by keeping the money. The caseworker, knowing that the welfare benefits are based on an unrealistically low cost-of-living index, does not want to report the man. The caseworker asks the student to go along with this plan. What should the student do? (Adapted from Ruggiero, 1992)

Case Study B: Ethics and Science

A student is assisting a lab technician in a blood bank as a service project for her biology class. The student knows that the technician is going through a pretty tough divorce and that his work hasn't been up to par. She accidentally learns that the technician has mixed up several patients' blood samples. If the student corrects the errors, the director of the blood bank will find out and the technician will be fired. If she doesn't correct them, several doctors will receive incorrect information about their patients' physical condition. What should the student do? (Adapted from Ruggiero, 1992)

Case Study C: Ethics and Mentoring

A college student is serving as a tutor with some fellow students in an after-school program. They are being supervised by a parent volunteer, with a public school teacher on call. The student-tutor discovers that the parent seems to have an aversion to working with a few of the children, who happen to be members of an ethnic minority group. The parent continually assigns the college students to work only with the non-minority children, and is short-tempered with the minority children. The tutor is concerned about what to do and brings this item up for discussion in the college English class for which he is doing his service project. A number of students exhibit racist attitudes, claiming that for the most part minority students are not in school to work and that it is best not to expect much of these children. They side with the parent's behavior. An argument ensues. How should the instructor handle this discussion?

experience through collecting and documenting oral histories in minority or immigrant communities. As the students document these stories, they can compare these kinds of historical narratives with the ones presented in history textbooks. The professor can challenge the students to think about their ethical obligation to write history from an inclusive perspective, rather than from one that favors one economic or ethnic group over another.

Achieving civic responsibility involves more than promoting a civic conscience; it also involves helping students acquire the skills to promote sustainable democratic communities. When possible, students need to become engaged in projects that go beyond providing direct delivery of service, such as tutoring in the schools or serving food in the soup kitchen. Faculty and colleges need to partner with community-based organizations to help improve community life, incorporating group or democratic decision-making activities such as helping teach a micro-enterprise class at a family center or community school or supporting an effort to improve housing conditions (Lisman 1998).

The challenge of this kind of community work for faculty is not only to develop campus and community partnerships, but also to ensure that students work on activities relevant to the academic content of their courses.

Students can reflect on the challenges of helping people at a family center, community school, or nonprofit community development corporation while learning how to develop their own home-based businesses. Students learn by teaching and mentoring, and gain real-world experience in the complexities of business development. Students also contribute to the empowerment of community members to become more economically self-sufficient as a pathway toward developing sustainable democratic communities. As students examine these community-directed activities in the classroom, they can see the relevance of what they are learning to help improve civic life.

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Service Learning **RESOURCE GUIDE**

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THE SERVICE LEARNING JOURNAL: WRITING TO LEARN

by Joan Gilson and Nan Ottenritter

The service learning journal is a set of informal, sequenced writing assignments about course work and personal and civic responsibility. It is useful for many different kinds of courses, from the humanities to sciences and technical trades. Students use their journals to respond to experiences in class and at service learning sites, apply course concepts, raise questions, make values decisions, and determine directions for the future. While the journal helps students explore new connections and possibilities, instructors also find the assignments useful as feedback, enabling teachers to monitor student progress and identify areas of confusion about critical course concepts.

Goals for Journaling

The advantages of using journals are many, but one stands out. Students who journal about their course work and experiences also increase their understanding of specific course theories and their applications. Students also become clearer writers and thinkers, more empowered individuals, and better citizens.

Service learning journals are an adaptable teaching strategy because the various details of the timing and content of assignments can be changed to suit individual teaching styles. Many instructors find that regular practice is the most important factor in improving writing and thinking skills. Asking students to submit journals several times throughout the quarter or semester helps them get solid, scheduled practice in the skills of writing and critical thinking.

Evaluating Journals

Service learning journals may be evaluated on the quality of writing, content in relation to course material, and length of entries. One system of grading for a composition course is as follows:

- An "A" journal contains thoughtful, clear, correct prose of at least two, and not more than three, pages for each assignment (i.e., 24-36 pages over 12 weeks).
- A "B" journal will contain clear, mostly correct prose of at least one, and not more than two, pages for each assignment (12-24 pages).
- A "C" journal will contain adequate prose of at least one half, and not more than one, page per assignment (6-12 pages).
- A "D" journal will contain adequate prose of less than half a page per assignment (3-6 pages).
- An "F" journal will contain less than adequate prose of less than three pages in all (0-2 pages).

Another method of evaluation may de-emphasize quantity of writing, focusing instead on the quality of the analysis. This method requires the student to write about observations of an incident at the service site, relate his or her reactions to the incident, and synthesize the observations or reactions with course content.

Sample Weekly Assignments

Following are typical student service learning journal assignments that could be used by faculty in a variety of disciplines.

Form: The service learning journal consists of weekly writing assignments over 12 weeks. The first assignment will be collected, graded, and returned to you so that you are clear about expectations for your journaling. If you have any questions, feel free to consult with the instructor. Journals will be collected at mid-semester and the end of the course.

Purposes: The journal is designed to improve your knowledge, skills, and capacity for reflection and action.

Objectives: The objectives of the journal are to demonstrate improvement in (1) understanding of course content; (2) critical thinking and problem-solving skills; (3) citizenship and leadership development; (4) personal growth; and (5) writing skills.

Student Assignment 1. Describe a time when you did something kind for someone else without any reward. Be specific and provide details of time, place, motivation, results. (*Learning goals: citizenship and leadership development, personal growth, writing*)

Student Assignment 2. Write a page or more defining and explaining the concept of community. Your explanation should provide the reader with the characteristics of a successful community, according to your own experience. (*Learning goals: critical thinking and problem-solving, citizenship and leadership development, personal growth, writing*)

Student Assignment 3. Choose either option A or B, as follows:

Option A. Use your imagination to write a page or more describing the best kind of community you can think of. Be sure to include details about what kinds of laws, religion, festivals, fun, leisure activities, schools, etc., this community would have. Explain how the inhabitants survive, what they believe is right and wrong, what keeps them from breaking their own laws. What are their schools, businesses, religions, child-rearing practices, treatment of the elderly, treatment of criminals and the

disabled like? (*Learning goals: course content, critical thinking and problem-solving, citizenship and leadership development, personal growth, writing*)

Option B. Write at least a page describing an area of confusion you are having about the current unit of study. Conclude your description with three or four summarizing questions. (*Learning goals: course content, critical thinking and problem-solving, personal growth, writing*)

Student Assignment 4. Using class discussions and any relevant assigned reading, write a definition for service learning. Then describe some specific ways that you could use the service learning component of this class to your own benefit: to enhance your learning, explore careers, help others, etc. Please provide detailed information about the potential benefits you believe can be derived from service learning. (*Learning goals: critical thinking and problem-solving, personal growth, writing*)

Student Assignment 5. Find a newspaper or magazine article about volunteer work or a volunteer project. Describe the project here and explain what kind of difference it made, as nearly as you can tell from the article, for the volunteer, the recipients, and the community. Explain why you chose this particular article to write about. (*Learning goals: citizenship and leadership development, personal growth, writing*)

Student Assignment 6. Write about a page describing the service learning project you will do for this class. If you will work for an agency or community organization, explain what the agency does, how it began, its size, goals, and other pertinent details. You may want to interview a veteran volunteer or the agency director for this information. If your service learning project is a brief, less organized experience, discover its scope, purpose, and history. These items are important for you to understand the ultimate impact of the project upon the community it works to serve. (*Learning goals: citizenship and leadership development, writing*)

Student Assignment 7. After your first service experience with this organization, take about 30 minutes and write down everything you remember about it. Note details: sights, sounds, odors, tactile sensations, etc. Note people, furniture, events, everything about the experience. (*Learning goals: critical thinking and problem-solving skills, personal growth, writing*)

Student Assignment 8. Describe one problem or strength you see with this organization. Explain why it is a problem or strength and offer a specific plan for either the solution of that problem or use of that strength. (*Learning goals: critical thinking and problem-solving skills, writing*)

Student Assignment 9. *For Economics:* Explain the concept of commodity clearly and in detail. How do you see this concept at work in your service learning experience?

For Biology: Explain the concept of photosynthesis clearly and in detail. What examples of photosynthesis have you noticed at your service learning site? Describe the significance of the presence or absence of this process for the life/lives you observed there.

For Introduction to Literature: Explain the concept of the scapegoat. What evidence of this concept did you observe at your service learning site?

For Introduction to Sociology: Explain the concept of racism or ageism. Did you observe evidence of the workings of one of these concepts at your service learning site, either as the site presently exists or as part of the history of the clients of this service?

(*Learning goals for all disciplines: course content, writing*)

Student Assignment 10. After a minimum of four or five sessions at your site, describe your impressions, your learning goals, and the difference this project makes in both the immediate community (your local town or county) and the larger community—that is, the nation or the world. (*Learning goals: critical thinking and problem-solving skills, citizenship and leadership development, writing*)

Student Assignment 11. What do you know about this academic discipline (e.g., chemistry, biology, composition, sociology) now that you did not know before your service learning work? Write a letter to a new student at

Sample Journal Entry

This journal entry by a first-year community college student was written in response to Assignment 4. How might a faculty member evaluate this entry?

Service learning is a somewhat new teaching method that community colleges across the country are catching on to. [*Community Colleges and Service Learning*, an AACC publication] states: “The service learning instructional methodology integrates community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility.”

Through service learning all parties involved benefit. Students see for themselves how rough others may have it. They can have tangible evidence that life is not always what it may seem. Some people do not have it as lucky as you do. If a student chooses to do his or her service learning volunteer project on something like dedicating their time picking up trash, they may get something else out of it. They may feel a feeling of worth. They can see their progress. They can see that they have helped. For myself I will choose Special Olympics as my service learning project. My basketball team coaches Special Olympics basketball teams. I could write about the joy in the kids’ faces, the happiness that I have felt by helping out people. I could write about the feelings I had when one of the special kids smiled or laughed during the games. Those kids have more fun playing basketball for the Special Olympics than I ever have. I love playing basketball, but those kids brought a new meaning to having fun on the basketball court.

People gain character by volunteering. Community service is a necessity for the future. Bill Clinton said [in his 1993 inaugural address], “I challenge a new generation . . . to a season of service . . . to act on your idealism by helping troubled children, keeping company with those in need, and reconnecting our torn communities.”

the college explaining the effect of the service learning component on learning course material. (*Learning goals: course content, writing*)

Student Assignment 12. What do you know now about yourself, your abilities, your community, and your future as a result of service learning? (*Learning goals: personal growth, writing*)

Conclusion

Service learning journals can help students learn how to write—how to express their thoughts about course-related service thoughtfully and clearly—and can give faculty a new means for communicating with students. While journaling may not be the best form of reflection for every course or discipline, its value to student growth and understanding of community and civic responsibility can be immeasurable.

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