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Evaluation Methods that Build Quality into K-16 Service-Learning Programs

L. Richard Bradley

EVALUATION METHODS

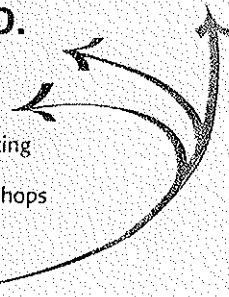# THAT BUILD QUALITY INTO K-16

SERVICE-LEARNING

PROGRAMS

L. Richard Bradley, Ph.D.
Consultant

"Creativity Serving Human Need"

- Educational & Organizational Consulting
- Program Design & Evaluation
- Personal & Faith Development Workshops

6489 Brookbend Drive
Columbus, OH 43235-5001   614.793.9758

1762

What Service-Learning Is

<u>Definition</u>:
Service-learning is an **educational strategy** that involves students in **meaningful service** to their communities and/or to society, while engaging in some form of **reflection or study** that is related to the service. High quality service experiences

- ❖ meet **actual** community needs

- ❖ are **coordinated in collaboration** with the school and the community

- ❖ are **integrated** into the student's academic curriculum so that service goals and learning goals blend together and enrich each other

- ❖ provide students with **structured time** to think, talk, write, and/or reflect in other ways about what they saw, did, and felt during their service experience

- ❖ provide students with **opportunities to use** newly acquired academic knowledge and skills in **real-life settings**

- ❖ **enhance** and enrich what is being taught in the classroom by extending student learning beyond the classroom into the community

- ❖ **foster** the development of a sense of responsibility to and caring for self and others.

STEPS IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS

STEP ONE: Decide on the focus of your evaluation.

STEP TWO: Decide on the purpose of your evaluation.

STEP THREE: Decide on the audience with whom the results of your evaluation are to be shared.

STEP FOUR: Decide on the resources (dollars, time, people) needed to conduct your evaluation.

STEP FIVE: Decide on an appropriate evaluation timetable.

The decisions you make at each step will help you select the most appropriate evaluation strategy for **your** program. Strategies include:

qualitative vs. **quantitative**
formative vs. **summative**
descriptive vs. **experimental**
external vs. **internal**

Evaluating Your Project: Getting Started

1. How would you know if your project was successful? What would "success" look like?   What would you like to know about you program - and students - at the end of the school year?

2. What **objective criteria** would you need to be able to judge the success of your project?

3. What information do you already have that would help you evaluate the success of your project?

4. How could you be more systematic about collecting this kind of information?

5. What additional information do you think you would need to help you make a case for continuing your project? With your colleagues? With your principal? With parents? With members of the community?

6. What are some of the ways you could go about collecting this extra information?

INITIAL CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

1. Address and meet learning goals students have set for themselves.

2. Characterized by high quality partnerships between schools and the community.

3. Program design and goals are appropriate in relation to:

    a. the duration of the service experience

    b. the age and developmental needs of the those involved

    c. the levels of cognitive, social, and moral development of those involved

    d. the preferred learning styles of those involved

4. Structured reflection happens throughout the program.

5. Service-learning activities are integrated into the curriculum.

6. Opportunities at the service site match student learning goals and reinforce classroom learning.

7. There is a high level of commitment from school administrators and teachers (especially colleagues).

8. There is a high level of commitment from parents.

9. There is a high level of commitment from the community.

Service-Learning Evaluation 101

Goal: To obtain basic information for your stakeholders about what happened in your program.

- Who are your stakeholders?
  - Corporation for National Service, state Learn & Serve Commission, or other funding agencies
  - local school board and its members
  - parents and other members of your community
  - local and state legislators

- What types of information do they want?
  - a brief description of your service-learning activities
  - the number of students who participated in your service project
  - the number of service hours
  - the number of beneficiaries served
  - the ethnicity of participants
  - the economic and/or educational backgrounds of your students
  - project categories: human service, education, conservation/ environmental, public safety, other
  - type of service: direct, indirect, civic action, individual, group

- Why do they want this information?
  - to make decisions about continuing your funding and/or program
  - to make decisions about program impacts

- Ways to collect this information
  - surveys, questionnaires
  - interviews, focus groups
  - self-reflective tools such as journals
  - teacher observation of students

- When to collect this information: throughout your project

Service-Learning Evaluation 201

Goal: To deepen your own understanding of what happened in your program.

- What do you need or want to know?
    - What is the level of teacher "ownership" of the program? Is this something they wanted to do or that they were told to do?
    - Are participating teachers adequately prepared to implement the program?
    - How are your teachers infusing service-learning activities into the curriculum? What curricular connections are referred to (and used) by implementing teachers?
    - To what extent were program goals and objectives achieved?
    - What barriers did teachers face in their efforts to implement service-learning programs in their classes? What did they do to overcome these barriers? Which barriers still remain?
    - What additional assistance might have helped teachers to be more successful in their implementation efforts?

- Why do you need this information?
    - to give you more accurate information about why a particular program did or did not have the expected impacts on participants
    - to help you make decisions about modifications or changes in your program
    - to help you decide whether to continue a given program

- Ways to collect this information
    - surveys and questionnaires
    - interviews and focus groups
    - process observation
    - implementation logs
    - checklists of program goals and objectives

- When to collect this information: throughout your project

Service-Learning Evaluation 301

Goal: To deepen your understanding of the impacts your program has on students who participate in it.

- What to you need or want to know?
  - Was your project designed to meet real community needs? In what ways were students involved in identifying, planning, and evaluating their service activities?
  - In what ways did service activities meet student learning and service goals?
  - What are the impacts of your program on student knowledge and skills; student attitudes and behaviors; and student attitudes toward school and education
  - How often – and for how long – were students engaged in their service activities?
  - Were students adequately prepared for their service activities?
  - What kinds of reflective activities were used? How much time was spent in reflection? When were these done?
  - when compared with other methods of teaching, how effective is service-learning in decreasing expected anti-social behaviors among all students and, especially, among "at-risk" students?

- Why do you need this information?
  - So you can answer questions from administrators, colleagues, parents, and others in the community about the effectiveness and value of the program

- Ways to collect this information
  - surveys and questionnaires
  - interviews and focus groups
  - self-reflective tools such as journals
  - pre/post service assessments on key indicators such as attitudes, GPA, behaviors, etc.
  - observations/evaluations by service site supervisor or mentor

- When to collect this information: throughout your project

Developmental Theory and Service-Learning

School Level	Psychosocial Theory: Erikson, Chickering	Cognitive – Developmental Theory: Selman, Kohlberg, Gilligan, Perry	Learning Theory: Personality Type (MBTI) and Multiple Intelligences
Elementary	*Erikson:* Initiative vs. Guilt Industry vs. Inferiority	*Selman:* Stage 1 *Kohlberg:* Stage 2 *Gilligan:* Level 1	 T
Middle School	*Erikson:* Identity vs. Identity Confusion	*Selman:* Stage 2 *Kohlberg:* Stage 3 *Gilligan:* Level 1-2	 H R
High School	*Erikson:* Identity vs. Identity Confusion Intimacy vs. Isolation	*Selman:* Stages 2,3 *Kohlberg:* Stage 3 *Gilligan:* Level 2 *Perry:* Dualism	O U G H
College	*Erikson:* Intimacy vs. Isolation *Chickering:* Developing Competence Managing Emotions Developing Autonomy Establishing Identity Freeing Interpersonal Relationships Developing Purpose Developing Integrity	*Selman:* Stage 4 *Kohlberg:* Stages 3,4 *Gilligan:* Level 3 *Perry:* Dualism, Relativism	 O U T

Comparison of Evaluation Strategies
in Relation to Service-Learning

Questions You Want Answered	Type of Evaluation	Ways to Do This
• Are you doing what you said you were going to do in your proposal or program description? • Is your program operating efficiently and in a timely manner?	**Formative** or **Process** [primarily qualitative]	• Process observation • Interviews with program staff and administrators • Surveys for staff and administrators • Review minutes of meetings
• How well are your program goals and objectives being met? • What impact is your service-learning program having on student skills and knowledge, attitudes and behaviors?	**Summative** or **Outcome** [qualitative or quantitative, depending on evaluation design]	• Checklist of goals and objectives • Surveys, questionnaires • Observation • Self reflective tools such as journals • Pre/post assessments on key indicators, such as GPA, behaviors, attitudes, knowledge • Statistical analysis
• How many students participated in your service-learning project? • How many hours of service did they give? • How much did it cost?	**Descriptive** [primarily qualitative]	• Case studies • Observation • Teacher project report forms • Statistical analysis
• Do programs that integrate service into the curriculum have a greater impact on students than those that are not curriculum based? • What impact does service-learning have on "at-risk" youth?	**Experimental** [qualitative or quantitative, depending on evaluation design]	• Surveys, questionnaires • Observation • Self-reflective tools such as journals • Pre/post assessments on key indicators, such as GPA, behaviors, attitudes, knowledge • Interviews, focus groups • Statistical analysis

LIST OF SURVEYS AND INSTRUMENTS USED BY THE FOUR-DISTRICT CONSORTIUM (AVAILABLE FROM *PARTNERSHIPS MAKE A DIFFERENCE*)

<u>For Assessing Student Outcomes:</u>

- *Checklist of Personal Gains*
  (26-question post-project, self-reflective student survey – assesses gains in five areas of development: Personal, Social and Interpersonal, Values, Academic, and Career. Suitable for use with middle and high school students)

- *Questions for Student Focus Groups*
  (10-question post-project, oral or written; suitable for use with students at all grade levels, particularly if used as an oral interview)

- *Mentorship Program – Student Evaluation*
  (25-question pre/post, self-reflective survey – assesses gains in five core areas related to the SCANS competencies: use of resources, interpersonal skills, use of information, understanding of the work environment, and use of technology. Suitable for use with middle and high school students)

- *Supervisor/Mentor Evaluation of Student*
  (10-question pre/post survey, completed by service site supervisor or school-to-work mentor, related to a range of student attitudes and skills. Suitable for use with middle and high school students)

- *Student Outreach Evaluation of Service-Learning or School-to-Work Experience*
  (post-project, written, self-reflective student survey that enables students to evaluate their service or school-to-work experience and site. Suitable for middle and high school students)

- *Aging Quiz: Facts and Myths*
  (25-question pre/post survey of student attitudes towards and knowledge about aging. Suitable for use with middle and high school students)

- *Knowledge about Mental Retardation*
  (10-question pre/post survey of student attitudes towards and knowledge about mental retardation. Suitable for use with middle and high school students)

- *Disability Awareness*
  (15-question pre/post survey of student attitudes towards and knowledge about persons with disabilities. Suitable for use with middle and high school students)

- *Poverty and Homeless in the United States*
  (7-question pre/post survey of student attitudes towards and knowledge about poverty and homelessness in the United States. Suitable for use with middle and high school students)

- *Perceptions of Homelessness*
  (20-question pre/post survey of student attitudes towards and knowledge of homelessness in Franklin County. Suitable for use with middle and high school students)

For Assessing Teacher Outcomes:
- *Teacher Service-Learning Survey*
  (31-question pre-post survey of teacher attitudes towards and knowledge of service-learning and its relationship to educational reform)

- *Pre-Project Teacher Report Form*
  (18-question pre-project survey designed to collect all of the numerical information needed for pre-project stakeholder report, plus information on project curriculum connections, design, and objectives)

- *Post-Project Teacher Report Form*
  (23-question post-project survey designed to collect information needed for post-project stakeholder reports, plus teacher observations of student outcomes, recommendations for "next time," and tips for replicating the project in other settings)

For Assessing Community Outcomes:
- *Qualities You Would Like Your Son/Daughter to Have*
  (26-question pre/post survey of the characteristics or qualities many parents say they would like to see in their children. Based on the Child Development Project, 1986).

- *Community Health Checklist*
  (14-question survey can be administered to both youth and adults before a project to assess the perceptions of each group regarding the assets that are present in the community. Can also be used pre/post to assess changes that may be related to specific project goals. Developed by the SEARCH INSTITUTE)

For more information about any of these surveys, contact
    Dr. L. Richard Bradley, Ph.D.
    6489 Brookdbend Drive • Columbus, OH 43235-5001
    614/793-9758   e-mail: bradley.16@osu.edu