

2004

Resource Guide to Service-Learning

UNO Service Learning Academy
University of Nebraska at Omaha

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Resource Guide to Service-Learning

University of Nebraska at Omaha
Service-Learning Academy



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Nebraska
Omaha

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SERVICE LEARNING ACADEMY

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What is Service-Learning?

Service-Learning is a partnership among students, faculty, and community organizations. Service-Learning projects:

- are conducted in and meet the needs of a community;
- help foster civic responsibility;
- are integrated into and enhance the academic curriculum of the students enrolled; and
- include structured time for students to reflect on the service experiences.

Adapted from Souza, Tasha (1999) "Service-Learning and Interpersonal Communication: Connecting with the Community." *Voices of Strong Democracy: Concepts and Models for Service-Learning in Communication Studies*. Washington, DC: AAHE.

Service-learning is the pedagogy that involves students in community service activities along with a facilitated means for applying that experience to their personal and academic development. It is aimed at enhancing and enriching student learning of course material. Course objectives are linked to meaningful learning through service. Course activities such as lectures, readings, discussions, and reflections inform the student service while service experiences influence academic dialogue and student comprehension.¹

When compared to other forms of learning like internships, field placements, student teaching and cooperative education, service-learning is similar in that it is student-centered, hands-on and directly applicable to the curriculum. The critical difference and distinguishing characteristic of service-learning is its reciprocal and balanced emphasis on both student learning and addressing community needs that are otherwise unmet. The students work on community problems that make academic learning relevant while simultaneously enhancing their social skills, analytical ability, civic and ethical responsibility, self-efficacy, and career development.²

Through community involvement, service-learning addresses the outreach mission of UNOmaha as a public institution. As pedagogy, it is an effective strategy to enhance student learning through engagement. Student participation is required to develop learning goals and to confront real life in a way that challenges their assumptions and forces critical thinking. Faculty share control over learning outcomes while developing closer relationships to students and fodder for harvesting student learning from experience. Service-learning pedagogy is commonly described as a continuous learning cycle. First articulated by David Kolb, the cycle fosters meaning and comprehension through Concrete

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Experience, Reflective Observation (assimilation), Abstract Conceptualization (theory building), and Active Experimentation (problem-solving).³

How is Service-Learning Defined by Service-Learning Organizations and Leaders in the Field?

Service-learning is "a method under which students learn and develop through active participation in ... thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs, that are integrated into the students' academic curriculum or provide structured time for reflection and that enhance what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community." (Corporation for National Service, 1990)

Service-learning has been defined as "both a program type and a philosophy of education. As a program type, service-learning includes myriad ways that students can perform meaningful service to their communities and to society while engaging in some form of reflection or study that is related to the service. As a philosophy of education, service-learning reflects the belief that education must be linked to social responsibility and that the most effective learning is active and connected to experience in some way." (Research Agenda for Combining Service and Learning in the 1990s)

"Service-learning programs are explicitly structured to promote learning about the larger social issues behind the needs to which their service is responding. This learning includes a deeper understanding of the historical, sociological, cultural, economic and political contexts of the needs or issues being addressed." (Jane Kendall, NSEE, 1990)

Service-learning is "any carefully monitored service experience in which a student has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what he or she is learning throughout the experience." (National Society for Experiential Education, 1994)

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The Difference between Service-Learning and an Internship/Practicum or Volunteer Opportunity

The primary focus of **Service-Learning** is to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between theory and application for a given course. By giving students an opportunity to work on a community project related to the course topic, students can see how these theories come to life. Students work a limited number of hours over the course of a semester with a non-profit agency, government agency or school. The course instructor, with the assistance of the Service Learning Academy, arranges the service-learning opportunities. Service-learning instructors often ask students to complete journals or short reflective papers throughout the semester. Often the final assignment is an extension of the journals or short projects, relating the experiences of the semester to the course material. These assignments help students focus their observations at the community organization on issues pertinent to the course material. The service-learning experiences become a 'text' for the class - a basis for discussion of larger issues and further inquiry. Service-Learning experiences are unpaid.

The primary focus of an **Internship/Practicum** is to provide students practical job experience in their field of interest. Students in internships gain skills and experience over a longer period of time (usually 3-9 months) with a greater hourly commitment (20-40 hours per week). Students locate and apply for internships/practicums that are often paid.

A **Volunteer** opportunity is the most flexible option where students spend anywhere from one day a year to one day a week at an organization whose mission they find interesting. Time and length of commitment vary depending on the position, as do the complexity of the duties. Volunteer opportunities are generally unpaid positions with a local non-profit community agency.⁴

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The Benefits of Service-Learning⁵

Service-learning fulfills UNOmaha's mission as a public institution and its benefits directly relate to concepts woven throughout the university's strategic plan. Teaching and advising, research and scholarship, outreach programs and the university community can all be enhanced through student and faculty involvement in service-learning.

Benefits for Faculty:

- Stimulation of teaching methods as an alternative to traditional lecture
- Increasing contact with students through greater emphasis on student-centered teaching
- Gaining new perspectives on learning and an increased understanding of how learning occurs
- Connecting the community with curriculum and becoming more keenly aware of current societal issues as they relate to academic areas of interest
- Identifying areas and opportunities for research and publication related to current trends and issues

Benefits for the Community:

- Access to university resources
- Positive relationship opportunities with the university
- Awareness-building of community issues, agencies and constituents
- Opportunities for contributing to the educational process
- Affordable access to professional development
- Solutions to pressing community needs
- Greater understanding of teaching and learning processes

Benefits for Students:

⁵ CSU

- Hands-on use of skills and knowledge that increases relevance of academic skills in the real world
- Opportunities that accommodate different learning styles
- Interaction with people of diverse cultures and lifestyles
- Increased self-efficacy, analytical skills, and social development
- Valuable and competitive career guidance and experience
- Opportunities for meaningful involvement with the local community
- Increased awareness of civic responsibility

Studies* have shown that service-learning programs found greater gains for student participants than non-participants in three major areas:⁶

Academic Development

Studies show increases in academic achievement, persistence in college (retention), engagement in coursework, time devoted to study, interaction with faculty, knowledge of a field or discipline, general knowledge, plans to pursue advanced degrees, and preparation for graduate or professional school.

Civic Responsibility

Students in service-learning programs are more likely to participate in a community program, commit to helping others, promote racial understanding, and work to change political structures.

Life Skills

Service-learning students are more aware of their leadership abilities and the opportunities available to them. They have a greater sense of social self-confidence, and a better understanding of the communities surrounding them. Service-learning students are more likely than non service-learning students to be satisfied with the relevance of the coursework they complete, have a better understanding and acceptance of other races and cultures, and possess more highly developed critical thinking skills.

*Gray, Maryann Jacobi, Alexander W. Astin, et al. *Evaluation of Learn and serve America, Higher Education: First Year Report, Volume I*. Los Angeles: Institute on Education and Training, The Rand Corporation, 1996.

History of Service-Learning at UNOmaha

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The Service-Learning Academy (SLA) was established in the spring of 1999 with a grant from the Nebraska Consortium for Service-Learning in Higher Education. The SLA is currently supported by the Office of Academic Affairs and a private benefactor.

The goals of the Service-Learning Academy are:

- To coordinate UNOmaha's service-learning effort, providing a central point of contact between the campus and community-based organizations.
- To encourage, assist, and recruit faculty members interested in developing service-learning courses.
- To provide professional development opportunities in service-learning.
- To maintain and provide a library of the most current service-learning resources for faculty and community personnel.
- To make information about service-learning available to students.
- To cultivate continuing professional working relationships among the stakeholders in service-learning: faculty, students, and community.

How Does Service-Learning Relate to UNOmaha Strategic Planning Goals?

Goal 1: "UNOmaha places students at the center of the educational enterprise."

Service-learning provides students with experiences in the community that focus on learning course content while enhancing their civic responsibilities. Instead of being receptacles of information, students are engaged in collaboration with community agencies. Their actions as citizens matter and students begin to realize they can make a difference in their community. Some examples have been to develop brochures for community agencies, tutor Sudanese teens, and work to transition teens with disabilities to adult living and working experiences. As students engage in service-learning and reflect upon their experiences this individualized learning places them in a unique position to influence their own learning.

Goal 2: "UNOmaha strives to achieve academic excellence consistent with its mission."

Students engaged in service-learning are involved in an academically rigorous experience. More than simply learning the facts and reciting those back on tests, service-learning takes students to a higher level of thinking. They learn to compare what they are learning through lecture and readings to what they are learning in the community. They learn to reflect on their experiences, to analyze and evaluate what they see against what they read and experience. All this increases critical thinking and overall academic excellence.

Goal 3: " UNOmaha will actively engage in the community."

As noted in the above goals, service-learning is a collaborative effort which would not be possible without the community. Service-learning opportunities are partnerships with community agencies to enhance academic learning. Students benefit by learning through experience, and the community benefits by having needs addressed through student effort. Service-learning is mutually beneficial because through these efforts everyone gains.

To engage in service-learning is to meet all of the Strategic Planning goals for UNOmaha (UNO Academic Affairs Strategic Planning Goals, 2000).

How Can The Service-Learning Academy Assist You?⁷

Since 1998, UNOmaha has supported faculty in designing and implementing service-learning courses. The staff is abreast of innovative practices and resources available, and the office maintains a current list of service sites in the community. Working with the SLA provides recognition and brings faculty into a community of educators who are concerned about making a difference. An integral component of the SLA is the Service-Learning Advisory Board. Members guide SLA activities, mentor faculty new to service-learning, prepare workshops, award selections and plan special recognition events. To foster service-learning, SLA offers the following services to faculty.

Site Referrals and Consultation

The SLA maintains a database of active community agencies. Staff will link faculty with sites whose needs are relevant to their service-learning objectives. They will consult with faculty on site selection, syllabi revision, student orientation, the design of reflection activities and assessment/evaluation.

Listserv

The SLA hosts an online discussion group, *serlearn*, to encourage discussion of service-learning related topics among UNO faculty. Periodical announcements of activities, conferences, publication opportunities and research findings are also shared through the listserv. *To subscribe to serlearn, contact cpettid@mail.unomaha.edu*

Awards and Recognition

The SLA recognizes faculty members, individual students, groups of students, and one or more community agency representatives each year. SLA presents Service-Learning Awards to the selected recipients at the annual Service-Learning Celebration.

Evaluation

The SLA provides evaluation forms for students and faculty involved in service-learning. The forms are mailed to faculty listed on the SLA roster each semester and the summarized data is distributed to faculty and administrators.

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Service-Learning Roles for Faculty, Students and Community Representatives⁸

The Role of the Service-Learning Academy is to:

- Refer new faculty to experienced service-learning faculty mentors.
- Strengthen the community of service-learning faculty.
- Provide classroom orientation and reflection sessions as requested.
- Consult on logistical, risk management, and troubleshooting issues.
- Provide information on funding resources related to service-learning as it becomes available.
- Encourage faculty members to give students evaluations of the service-learning project.
- Inform faculty of resource and recognition opportunities via the listserv, *ENOTES*, and Notes (the University newsletter for faculty and staff).
- Maintain and share a current roster of service-learning faculty and courses.
- Maintain the Service-Learning Academy web site.

The Role of the Faculty is to:

- Provide students with guidelines for working at a community service-learning site.
- Describe the service-learning activity and its relation to the course objectives in the course syllabus and on the first day of class.
- Provide SLA with a copy of the course syllabus during the first two weeks of class.
- Familiarize themselves with the service sites and monitor student progress through discussions, agency supervision, journal assignments, progress reports or individual check-ins.
- Provide individual and group forums for students to reflect on what they are learning from the experience.
- Attend at least one SLA workshop or event each year.

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- Provide SLA with a copy of any news articles featuring a service-learning course and inform SLA of significant events related to the students or the course.
- Consider nominating one service-learning student or a student group for recognition at the annual Service-Learning Recognition Awards Celebration.

The Role of the Student is to:

- Respect the confidentiality of the people served.
- Be prompt, willing, respectful and positive at their service-learning placement.
- Be open to learning about cultures and lifestyles that are different from your own.
- Arrange hours with placement agency as directed by the instructor.
- Fulfill all agreed upon duties and responsibilities at the community site.
- Provide feedback about the service-learning experience, its relevancy to the course material and participate in course discussions.
- Speak with your site supervisor or faculty member if uncomfortable or uncertain about what you are to do.
- Participate in an evaluation process of the service-learning experiences.

The Role of the Community Partner is to:

- Provide orientation for students to the agency including common-sense safety procedures.
- Provide work that is significant, relevant to course objectives and challenging.
- Provide training, supervision, feedback and resources, thus increasing the likelihood of student success.

Frequently Asked Questions from Faculty

How do I identify a community agency for my service-learning class?

The SLA maintains a database of active community agencies. The SLA Staff will link faculty to sites with needs relevant to course content. The SLA staff will consult with faculty on site selection, syllabi revision, student orientation, the design of reflection activities and assessment/evaluation.

How do I determine if the needs of the agency are going to fit with the content of my course?

Probably the best way is to arrange a visit with the prospective community site manager and discuss with them about your course content and objectives. After this meeting and exchange of information, you should be able to determine whether you have a good match. SLA staff members may also participate in this meeting upon request.

Should I use one agency or multiple agencies for my service-learning experience?

You can use as many or as few agencies as you would like for your service-learning experience. The number of agencies involved per class varies. We strongly suggest using only one or two service sites for your first service-learning project; our experience is that multiple sites require more coordination on the part of the faculty member and more independent students.

What should I expect from a service-learning community agency?

This varies widely with the type of service-learning experience you have designed. With some community agencies a representative needs to be amenable to work with students or at least available as a resource while students are on site. At other agencies, students need to have a contact person willing to set up times to meet and review completed work. At a minimum, you should have a contact person, phone number, and agency address. A letter, drafted in consultation with faculty, for students and agencies outlining expectations helps prevent misunderstandings.

How is service-learning different from student teaching, practicum/internship experiences, and volunteering?

The primary focus of service-learning is to provide a deeper understanding of theories and course content studied in a particular class. The goal of an internship/practicum is to provide students a practical work experience in a field of interest to them. A volunteer opportunity is the most flexible option where students spend between one day a year to one day a week at an organization whose mission they find interesting.

How much time should I spend with service-learning in my course?

Using service-learning in a course is typically a significant change in pedagogy. Because the service-learning component is an application of the course content,

it may be hard to separate service-learning from the rest of the course. However, time should be set aside to teach students about what service-learning is, get them established in their service-learning sites, explain the expected reflection assignments, and schedule periodic check-ins on their service-learning experiences throughout the semester. Some instructors set aside time for student presentations of their service-learning experience at the end of the semester.

How much time outside of the class will my students need for service-learning?

Time devoted to service-learning ranges from 10-30 hours per semester; the norm is 20 hours.

How do I grade my students on the service-learning experience?

This varies widely but typically some form of accountability for time spent on the service-learning project is expected, plus a product or presentation. Journals or reflections can also be graded. Points related to service-learning typically represent 20-40% of the course grade.

What is the role of journaling and reflection in service-learning, and how do I evaluate the written content?

The most successful journaling assignments follow a specific format. If the format is clearly outlined, then students are graded on both content and technical skills as with any other assignment. Most journals include a component for reflection. Reflections should also be included during class discussions. This creates a learning situation for all students and the faculty member. Issues that arise may be important to more than one person. These discussions are often great learning opportunities.

How do I integrate service-learning and reflection experiences into class time?

At the beginning of the semester, faculty need to do frequent check-ins with students about their service-learning assignments. After that, a short period can be devoted to check at least 2 times per month. These check-ins often lead to discussions that enhance readings, in-class discussions and lectures.

What forms/materials have worked successfully with service-learning in the past?

The Service-Learning Academy has a collection of forms for use in service-learning courses. At a minimum, a faculty member should have some type of form, letter or set of guidelines on service-learning for use with community agencies to determine their needs and expectations of students working in their agencies (possibly two forms). The next form should be an outline for students to use for their journals. What you expect should be made very clear to students; if you are not specific, you are likely to get a wide range of journaling, both with and without reflection. Finally, it would be helpful to distribute an evaluation form

to community agencies and students. The evaluation forms should be designed with course improvement in mind.

Frequently Asked Questions from Students⁹

What is service-learning?

Service-Learning is a partnership among students, faculty, and community organizations. Service-Learning projects: are conducted in and meet the needs of a community, help foster civic responsibility, are integrated into and enhance the academic curriculum of the students enrolled, and include structured time for students to reflect on the service experiences. According to the National Youth Leadership Council, "Service-learning is the blending of service and learning goals in such a way that both occur and are enriched by each other."

How many hours of service-learning work will students complete during the semester? How much time outside of class is required?

The number of service-learning hours each student completes during the semester is up to the individual faculty member. Some faculty members have students do 10 hours per semester, while others have students do 40 hours per semester; it is the professor's discretion. Outside of class time is generally required with service-learning, but the number of hours depends on the faculty member teaching the course.

Who decides what agency I will be working with?

Some professors allow the students to choose what agency they will be working with, while others assign students an agency. In some classes, the entire class works with the same agency; in others, students work in groups with each group going to a different agency. Again, it is up to the individual professor.

What if a problem arises during the semester at the agency?

Each professor should devise a plan for dealing with any problems during your service-learning experience. We recommend you first contact your site supervisor with any problems. Immediately following the discussion with your site supervisor, contact your professor and let him/her know that you have talked with your site supervisor. Be sure to document any problems you have. Above all, keep your professor informed as to what is happening at your site.

Will transportation to the service sites be provided?

In most cases, it is up to students to find transportation to and from a service site. Carpooling is always encouraged.

What if I am currently working or volunteering in the community?

Excellent. The more you can do for the community, the better you and your community will be. Also, try to keep in mind that service-learning is not volunteerism. Service-learning is a teaching method that allows you to apply course theories to your service experiences.

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What if I decide that I do not want to participate in service-learning after I have already enrolled in the course?

You will need to talk to your professor on an individual basis; some professors may provide alternative assignments. It is important to keep in mind that students generally don't have the privilege of choosing whether or not they want to participate in a presentation or taking a test in a class. Service-learning is part of the class and part of your grade. If you find you are unable to meet the requirement, you should discuss this with faculty. Chances are after you give service-learning a try, you will enjoy yourself.

Do I get paid for my work?

No. Service-learning is part of your work in the course, not a paid position.

Frequently Asked Questions from the Community

What is service-learning?

Service-Learning is a partnership among students, faculty, and community organizations. Service-Learning projects: are conducted in and meet the needs of a community, help foster civic responsibility, are integrated into and enhance the academic curriculum of the students enrolled, and include structured time for students to reflect on the service experiences. According to the National Youth Leadership Council, "Service-learning is the blending of service and learning goals in such a way that both occur and are enriched by each other."

What kinds of service-learning projects have been done in the past and where? Numerous examples of specific service-learning projects from UNOmaha are included in the Community section of this handbook. Projects vary from one class to another.

How will I know if the needs of our agency are going to be met?

If you have well-articulated needs, then the professor should be able to align service-learning objectives to meet those needs. It is important for the professor and community agency representative to clarify their goals and expectations for the activity early in the project development process.

How many hours of service-learning work do the students have to complete during the semester? Are we at the agency responsible for keeping track of the hours?

The number of service-learning hours each student completes during the semester is up to the individual faculty member. Some faculty members have students do 10 hours per semester, while others have students do 40 hours per semester. It is the professor's discretion. It is recommended that the faculty member and the community agency representative meet and discuss who will keep track of student hours and how that information will be shared.

When will we find out if our agency will have a service-learning student(s)?

Either a staff member from the Service-Learning Academy or the professor of a service-learning class will contact you via the telephone, email or fax.

What if some of the students stop coming during the semester?

Notify the professor immediately if a student stops coming.

Who do I contact if a problem arises with a student(s)?

Each professor should devise a plan for dealing with any problems during the service-learning experience. We recommend that students first consult their site supervisor with any problems. Immediately following the discussion with the site supervisor, students are encouraged to notify their professor. As a site supervisor, be sure to document any problems you have. Call the professor and inform him/her of the situation if the problem is not resolved.

Who is liable if something goes wrong at the agency during the service-learning experience?

The University of Nebraska is self-insured for professional and comprehensive general liability in the amount of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 in the aggregate of liability occurrences in any fiscal year. The following are insured under this policy: "Students in Training" shall mean any student enrolled in a program of the University when student is acting for or on behalf of the University or when rendering service to another as part of his or her teaching or training by the University." To minimize risk, faculty and community agencies should set up a line of communication for students to report difficulties and to solve problems.

How can the agency recognize an exceptional service-learning student(s)?

Agency representatives can recognize exceptional students through positive feedback on the student evaluations, personal contacts, thank you notes, and even a letter of recommendation for student service-learning awards. Agency representatives can talk to their cooperating professor if they are interested in recognizing individual students.

How to Incorporate Service-Learning¹⁰

WHAT ARE YOUR COURSE GOALS?

Since service-learning placements are guided by the goals of your course, the first step is to consider what those goals are:

- What questions would you like your students to be able to answer by the end of the semester?
- Which theories or policies would you like them to know?
- Is part of your course goals related to the students' writing ability, critical thinking skills or computer literacy?
- What would you like your students to have gained by the end of the semester?

HOW CAN WE MEET THOSE GOALS THROUGH COMMUNITY PLACEMENTS?

Once the course goals have been identified, faculty should think about the types of experiences that will help your students reach those goals:

- Are there places you have thought of that have programs you would like your students to participate in?
- Are there types of experiences you would like your students to have, regardless of the focus of the organization (places that need students to write, translate, do web development etc.)?
- Or, are there certain types of organizations that you prefer to work with (political, environmental, healthcare, women's organizations for example)?

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE MOST OF THE EXPERIENCE?

The most challenging part of being a service-learning student (and instructor) is to make clear and **relevant connections** between the work being performed at an agency and the questions and theories being discussed in class. **We have found that incremental assignments that lead to a final project integrating the experience are the most academically effective.**

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How to Integrate Service-Learning into a Course¹¹

Integrating service-learning into a course requires thoughtful planning and thorough follow-up. Remember, the service activity is not an additional component but another way to teach course concepts. Successful learning and effective community contributions depend upon a well-integrated package of syllabus, orientation, reflection, and assessment. The following steps are suggested and should be completed with assistance from the SLA.

Generating Project Ideas:

- Articulate, in writing, the objective(s) of the service assignment.
 - What do you want students to gain through the experience?
 - Communicate your objectives(s) to SLA by submitting your syllabus.
- Identify community needs that may be appropriate for your objectives.
 - Ask SLA to draft a list of possibilities or identify community needs via your own professional contacts.
- Contact potential community partner(s).
 - Describe what you and your students have to offer via your course objectives, timeline, and limitations.
 - Gather information concerning the following: agency need, contact person, location, number of students they can accommodate, orientation and training requirements, hours of operation or need.

Developing the Syllabus:

- Identify the service activity and objective(s) of the service in the syllabus.
- Link the service to course content.
 - Writing assignments, discussion topics, readings, presentations and other activities listed in the syllabus.
- Explain clearly the incentive(s) for successful completion of the experience.
 - Provide a clear link between course content, the service activity and student success in the course.
- Describe how students will be assessed on the experience.
 - Clarify that the grade is for the processing of their experience - through papers, discussions, presentations, etc. - **not for the service hours alone.**

Orientation/Training:

- Talk about the service experience on the first day of the course.
 - Touch on each of the topics listed under "developing the syllabus."

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- SLA staff members are available for class presentations.
- Invite agency or community representatives to visit the class.
 - Host a panel presentation if you have multiple partners.
- Address student concerns, fears and expectations regarding the service experience.
- Prepare students with the appropriate skills and brief them on their responsibilities regarding communication, follow-through and professionalism.

Contracting/Supervision:

- Provide a timeline.
 - Students need benchmarks for contacting the agency, meeting with supervisors, signing contracts, beginning and completing the service – avoid the inevitable temptation to procrastinate.
- Have a backup plan for students with special needs.
 - Consider providing an alternative for those students who are legitimately unable to participate in the service.
- Contact the community partner(s) at least once mid-semester to seek feedback and, if possible, visit the service site(s) to gain first-hand exposure to the experience.

Reflection

Implement reflective assignments and activities throughout the semester.
(See Reflection Section pages 27-31)

Assessment/Evaluation:

- Use reflection assignments to assess student learning and evaluate performance.
 - Evaluate analytical skills, communication skills, critical thinking and judgment from student reflection papers and presentations.
 - Create individual or group assignments that require students to integrate what they have learned from the course content with the service experience.
- Encourage students to submit an evaluation form to be completed by the service supervisor.

- Though incentive points may be provided for successfully completing the service contract and obtaining a supervisor evaluation, the grade should be based upon rigorous assessment of student learning and skill application as documented by reflective assignments.
- Administer the SLA evaluation form to students on the last week of class. This form was developed by the SLA and will be mailed to you 2-3 weeks before finals.
 - Return the evaluations to SLA and a summary report of responses will be sent back to you.
 - Use the evaluations to plan and refine your next service-learning course.

Effective Service-Learning Models

Although there are several models for integrating service-learning into academic coursework, there is no 'right way' to bring service-learning into a college-level class. However, three fundamental pieces that must be present in order to classify a project or class as service-learning.

The three elements are 1) Community service which promotes civic responsibility, 2) Connection of service to the academic content of the course, and 3) Reflection on the community service aspect as it relates to the course content. This section will briefly outline some of the models that professors at the University of Nebraska-Omaha have used to effectively integrate service-learning into their classes.

Model 1

In this model the faculty member, Dr. Jody Neathery-Castro, knew she would be teaching a course called Gender and Global Politics. She wanted to include service-learning activities in the course, and turned to the Service-Learning Academy for suggestions. The community coordinator referred her to the South Omaha Sudanese Program, which had a program for teenage Sudanese girls who recently relocated to Omaha. She then made the contact, met, and arranged for different types of activities for her students. In this model all students are assigned to one agency to do their work and all the work is done at that site.

Model 2

In this model, the faculty member has an agency in mind that might meet student needs for service-learning assignments in a specific course. This model has been used effectively in several departments. Two notable examples are from the Communication Department. In one example, the faculty member, Dr. Shereen Bingham, taught a course on conflict resolution. She wanted to train her students in mediation skills as offered by the Mediation Center of Omaha. She contacted a staff person at the agency and coordinated with him to do part

of the teaching of the mediation skills within her course. The students then had an opportunity to use those skills during the semester at the community agency.


Another example in the same department involved the Nebraska AIDS Project. In this course, the faculty member, Dr. Hollis Glaser, arranged for her students to work on several different projects within the agency. They worked to develop a history of AIDS in the metropolitan area. This involved conducting interviews, developing written materials and putting together a final project that involved student work on a number of different aspects of the entire project.

Model 3

In this model, a course called Interactions Between Professionals and Parents of the Handicapped was being revised by faculty member Dr. Sandra Squires. Since it seemed ideal for a service-learning component, she tried it as an optional assignment for one semester before implementing it for everyone the next semester. A few students took advantage of the optional assignment, and with extensive feedback from them on what did and did not work, she then refined the assignment and integrated it into the course for the next semester. Although the faculty teaching the course has changed, the service-learning assignment has remained as part of the course.

Sample Timeline for Developing a Service-Learning Component in a Class

8 weeks before semester	Determine interest in service-learning for a course and how it relates to course objectives.
7 weeks before semester	Contact SLA for names of community agencies and their activities as well as to gather ideas on teaching with service-learning, and obtain possible community agencies mission.
4 – 6 weeks before semester	Visit suggested community site(s) and ask about needs and service-learning project ideas.
4 weeks before semester	Send out follow-up letter to agencies and coordinate specifics for service-learning project.
3 weeks before semester	Revise course objectives and syllabus as needed to reflect service-learning reflections, journals, etc.
2 weeks before semester	Compile information from agencies to determine if group or individual projects are appropriate.
1 week before semester	Revise syllabus and add information on how you want journals done, how you will handle reflections, assessment, etc. (If you need help of any kind, contact the SLA).
First week of class	Explain the concept of service-learning and distribute information about the sites to students.
By 2 nd week of class	Ask students to make initial community contacts.
2 nd week of class	Review service-learning assignments and make adjustments as necessary.
3 rd week of class	Finalize all service-learning assignments.
4 th – 6 th week of class	Require 1 st submitted reflection assignment (or predetermined schedule...weekly, monthly, etc.).





Throughout semester

Have check-ins and reflections. This is crucial to connecting service-learning projects to course content.

Last week of class

Final assignments due (journals, reflection, discussion, presentation from service-learning experiences -- possibly inviting community agencies) and evaluation of community agency and experience.



Tips for Making Community Connections¹²

- Contact the Service-Learning Academy if you need ideas or a list of potential community agencies.
- Research the agency history, mission and related social issues before making contact. Investigate cultural diversity issues with employers. Provide students with an overview of any cultural diversity issues that may have an impact on service-learning work.
- Meet agency representatives at their office whenever possible.
- When inviting community partners to campus, send them a one-day visitor pass for parking and a campus map (Available at Campus Security Office, EAB 100).
- When visiting the agency or service site, note details on location, transportation and parking that will be pertinent to your students.
- Ask the agency how a collaboration might be useful. An important aspect of service-learning is that we provide genuine need/service in the community.
- Learn about the assets of the agency and the clientele. Explore their capacities and abilities, and relate this to your students. By acknowledging that community agencies have valuable and desirable strengths and insights, faculty and staff will be able to realize the reciprocity integral to the discipline of service-learning.
- Be open to indirect service projects. Consider how you can help students see the value of service that provides support to community vs. direct contact with people (e.g., grant writing, development of agency materials: PR video, brochures, volunteer handbook).
- Basic goals of service-learning include community development and empowerment. For these goals to be realized faculty and community must be equal, collaborative partners. Take care to "do no harm." The community and the clientele are not a teaching or research laboratory. The notion of community as laboratory assumes a false hierarchy of power and perpetuates an attitude of institutional superiority.
- Invite community partners to be a part of reflections, presentations and related activities.

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Facilitating Critical Reflection¹³

According to Thomas Dewey, "truly educative" experiences generate interest, are intrinsically worthwhile, present problems that awaken new curiosity and create a demand for new information, and take sufficient time to foster development.

What is critical reflection?

Reflection is a process designed to promote the examination and interpretation of experiences as they relate to course content. Service-learners think critically about their experiences and the implications of the actions they have taken - good and bad - to determine their meaning. Through reflection, students analyze concepts, evaluate experiences and form opinions. Critical reflection provides students with the opportunity to examine and question their beliefs, opinions and values as they were formed or changed by the service-learning experience. Reflection involves making observations, asking questions and putting facts, ideas and experiences together to derive new knowledge.

Why reflect?

Reflection is an essential process for transforming experiences - gained from the service activities and the course materials - into genuine learning. It is crucial for integrating the service experience with the classroom topics. It fosters learning about larger social issues such as the political, economic and sociological characteristics of our communities. It enhances students' critical understanding of the course topics and their ability to assess their own values, goals and progress.

What are the benefits of reflection?

Reflection improves basic academic skills and builds perception of how class material relates to the world outside the classroom. In addition, it improves higher-level thinking, problem solving, and ability to learn from experience. Reflection promotes personal development by enhancing students' self-awareness, sense of community, and sense of their own capacities.

What is included in effective reflection?

- Connects service objectives to the course objectives by integrating the service experience with course learning.
- Occurs regularly within the course (is guided and purposeful).
- Includes components that can be evaluated according to well-defined criteria.
- Opportunities for both private and public reflection.
- Awareness of civic responsibility.

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- Is continuous, connected, challenging and contextual.

Tips for facilitating reflection:

- Prepare a framework for guiding the discussion.
- Lead the group by actively engaging each student.
- Set the tone by establishing norms of behavior such as:
 - Anyone in the group may speak at any time - no hand raising is required, but the rules of polite conversation are followed.
 - No profanity or sexual innuendoes are necessary to make a point.
 - Speakers should be respectful, open-minded and not aim to put anyone down.
 - Insist that responses are clear, coherent sentences - not just a few words.
- Clarify students' responsibilities and expectations (write them down and copy for all).
- Arouse interest and commitment to service-learning.
- Assess the values, knowledge and skills each student brings to the project.
- Develop background information about the people and problems the students will encounter in the service situations to sensitize them and help to eliminate any misconceptions.
- Develop and practice any skills that will be required, including being active observers and questioners of experience.
- Get closure on emotional/affective issues by the end of each reflective session.
- Leave some cognitive/topical issues open until the next session to give group members an opportunity to think more about them.

Note: Blackboard is a useful pedagogy to utilize for reflective activities. Contact Information Technology Services @ 554-3282 for more information.

Reflection Activities and Questions¹⁴

When facilitating reflection, vary the activities to accommodate multiple learning styles; create a reflective classroom – do not just add a reflective component.

Group Discussions

The groups may involve either the entire class or just a small number of students. If they are small groups, the instructor may allow students to choose their own group members, set criteria for group composition (e.g., no groups composed of a single ethnicity or gender), or assign students to groups. The group members exchange ideas about the course topics and/or the service experiences. The instructor may either pose general or narrowly focused questions for discussion. A scribe may be assigned to submit a summary of the discussion to the instructor.

Journals

Students may be asked to keep a journal as they engage in the service experience. The journals should not merely be simple inventories of events. They should address situations objectively, subjectively and analytically. Instructors may provide questions to guide students in addressing issues and should review the journals periodically. It is helpful to offer written comments, questions and feedback that will encourage, challenge and essentially provide a dialogue that deepens the students' thought process.

Journaling is also a way to use Bloom's Taxonomy to challenge students to use higher order thinking skills. The Levels of Bloom's Taxonomy are included below.

Knowledge: "This thinking skill tells you that a student can recall or recognize information, concepts, and ideas in the approximate form in which they exist."

Comprehension: "This thinking skill tells you that a student can grasp and interpret prior learning."

Application: "This thinking skill tells you that a student can transfer selected information to a life problem or a new task with a minimum of direction."

Analysis: "This thinking skill tells you that a student can examine, take apart, classify, predict and draw conclusions."

Synthesis: "This thinking skill tells you that a student can originate, combine, and integrate parts of prior knowledge into a product, plan or proposal that is new."

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Evaluation: "This thinking skill tells you that a student can appraise, assess or criticize on the basis of specific standards and criteria."

Types of **Reflective Journals** include:¹⁵

Personal Journal

Students free-write journal entries each week about any aspect of the service-learning experience.

Dialogue Journal

Dialogue journals are a conversation the student conducts on paper about a particular question or topic. Exchanging journals with a journal partner can do this.

Highlighted Journal

Before a student submits his/her journal, he/she rereads entries and, using a highlighter, mark sections of the journal that directly relate to concepts discussed in the text or in class.

Key Phrase Journal

In this type of journal, students are asked to integrate terms and key-phrases within their journal entries. Journal entries are written within the framework of the course content and become an observation of how course content is evident in the service experience.

Double-entry Journal

When using a double-entry journal, students are asked to write two one-page entries a week: students describe their personal thoughts and reactions to the service experience on the left page of the journal and write about key issues from class discussion or readings on the right page of the journal. Students then draw arrows indicating relationships between their personal experience and course content.

Critical Incident Journal

This type of journal entry focuses the student on analysis of a particular event that occurred during the week. By answering one of the following sets of prompts, students are asked 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 your service experience. Why was this significant to you? What underlying issues (societal, interpersonal, curricular) surfaced as a result of this experience? How will this incident influence your future behavior?
Another set of prompts might include: Describe an incident or situation that created a dilemma for you in terms of what to say or do. What is the first thing you thought of to say or do? List three other actions you might have taken. Which of the above seems best to you now and why?

Three-part Journal

Students are asked to divide each page of their journal into thirds, and write weekly entries. In the top section, students describe some aspect of the service experience. In the middle of the page, they are asked to

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analyze how the course content relates to this experience. In the bottom section, students are prompted to comment how the experience and course content can be applied to their personal or professional life.

Reading responses

Students may be asked to write responses to course readings. Students can be allowed varying amounts of freedom in how they respond by posing either general or more focused questions.

Electronic forum

Students may be asked to contribute to an electronic discussion on service-learning and course topics using email or a listserv. They may respond to either questions posed by the instructor or to points raised by other students. (Blackboard is an ideal way to structure this type of discussion.)

Analytic papers, portfolios and presentations are other options for service-learning practitioners to elicit critical reflection from their students. These three assessment devices will be discussed in the "Final Projects and Assessments" section.

Examples of Reflective Questions:

- What (will/have you been doing)? Who have you been serving?
- So what (will/have you been learning)? Why is your service work needed?
- Now what (should others do about it)? What are you going to do about it?
- Can you talk more about that? Why do you think that happens?
- What evidence do you have about that? What does this remind you of?
- Do you see a connection between this and ___?
- How else could you approach that? What do you want to happen?
- How could you do that?

*The information contained on these pages is a compilation of sources

Hatcher, Julie A. and Robert G. Bringle, "Reflection Activities for the College Classroom" Indianapolis, IN: 1996.

Manning, Kimberley "Service Learning in Political Science" 1998 Autumn Report.

Eyler, Janet, Dwight E. Giles, Jr. and Angela Schmiede, *A Practitioner's Guide to Reflection in Service Learning* Vanderbilt U: TN 1996.

Final Projects and Assessment¹⁶

Final projects and assessment have many forms when dealing with service-learning. From journals, papers, electronic discussions and class presentations, professors must use an assessment method that will be the most effective in their particular class. Service-learning practitioners have found the most important consideration to keep in mind when assigning a grade to the service-learning student is that the student is NOT being graded on their time at the service-learning site, nor on their performance at the site. Since service-learning is an academic option, all service-learning students should be graded on the academic merit of their final projects, presentations, exams and/or papers. The service projects serve only as the basis for the academic project, much like grading a student on a report written about a particular book but not for reading the book itself.

Three popular assessments include integrative papers, portfolios, and class presentations.

Integrative Papers

Most courses use papers as the summary activity for a course. Some courses have students develop a series of shorter assignments that are used to bring together the final paper while other classes use journals as field notes for the final paper. Papers are generally most effective as the final assignment when they are a culmination of a series of reflective discussions or assignments. There are a number of different types of final papers to consider:

Problem Solving Papers

Students investigate a social problem related to their community service assignment by defining the problem, analyzing root causes, identifying the stakeholders, identifying alternative policy solutions and recommending a policy to be pursued. 'Research' is not confined to the library, but includes interviewing experts working to deal with the issue in the field.

Theory Application Papers

Students identify a particular theoretical perspective or concept and then use the experiences with community service to 'test' the theory. Students argue for or against key points of the theory with examples from their experience.

Case Studies

Case studies can focus on individuals, on the service project itself or on the agency's role in meeting the needs of community members.

Service-Learning Self-Assessment

Some classes make the final paper an explicit evaluation of the students' service-learning experience using criteria identified for effective

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experiential learning. Students discuss personal growth and critique the program and the placement.

Agency Analysis

Students analyze the agency they worked with using appropriate organizational frameworks and evaluation tools. They combine their observations with information about who is served, how policies are made, where funding is obtained and future plans for the organization.

Book Review

Another option is to ask students to select a book to review (or have them choose one from a list) and to incorporate their critique with a discussion of their service-learning experience.

Portfolios

A portfolio is a collection of documents and other forms of evidence of student achievements, specifically as they relate to learning plan objectives. Portfolios can be used for both student and program evaluation.

Things that can be included are:

- Documents drafted or written (article reviews, book reports, office reports, pamphlets or flyers).
- Written analysis of problems, issues, options or other assessments.
- Finished projects (videotapes, graphics, charts, spreadsheets, training programs, photos, marketing plans, research/project results, pamphlets).
- Lists of projects completed, presentations made and training completed, all supported by date, location and organization.
- Annotated bibliography of readings related to course objectives.
- Grant portfolios.

Learning objectives should be clearly stated at the beginning of the course and a plan to achieve those goals should be developed by each of the service-learning students.

Portfolios can be evaluated with a number of questions:

- To what extent does the learning plan represent an appropriate and sophisticated level of learning?
- To what extent does the learning represent a broad range of learning objectives?
- Is there evidence for each learning objective?
- Does the evidence demonstrate a specified standard of achievement?
- Are the portfolio items clear evidence that learning has occurred?
- Is the portfolio clearly organized and professionally presented?

Class Presentations

Class presentations can be an effective way to help students synthesize the material they have gathered during their service-learning placements. The presentations can be short, three-minute updates throughout the semester or a longer presentation at the end of the semester. Presentations can be individual or group based, and can include inviting community members.

* Much of the material contained in this section was taken from, Eyler, Janet A *Practitioner's Guide to Reflection in Service Learning*. Vanderbilt U, 1996.

Diversity and Service-Learning¹⁷

Service-learning provides rich opportunities for students to experience and understand diversity in meaningful ways. It is a vehicle for students to learn from other cultures and explore differences beyond ethnicity. Planning, processing and identifying common hurdles will optimize your students' opportunities to learn about diversity.

Planning Considerations

In planning your service-learning project, you might want to consider the culture of your class, the agency, and the service recipients. Be sure to define and create an atmosphere that respects and nurtures differences. As a professor, model the type of behavior that supports respect for diversity. It is a good idea to facilitate exercises and activities that create awareness of the diversity issues present in the service-learning activity. Orientations to the agency are highly recommended and prevent misunderstandings. Lastly, discuss the differences between the culture of the non-profit organization and the culture of student life.

Common Challenges with Diversity Issues in Service-Learning

Sometimes diversity issues are not fully addressed because they can be intimidating. Here are some common faculty fears and some possible strategies or solutions.

- **Fear: activities might perpetuate stereotypes.**
Possible strategies or solutions:
 - Prior to the service project, ask students what types of activities perpetuate stereotypes and why. Explore those issues further.
- **Fear: having prejudiced/stereotyped comments come out during reflection sessions.**
Possible strategies or solutions:
 - Set parameters and boundaries prior to the service-work that defines and clarifies acceptable and unacceptable types of comments.
 - If an inappropriate or uninformed comment is made, give it back to the class and facilitate a discussion around that belief.
- **Fear: not knowing what is okay to say or not, or not being knowledgeable enough about a certain culture or ethnicity.**
Possible strategies or solutions:
 - Clarify that you are not necessarily responsible for being an expert on different cultures, but are there to facilitate dialogue and exploration on thoughts regarding different cultures.
 - Remind students that "an error in judgment is not an error in character." A statement not articulated properly, but respectfully, is okay and not a reflection on the person's character.

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Using Service-Learning to Meet Reappointment, Tenure and Promotion Criteria at UNOmaha¹⁸

Tenure and promotion decisions are based on an assessment of teaching, research, and outreach accomplishments. Evaluation decisions reflect not only **what** faculty do, but also **how well**. Scholarship is fundamental to the role of university faculty. Depending on College RP&T Committee, service-learning may be considered scholarly work or it can be used to advance scholarship and enhance academic contributions.

Principles for Integrating Service-Learning with Scholarship:

- Structure service-learning activities to address larger questions related to instructional effectiveness and/or appropriate outreach models for specific populations.
- Measure the effectiveness of service-learning and discuss the results in the context of a broader subject matter.
- Give visibility to your efforts.

How to Increase Visibility of Your Efforts:

- Present professional papers at state, regional and national meetings. (A list of service-learning conferences is on the service-learning web page.)
- Publish your findings in higher education publications or in applied academic journals, particularly those that report teaching innovations. (A list of possible journals to publish in is included in the resources section.)
- Serve the university community by volunteering to lead discussions, give presentations or conduct brown bags to campus-wide audiences.
- Make your work visible and emphasize quality; your service-learning efforts may lead to nominations for college or university teaching awards as well as other forms of recognition.
- Submit grants for external funding related to service-learning activities.
- Seek publicity for you and your student's efforts through the University Affairs and Communications. (Call 554-3509 early in the semester to invite media coverage of the significant activities that link your course to the community.)
- Apply for a UCAT Travel Grant.

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Outcome Evaluation in Service-Learning¹⁹

The purpose of outcome evaluation is to measure the effects of a program against the goals it sets out to accomplish and to improve future programming. Outcome evaluation in service-learning must serve a dual purpose: to assess the value of services performed from the community perspective, and to investigate the effectiveness of the educational experience for student learning and development. Put simply, evaluation is about usefulness and therefore "requires clarity about what one is attempting to evaluate, care in using measures that generate relevant and useful data, and willingness to act on what is learned." (Morton, 1996).

Experience with outcome evaluation reveals eight stakeholders whose roles in service-learning program performance must be considered, the units of analysis.

Units of Analysis:

- Non-profit agency or service setting
- Beneficiaries of the service
- Faculty
- Students
- Academic department
- University
- Community context that provides clients and agency sanction
- Funding entity, if distinct from other stakeholders

In the context of this complex partnership, outcome evaluations may provide a critical step in generating trust and reliance, as well as a means of enhancing and extending program momentum and development (Gugerty and Swezey, 1996). Each of the stakeholder groups has distinct quantitative and qualitative constructs for measuring program outcomes.

In the initial step, the designer of outcome evaluation must address the inner circle of stakeholders – students, clients, faculty and agency staff – to mutually determine the methods that fit the time and resources available, and the levels of cooperation and control. Student outcome measures are crucial to determining the effectiveness of service-learning and are of great interest to the field. Impacts

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on academic, career, civic, personal, ethical and social development are often targets for measuring student outcomes.

Principles for Effective Service-Learning Evaluation:

- Include stakeholders in the research design.
- Satisfy mutually beneficial objectives.
- Pay attention to social, psychological, ethical and political concerns.
- Balance emphasis on time and task.
- Provide empowerment through the evaluation process.

Steps to Service-Learning Outcome Designs:

- Formulate the question(s) for investigation.
- Identify relevant measures of performance or outcome.
- Determine how the data will be collected, by whom and at what point in the course.
- Plan for the analysis of the data and how it will be used to answer the research question(s).
- Formulate a follow-up plan for implementing recommendations and reporting research findings.

It is important to recognize the present state of educational research benefits from a wide range of evaluative inquiry. Designers of outcome evaluation should be open to a full pallet of research methods, keeping in mind that the most frequently used designs may be determined by circumstances as much as by interest. Simplicity may be the most useful exhortation to service-learning evaluators followed by patience and perseverance.

Risk Management in Service-Learning²⁰

Are you, the faculty member, liable for the safety and actions of students who participate in service-learning? Are your students protected in the case of personal injury related to the service experience? Are they liable for damages to others? Risk is always present, to some degree, in the activities that add value to our personal and professional lives. The following guidelines, created with assistance from the University of Nebraska at Omaha Purchasing and Risk Management Department, EAB 201, are designed to help you assess potential risks in service-learning and to minimize those risks.

Statement of Insurance-Student in Training

The University of Nebraska is self-insured for professional and comprehensive general liability for \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 in the aggregate of liability occurrences in any fiscal year.

The following are insured under this policy:

“Students in Training’ shall mean any student enrolled in a program of the University when student is acting for or on behalf of the University or when rendering service to another as part of his or her teaching or training by the University [...]”

Minimize Student Risk By:

- Discussing with the class the risks, as well as the benefits, involved in community service and the skills required.
- Setting up a line of communication for students to report difficulties to their supervisor.

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Keys to Success for Community Partners²¹

1. **Keep projects focused.** Focused projects with visible outcomes keep students on track, interested and motivated. A schedule of regular hours and/or meeting times each week is also helpful.
2. **Have an available supervisor.** One contact person for the students at the site is essential even if students work in the field with different area supervisors.
3. **Schedule a comprehensive orientation.** The orientation should serve to familiarize the students with the space, people and mission of the organization. The orientation determines, to a large extent, how well students will respond to the position and their responsibilities as service-learning students.
4. **Keep a Record of Service.**
5. **Contact us.** You may have questions throughout the semester. Don't let questions or problems wait! Give us a call (402) 554-2427, email us at cpettid@mail.unomaha.edu or drop by and visit with us at Allwine Hall 419.

If you don't tell us, we won't know.

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Examples of Service-Learning Courses Taught at University of Nebraska at Omaha

Community Service Writing Nora Bacon, Ph.D.

Community Service Writing is an advanced writing course offered to students who have completed the two-semester Freshman English sequence. Students are introduced to community organizations where, in addition to performing conventional volunteer work, they write documents such as newsletter articles, press releases, fundraising materials, and brochures. Objectives of the course are: 1) to give students an opportunity to apply rhetorical principles, writing for real audiences and analyzing the relationship between texts and their social context; 2) to create documents that advance the work of community organizations; 3) to involve students in community service, thereby heightening their awareness of community issues and their sense of civic responsibility; and 4) to build constructive working relationships between the campus and the community. Students engage in structured reflection in the form of classroom discussions, journals, and formal writing assignments including a research paper in which they investigate social issues relevant to the community-based organizations.

Social Work Practice II Paul Sather, MSW and Patricia Carlson West, MSW

This course is a graduate level course that is required for all graduate students entering the Foundation Level graduate program. The course is taught in the spring semester of each academic year. The focus of this course is on developing skills in planning, collaboration, empowerment and advocacy to effect social change. The service-learning approach to this course allows the students to gain "hands on" experience in collaborative work with racially diverse groups of clients and to develop increased competence in the primary social work skills of empowerment and advocacy. This course provides graduate students with an opportunity to gain real experience with a diverse community and community agency early in their graduate education, and enhance the student's capacity to integrate course content with actual practice.

Social Work Practice III Paul Sather, MSW and Patricia Carlson West, MSW

Social Work Practice III is a 400 level course that is required for all social work majors in their senior year. The aim of this course is to introduce the student to basic strategies for social change and to enhance the student's understanding of the significance of collaboration in effective community practice. A service learning approach allows students to gain experience in collaborative work with a racially diverse group of clients and to develop greater competence in the primary social work skills of empowerment and advocacy. The service-learning component also provides the student with an opportunity to connect course content with actual practice in a more timely and integrative manner.

Career Development for the Handicapped
Sandra K. Squires, Ed.D.

This course is geared toward experiential types of learning activities and introduces a service learning activity for all students. Because there is a federally mandated transition process which is designed to move students with disabilities from high school into adulthood, the service learning project gives students an opportunity to work with individuals through a variety of agencies currently serving persons with disabilities.

Management of Business Finance
David Volkman, Ph.D.

Management of Business Finance (FNBK 4150) is a senior level financial management course that focuses on employing theoretical capital budgeting procedures to estimate and evaluate corporate investment projects. As part of this course, a service learning experience includes students to form groups and perform a feasibility analysis for a community-based organization. A feasibility analysis performed by students will help a community-based organization identify the pecuniary benefits, characterize specific risk factors, and debate concerns about perceived risk of budgetary decisions under consideration.

Computer Science, Data Structures and Algorithms
Hesham H. Ali, Ph. D.

The course under consideration, CSCI 3320 Data Structures and Algorithms, is the third programming course in the computer science curriculum. The main objective of the course is to provide the students with a thorough understanding of how computer systems can be used to solve large-scale problems efficiently. It emphasizes the important concepts of problem solving techniques and efficient automation. Students enrolled in the course should have a two-semester experience in programming using a high-level structured language such as C++. After spending two semesters in developing their programming skills, the students get the chance in this course to look at the bigger picture of how computers can be used to solve real-life problems and develop a reasonable level of maturity in the field. This is why the course is selected to include a service-learning component that is centered on the idea of working with high school students. Towards the middle of the course, students should have a clear picture of the kind of real problems computers can solve efficiently. This would allow them to serve as excellent tutors or lab assistants for the first course in programming in a high school environment. Currently, the course is taught via standard lectures and several homework and programming assignments. Adding the service-learning component would add a new dimension to learning experience of the course. Helping high school students with their programming assignments would allow our students to further understand the concept of computer algorithms and sharpen their skills in analyzing various types of problems. The project would also provide much needed help to high school teachers in dealing with the demanding job of educating their students in the under-staffed computer laboratories.

**French/Applied Linguistics, TED 4000 Foreign Language/ ESL Methods
Carolyn Gascoigne, Ph.D.**

This course is designed to provide secondary education majors with specific competencies in foreign language methods and materials for teaching second languages. Service learning activities will be incorporated into the course in order to enhance learning (serve to learn) and to encourage a spirit of service (learn to serve). Specifically, students will put the content of the course (language teaching methodologies and techniques) into practice by teaching and tutoring underprivileged students in the Omaha metropolitan area. The service component of this course will benefit both the students of TED 4000 and the community. First, students of TED 4000 will have an authentic opportunity to practice and improve their language teaching skills. Second, students of TED 4000 will be able to work with a culturally and economically heterogeneous group of students, thus raising their consciousness of local societal needs. Similarly, community members, namely underprivileged students, will benefit from the service learning component of TED 4000 by receiving linguistic instruction, one-on-one attention, and being exposed to other languages, cultures, art, and literatures.

**Child Language Disorders II
Ellen Jacobs, Ph.D.**

This proposal addresses the restructuring of an existing course called Child Language Disorders II. The course has a lecture and discussion format and serves undergraduate students majoring in Speech-Language Pathology. This proposal would add a service learning component to enhance students understanding of a collaborative, functional model of helping individuals who have language disorders to succeed in their classrooms. In the field of special education there is a great deal of emphasis on collaboration among speech-language pathologist and teachers in schools. The service learning component would give speech-language pathology students an opportunity to (a) work closely with school-age children and adolescents who have disorders and (b) collaborate regularly with classroom teachers.

**Gender and Global Politics
Jody Neathery-Castro, Ph.D.**

The creation of a new class, PSCI 3230 Gender and Global Politics, will assist learners in both political science and women's studies – exposing them to the global political concerns of women at the same time that they serve women from different environments. This 3000-level course is being submitted for approval to the Arts and Sciences Education committee to be initially offered to undergraduates in either Fall 2000 or Spring 2001.

The instructor hopes to achieve the following goals with the course: 1) to critically identify the political problems and opportunities women face within their own countries and in the global arena; 2) to respectfully examine and evaluate government policies on gender issues; 3) to promote creative strategies for reducing bias on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation; 4) to foster collaborative learning and understanding between learners; 5) to advance learner leadership skills; and 6) to connect theory and case study to real-life situations, promoting cognizance of the interrelatedness between personal experience and broader social realities.

Service learning activities will encourage the students/learners to connect the personal and the political, and will illustrate that gender inequality transcends national boundaries and requires collaborative redress. The learners will work with specific agencies that serve immigrant women, or women from foreign countries, with the hope of fostering a sense of global community. Structured activities such as journals, class discussions, and group research will ensure that learners draw connections between theory and practice. The experiences of the class participants will be disseminated through university and academic forums.

Liberatory Pedagogy

Irvin Peckham, Ph.D.

The course, Liberatory Pedagogy, has been designed to explore the ways the dominant cultures oppress underprivileged social groups. A fundamental strategy is to use, albeit without conscious intention, educational institutions to reproduce social structures that maintain privileges for the groups benefiting from the way things are. One of the strategies has been to inculcate what Paulo Freire calls the banking model of education. In essence, education is thought of as a commodity that can be deposited in students. The effect of a model is to create the illusion of knowledge as static, of authorities who are the knowledge givers.

In previous Liberatory Pedagogy classes, we have read the works of John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and Ira Shor, who have opposed this model with a dialogic model in which knowledge is created through the active participation of the teachers and the learner. The thesis beneath the progressive model is that learners will gain a sense of empowerment as they learn that knowledge (or a social structure) is created dialogically. (I have radically oversimplified for the sake of brevity.)

I will use the service-learning model to give my students the chance to compare what these theorists have said to what my students can observe through working with underprivileged students. A good deal of work has documented the ways in which students from underprivileged social groups are further disadvantaged through an essentially middle-class educational system (e.g., Shirley Brice Heath, *Ways with Words*; Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities*; John Paul Gee, *Social Linguistics and Languages*). I will change my course to use materials that examine in greater detail these inequalities and to create service learning situations in which my students will have to chance to test whether the inequalities do exist, what they are, and how my students can help the underprivileged students and their families learn to negotiate an educational system that does not reflect their social group's values, and ways of speaking and interacting.

Interactions Between Professionals and Parents of Children with Disabilities

Sandra Squires, Ed.D.

This proposal addresses the rewrite of an existing course called Interactions Between Professionals and Parents of the Handicapped. The course is a lecture and discussion type of course that serves primarily undergraduate students. This proposal would add a service-learning component to enhance students' understanding of working with families.

In the field of special education there is a great deal of emphasis on communication between teachers and parents in schools. The service learning component would give students preparing to be special education teachers an opportunity to work closely with parents of children with disabilities and to develop those skills.

Foreign Language Teaching Methods
Carolyn Gascoigne, Ph.D.

Students of TED 4000, Foreign Language Teaching Methods, were able to put course content (foreign language teaching methodology) into practice while serving their community by teaching foreign languages and cultures to target community members. Specifically, students identified a community agency / group of their choice (school, community center, retirement home, library), then designed and carried out language and/or culture lessons that were taught to community members at regular intervals throughout the semester.

Psychology of Exceptional Children
Lisa Kelly-Vance, Ph.D.

My first formal service-learning course in this fall (2000) in Psychology of Exceptional Children, a course intended for first year graduate students in School Psychology. As the students are learning about different areas of exceptionality that we see in children, they are working with children who have learning and/or behavioral problems. Each UNO student is assigned to one student at Holy Name Elementary School in Omaha and they work on areas that are most problematic for the child. Each week UNO students write a Journal of Critical Reflection that is their opportunity to incorporate what they are learning about in the assigned readings with what they are actually seeing in the school. The journals have been insightful and suggest that students are understanding the purpose of service learning. Perhaps more importantly, the Holy Name staff is reporting that both our UNO students and their students are doing extremely well and that the program is a success.

Communication Special Topics--senior seminar
Hollis Glaser, Ph.D.

A cross-section of communication majors worked with Social Settlement on a variety of issues. One group helped with a volunteer handbook, one worked on public relations material, one worked on recruiting, one on marketing, and one group worked with team-building efforts. Besides the final product each group gave Social Settlement, the class learned how the different disciplines within the communication field work together and came away with a deeper understanding of how communication theory is applied.

Communication Leadership and Power in Organizations
Hollis Glaser, Ph.D.

I am still talking to community agencies as I write this. The goal will be to divide the class into small groups, each of whom will work with one agency. As they learn more about leadership, they will try to understand as deeply as they can how leadership is operating in the community organization. They will complete the semester by exploring leadership goals and processes with the agency.

UNOmaha Service-Learning Academy Website

The Service-Learning Academy maintains a website for the benefit of faculty, community agencies and students. The website is a wonderful resource for anybody looking to see what service-learning is about and what the University of Nebraska-Omaha is doing in the area of service-learning. The website includes the following:

- What is service-learning?
- Faculty and service-learning
- The Community and service-learning
- Students and service-learning
- Upcoming Events
- A list of all of the service-learning classes taught at UNO since the conception of the SLA
- Abstracts for service-learning courses
- Course descriptions and syllabi
- Photographs of service projects
- Links to Service-Learning Conferences
- Short Bios on the SLA staff
- SL calendar
- SL Award recipients
- SL workshops
- SL bibliography
- Grant opportunities
- SL weblinks to other service-learning institutions, resources, and databases

Professional Organizations and Resources²²

The following organizations are recommended resources for bibliographies, articles, syllabi, journals and conferences. The Service-Learning Archives provide electronic links to most of the remaining organizations and resources. NSEE is a renowned professional organization for practitioners of all forms of experiential education. The Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning is the best-known journal on service-learning in higher education.

Service-Learning Discussion Group

Robin Crews, crews@csf.colorado.edu, archives editor and owner.

<http://csf.colorado.edu/sl/>

To subscribe, send the message "subscribe service-learning" to majordomo@csf.colorado.edu

National Society for Experiential Education

9001 Braddock Road Suite 380

Springfield, VA 22151

Voice 703.426.4268 / 800.803.4170

Fax 703.426.8400 / 800.528.3492

info@nsee.org

<http://www.nsee.org>

National Service-Learning Cooperative Clearinghouse

ETR Associates

4 Carbonero Way

Scotts Valley, CA 95066

Voice 1-866-245-SERV (7378) / 831-438-4060

Fax 831-430-9471

nslc@servicelearning.org

<http://www.servicelearning.org>

Campus Compact National Center for Community Colleges

145 North Centennial Way

Suite 201

Mesa, AZ 85201

Voice 480-461-6280

Fax 480-461-6218

gloria.schoonover@mcmail.maricopa.edu

<http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/organizations/community/compact/>

²² CSU

International Partnership for Service-Learning

815 Second Avenue
Suite 315
New York, NY 10017
Voice (212) 986-0989
Fax (212) 986-5039
info@ipsl.org
<http://www.ipsl.org/>

Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning

OCSL Press / University of Michigan
1024 Hill Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-3310
Voice (734) 647-7402
Fax (734) 647-7464
mjcsl@umich.edu
<http://www.umich.edu/~mjcsl/>

Corporation for National Service

1201 New York Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20525
Voice 202-606-5000
<http://www.nationalservice.org>

National Service-Learning Conferences

National Society for Experiential Education

2002 National Conference

“Experiential Education: Exploring New Territories”

October 1-4, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, NV

- Usually in early to mid-Fall
- Location changes every year

The National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) is a membership association committed to all forms of experiential learning – whether they happen in the classroom, workplace, or community. NSEE is a strong advocate of partnerships that contribute to classrooms that are more dynamic, a stronger workforce, and thriving communities. The 2002 national conference will feature workshops, roundtable discussions, program showcases, and exhibits.

Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL)

2002 Conference

- Usually in mid-Spring
- Location changes every year

Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to the education and empowerment of college students to strengthen the nation through community service. COOL's vision is to mobilize and connect students of all backgrounds to lead a movement that increases participation in our communities, promotes activism, and fosters the civic and social responsibility necessary to build a just society.

National Service-Learning Conference

“Weaving the Fabric of Community: A Celebration of Service-Learning”

Minneapolis, April 23-26, 2003

- Usually in mid-Spring
- Location changes every year

Celebrating fourteen years of service-learning leadership, the National Service-Learning Conference highlights and promotes service-learning as a way of teaching and learning that builds academic and citizenship skills while renewing communities. It is the only major national education conference that provides service-learning professional development to a diverse audience of K-H educators, administrators, pre-service teacher education staff and faculty, researchers, youth leaders, parents, program coordinators, national service members, community-based organization staffs, and corporate and foundation officers.

Campus Compact

- **2002 National Summit**
- **"Realizing the Civic Mission of Higher Education: How Far Have We Come, What Does the Future Hold?"**

**November 7-9, 2002 The Providence Westin
Providence, Rhode Island**

Campus Compact is a national coalition of college and university presidents committed to helping students develop the values and skills of civic participation through involvement in public service. It is the only national higher education organization whose primary purpose is to support campus-based public and community service in higher education – one that supports not only the civic development of students, but the campus as citizens as well.

AAHE Series on Service-Learning in the Disciplines

"The AAHE Service Learning Project consists of a two-part initiative dedicated to the integration of service-learning across the disciplines. The project is anchored by an 18-volume series designed to provide resources to faculty wishing to explore community-based learning in and through the individual academic disciplines. AAHE sees its primary role as a facilitator and resource for those whose work brings them into more direct contact with teaching faculty. Through the monograph series and the coalition-building meetings, AAHE aims to ultimately strengthen the educational infrastructure supporting service-learning in higher education." - Edward Zlotkowski, senior associate

The Service-Learning Academy owns 14 of the 18 monographs. A sample for each of the monographs has been produced: The disciplines include:

- Accounting
- Biology
- Communication Studies
- Composition
- Engineering
- Environmental Studies
- History
- Management
- Nursing
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Spanish
- Teacher Education
- Women's Studies

*Abstracts can be found at the following website address:
<http://www.unomaha.edu/~srvlearn>

Service-Learning Bibliography

*indicates resources available at the Service-Learning Academy

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