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the honorees. For example, the school kit received by all schools each September includes an easy-to-adapt news release that schools can disseminate locally on their honoree.

Publicity efforts intensify at the state and national levels. News releases are produced on state honorees and distinguished finalists and sent to appropriate local and regional newspaper, television and radio reporters. At the national recognition event work is done with the national press, video news releases are produced on the honorees, and news releases are sent to newspapers in the honorees' states and communities.

While the program produces considerable publicity on the honorees, there are also numerous effective ideas that local educators can implement to gain recognition for their students, whether they are local, state, or national honorees. Consider these:

- Feature your honorees at a school meeting that has parents and other adults in the audience. This might be a PTA or booster club meeting, awards assembly, or open house. Showcase your honorees as an example of what's right with youth today.
- Take your honorees to a civic club meeting and introduce them. Have your honorees briefly discuss their service project.
- Seek a time when your honorees can appear at a school board meeting and be recognized.
- Work with the news media in your community to do a larger feature on the project your student(s) initiated. If you have a school public relations professional in your district, work with that individual in seeking additional media coverage.
- See if your honoree's projects can be featured in a school district newsletter or the district homepage which is read by community members.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards is a program that is great recognition for students who serve. But it can also be a bonanza to gain recognition for your school. Get into in this program and take advantage of this opportunity! ~B

Service Learning: Connecting Citizenship with the Classroom

By Mary Ellen Brandell and Shelly Hinck

Service learning is the blending of service and learning goals in such a way that the two reinforce one another. It connects student service with traditional classroom instruction, learning, and reflection. Service learning is a philosophy of education, as well as a service to the community.

Service learning means different things to different people. Generally, it refers to a method that students learn through participating in organized service experiences designed to meet community needs. The service is integrated into the academic curriculum so students can think, write, or discuss what they experienced during the activity.

Service learning should enhance what is taught in the classroom and extend learning beyond the classroom to help students develop a sense of caring (National & Community Service Act of 1990). Service learning expands the students' world from the classroom to the community.

Projects that are thoughtfully constructed and well supervised allow students to use their academic skills to provide service to the community. Effective service learning can transform students from passive to active learners and help them become responsible community members. Service learning not only enhances the way young people learn, but also changes society's view of combining education with service.

Addressing a Societal Need

In 1991 the National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) sponsored a follow-up Wingspread Conference that generated the *Research Agenda for Combining Service and Learning in the 1990s* (Giles et al., 1991). The federal government's interest in supporting service learning increased with the passage of the National & Community Service Trust Act of 1990, which was

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followed by the passage of the National & Community Service Trust Act of 1993, which resulted in the formation of the Corporation for National & Community Service.

The Corporation first funded the creation of 20,000 positions in the AmeriCorps National Service Program and service learning programs in K-12 and higher education settings through Learn and Serve America.

The primary goal of service learning is to focus on facilitating citizenship education in preparation for living and actively participating in a democracy. According to Astin, "It is virtually impossible to teach students what it means to be a citizen or participate in a democracy. Citizens must be involved in the process; service learning is the most effective means of accomplishing a method to produce educated citizens who understand and appreciate how democracy is supposed to work. Service learning also teaches young people responsibility to become active participants in the community. Besides preparing students for citizenship and democratic participation, service learning also includes preparing them for the world of work" (Pew Higher Education Roundtable, 1994).

Service learning allows students to develop skills such as creative problem solving, effective communication, decision making, and the ability to synthesize information; it leads to an increased sense of social responsibility (Jacoby, 1996).

Impact of Service Learning Activities

In an effort to document the impact of service learning, a report by Learn and Serve noted several positive effects of student involvement with service learning projects during the 1995-96 school year. The three-year Learn and Serve study addressed the impact of well-designed, fully-implemented service learning programs in both middle level and high schools in nine states.

First, researchers found that participants in service learning programs "scored significantly higher on measures of personal and social responsibility, acceptance of cultural diversity, and service leadership than a comparison group of students in the study."

Second, the researchers found a positive impact on measures of educational engagement, aspirations, and achievement of service learning participants. The report found that "Service learning participants had higher grades in social studies, math, and science, were more likely to want to

Service learning participants had higher grades in social studies, math, and science, were more likely to want to go to a four year college, and rated their school experience more positively than a group of comparison students.

go to a four year college, and rated their school experience more positively than a group of comparison students. The positive impact on school grades was particularly strong for middle school students, with a 16 percent difference in core grade point average (the average of English, math, social studies, and science grades), a 25 percent difference in math grades, and a nearly 30 percent difference in social studies grades."

A 1997 article by Scales and Blyth echoed the fact that well-designed service learning projects result in many positive effects for students:

1. Service learning significantly improves various dimensions of personal development.
2. Service learning significantly improves various dimensions of citizenship and personal development.
3. Service learning improves various dimensions of intellectual development/academic success.
4. Students involved in service learning projects felt they had greater than usual autonomy and responsibility for their learning.

Initiating a Service Learning Unit

Service learning is relatively easy to initiate in a classroom if the underlying concepts of service learning are understood and teachers are open to the opportunities that present themselves. To realize the positive impact of service learning, however, projects must be carefully planned. There are six steps in a successful service learning unit: brainstorming, focusing, implementing, evaluating, reflecting, and celebrating.

Brainstorm

To start a service learning unit in a classroom, look first at the community. This could be your school, neighborhood, city, or a larger area such as a state, nation, or the world. Identify the needs that might be met through developing students' skills or through their interest or knowledge in a subject. Talk with local community members about the needs of the community, neighborhoods, etc. Talk with your students to identify their interests and concerns. At this point, do not restrict or eliminate any suggestions.

Focus

Next, examine each idea. Will both your students and those being served benefit? Is the project clearly linked to school curriculum and student learning? Service learning can be a powerful teaching tool if the service learning project is a part of the curriculum; it should not be viewed as an "extra" activity. Fritz Crabb, former facilitator for service learning for the Grand Rapids, Mich., district states that, if service learning is to be benefi-

cial "it has to be seen as a tool to help teachers teach the existing curriculum" (1996, p. 47).

It is also important to consider the limitations and risks of the project as well as the resources you have available. Assessing the risks involved in each service learning project is imperative. Tremper and Kostin (1993) outline five steps: looking for risks; assessing the risks; deciding how to control the risks; implementing a risk control strategy; and reviewing and revising the process. While no situation is ever risk-free, implementing a risk control strategy will allow schools to safely navigate the potentially risky sea of service learning.

Implement

Once the idea is fully developed, implement it.

Evaluate

Why assess a service learning program? Assessment provides the basis for developing and improving programs, documents a program's effectiveness to a school's administration and to funding sources, and establishes a climate conducive to the wider adoption of service learning and community service education models.

Perhaps one of the most important reasons to evaluate a service learning project is offered by Richard Bradley, who states, "Whenever parents ask why a service learning project might benefit their son or daughter, it helps to be able to say, 'based on our evaluation of the impact of this program, your child is likely to benefit in one or more of the following areas...'. A carefully designed evaluation plan can give you the information you need to answer parents' concerns" (1996, p. 47).

The most daunting step is often to decide where to begin the assessment process. Assessment must be viewed in the larger context of educational goals. It should flow naturally from the curriculum and from the service experience. Marylynn Cunningham, a profession development specialist with the Aytette County Public Schools in Lexington, Ky., offers one way to evaluate the process of learning:

- State learning objective or problem—Identify a specific objective, problem, or outcome.
- Gather data—Identify appropriate sources, use the sources, and assess their validity; identify what type of data will be used—quantitative, qualitative, or a combination of both (see Table 1).
- Analyze data—Organize data and evaluate their relevance to learning.
- Generalize or infer—Understand the meaning of data, determine trends, or draw conclusions.
- *Communicate*—Articulate conclusions early and produce specified products.

Cunningham further states, "To assess the content learning in service learning, students select their favorite method of documentation, using written, verbal, or audiovisual approaches. Written format can be reports, charts, graphs, logs, journals, research papers, essays, and others. Verbal approaches include discussions, oral reports, speeches, seminars, speak outs, and town meetings" (1996, p. 123). Additionally, some student changes can be assessed by comparing test scores before and after service activities.

While students can provide a wealth of information concerning assessment and evaluation, it is also important to remember that questioning all individuals involved in the service project may yield important and valuable information. Talking with the service organization or the service recipients may result in greater insight about the success or the failure of the project (see Table 1).

Reflect

Allow students to focus on what they have accomplished, think about the impact they have had on those being served, and decide how their own attitudes and behavior have changed. Give the students an opportunity to explore how they feel about what they have accomplished. To be effective, structured opportunities must be provided for students to reflect on their ser-

TABLE 1
Comparisons of Evaluation Strategies

Formative Evaluation: Quantitative or Qualitative

Questions You Want Answered

Are you doing what you said you were going to do in your proposal or program description?

Is your program operating efficiently and in a timely manner?

Ways To Answer Your Question

Process observation of programs/operations

Interviews with program staff, administration, students, parents, other stakeholders

Questionnaires for stakeholders

Minutes of meetings

Summative Evaluation: Quantitative or Qualitative

Questions You Want Answered

How well were your program goals and objectives met?

What impact has your service learning program had on student skills and attitudes?

What decisions do you want to make about your program?

Ways To Answer Your Question

Checklists of goals and objectives

Surveys

Observation

Self-reflective tools such as journals

Pre/post service assessments on key indicators, such as GPA, behaviors, and attitudes

Statistical analysis

vice learning experiences. In addition, students must be committed to the service project and recognize the time and energy required for success.

It is important to involve faculty members in reflection. For faculty members, reflection can help with preparation, the service itself, and learning from the service. Faculty reflection need not be done alone; in fact, some teachers need the opportunity to discuss reflection strategies with each other. Teachers and administrators might want to think about establishing a service learning committee or compile student personal essays in the library to allow others to see what the project was like and the kind of learning experienced by the students.

Celebration

While reflection and assessment are often lauded as integral components in the service learning process, an often overlooked ingredient is celebration. Marianne McKeown says that "Celebration is the recognition not only of participants' successes but also of their vision, effort, and growth" (1996, p. 196). She adds: "In the success of the service all parties join in a recognition of the intrinsic joy or good that results from the service rendered."

Recognizing and praising individuals involved in the service learning project can range from a spontaneous pat on the back to a planned school-community recognition assembly. It is important to note that it is not the reward that is being celebrated but the learning acquired, the friendships made, and the caring that was enacted. Celebrations offer participants the opportunity to reflect on the project, celebrate its completion, and motivate others to join in future projects. The celebration builds citizen spirit.

Successful Service Learning Projects

The knowledge students gain from participating in community service activities can help them integrate their academic and intellectual growth with personal development. Real-world experiences introduce students to civic involvement and lay a foundation for lifelong public responsibility and community service. The development of such an ethic serves the students as well as the general community.

School-based community service projects may include semester-long or year-long activities that address a local, state, or global need. Recycling, environmental improvement, or community service causes may actively address both curricular and societal issues. The development and selection of service learning activities will vary with the age of the participants, cultural diversity of the school, and established goals and outcomes for the particular content area for which the service learning project is designed.

Principles of service learning promulgated by Wingspread (1988) emphasize that the projects must not only address a societal need but also must be developed within an academic context. The goals must be reciprocal and agreed upon by the students involved in the project and by those to whom they are providing the service. Some examples include:

- Middle school students in a health class produced an AIDS videotape commercial to inform their classmates and other local youth about the dangers of AIDS.
- Students in a high school business education program provided services to a variety of individuals who needed clerical assistance—school personnel, low-income residents, and residents of a nearby senior citizen complex.
- As part of a brainstorming activity in a science instructional unit, three sixth grade classes decided to save a portion of the world's rainforests. They saved their snack money and "bought" three acres of rainforest.
- Fifth and sixth grade students made bowls as part of an art project and then taught second graders to make bowls. Working together, the three classes then sponsored a soup supper for teachers and other citizens at which the children's bowls were auctioned. The proceeds were donated to a local charity.
- A high school sponsored a schoolwide service event, where students collected canned goods for the aging, money for a day care center for homeless children, and toys for a children's program, and found sponsors for foster children.
- Students in an interdisciplinary high school course on technology and research partnerships conducted research on authentic problems for private corporations and government agencies. Students were taught how to use state-of-the-art technology and scientific methods to solve the actual problems they were given.
- Students in a mid-size community recognized that many of the international students and professionals who came to work and live in the community were not able to purchase foods or items from their native cultures. After interviewing the members of the international community, the students were able to identify the items that were important to the diets of the international community. The students then took the list to local supermarket managers and asked if the store could stock these items.
- A ninth grade English class studied Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The main character, Atticus Finch, said "You never really know a man until you walk in his shoes." The students then collected all sorts of used shoes, boots, sandals, etc. and wrote an essay for each type of person who might have worn such a pair. The essays were slid inside each shoe that had been refurbished and donated it to charity.

• Students in an English as Second Language classroom interacted with handicapped pupils housed in their school building. They did not need verbal and written skills to teach the handicapped students self-help skills and how to play board games, to engage in physical activities, or to fix and feed them snacks. The ESOL students felt needed and wanted and at the same time were helping integrate the handicapped students into the larger student body. ~B

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Obstacles to the Effective Teaching Of Writing: A 20-Year Follow-Up

By Ronnie D. Carter

Has the effective teaching of writing changed for the better, remained much the same, or become worse in the last 20 years? Have the major obstacles to the effective teaching of writing been removed? This 20-year follow-up examines the question.

Why can't high school teachers effectively teach students how to write? When I asked that question 20 years ago, high school English teachers from a six-county area of east central Indiana gave a variety of reasons, from inadequate teacher training and lack of support from teachers in other disciplines; through indifference of administrators in charge; to large class size; to poor student preparation in grammar, sentence sense, and punctuation.

Ten years ago I conducted a follow-up study of the same 16 high schools to learn whether the major obstacles to the effective teaching of writing had been removed. Alas, despite 10 years of research, publication, discussion, additional inservice training, and practice, the problem areas remained much the same. To be sure, there were some gains, but the overall rate of "progress" in student writing quality could be labeled extremely modest.

The modest gains included microscopically better training for a few new teachers, slightly reduced class size (from 27 to 25 students in the average writing class), and more support from administrators. Teachers in other disciplines were just as indifferent to student writing problems and equally resistant to accepting accountability for assigning and grading written exercises.

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Note: The original survey of 1976 was published in the NASSP Bulletin in October 1997; the 10-year follow-up of 1986 was published in the October 1987 issue.