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Introduction to Service-Learning

Augsburg College

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INTRODUCTION TO SERVICE-LEARNING

**Information for Education students making a
difference in our community.**

EDU 265

EDU 210

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SERVICE-LEARNING
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INTRODUCTION TO SERVICE-LEARNING

A healthy society requires that its members help and care for one another, that they accept some measure of personal responsibility for the welfare of others in their community. The idea is not new. Yet it is crucial for the health of our modern society and world, as it was for the first gatherings of humans into extended families and woodland tribes. But because an idea is old and honored does not insure it's being practiced. The most fundamental of our values must, like freedom itself, be nurtured, affirmed, and won again. There is virtually no limit to what young people can do, no social need they cannot at least do something about. What youth can do is limited more by social and political convention than by capacity, energy, or willingness. In the volunteer sector of the community we see young people working on their own or with adults to alleviate social hurts and to eliminate their causes. Here we often see organizations, administrators, teachers and youth workers who acknowledge the capacity of youth to make strong contributions and play responsible roles, and who understand that their school's or agency's goals can better be met by engaging young people in real challenges of life rather than by confining them to passive dependency. In their worldview, a social studies student or scout or 4H'er not only listens, sits, and obeys, but also questions, acts and helps make the rules. We have a stake in young people believing they have power to change the world and being motivated to do so out of a deepened love and concern for others. We have a stake in their developing and testing their skills for effective citizen participation, and having the chance to act on their humanitarian ideals. We have a stake in the agencies that serve and involve youth making central to their mission the formation and practice of the skills and values that will assure our survival in the 21st century. In short, we have a stake in a strengthened service ethic in our society.

Dan Conrad and Diane Hedin, Youth Service. A Guidebook for Developing and Operating Effective Programs, Independent Sector, 1987.

WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-Learning is a method by which young people learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully-organized service experiences.

- *that meet community needs;
- *that are coordinated in collaboration with the school and community;
- *that are integrated into academic curriculum;
- *that provide structured time for a person to think, talk and write about what he/she did and saw during the actual service activity;
- *that provide young people with opportunities to use newly acquired academic skills and knowledge in real life situations in their communities;
- *that enhance what is taught in the school by extending student learning beyond the classroom;
- *and that help to foster the development of a sense of caring for others.

The Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform, May, 1993

**COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING
AT
AUGSBURG COLLEGE**

Augsburg's Service-Learning program combines responding to human needs in the community with an understanding of social issues and educational growth. Augsburg students learn from and about the community and society in which they live by participating in direct service activities that are integrated into departmental courses and connected to course concepts. Through direct service such as volunteering at a homeless shelter, tutoring in neighborhood schools, or designing a computer data base system for a non-profit organization, students engage in a dynamic and interactive educational approach which involves reciprocal learning between the student and the community. Often times, service activities in community organizations can lead to a longer and sustained commitment that goes beyond the hours required for a course. Doing a service-learning internship for academic credit is an available next step.

Service-Learning Programs and Activities include:

FYE CITY SERVICE PROJECTS

All first-year students participate in a community service project as part of Freshman orientation in order to learn about the city of Minneapolis and as a way to help students understand Augsburg's motto, "Education for Service." Students work in groups of 15 with a faculty member and a student orientation leader. Service sites include: homeless shelters, nursing homes, schools and a variety of other community organizations.

COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHOLARS

The Scholar program is designed to foster and support student leaders in service as well as strengthen our commitment to community partnerships. Two incoming freshman and ten Augsburg students each year are chosen as Community Service Scholars and receive a \$2,000 scholarship to act as liaisons to 12 community organizations in Minneapolis. These students work to strengthen partnerships between the college and core sites of the Community Service-Learning Program.

TUTORING PROGRAM

Each year, two hundred Augsburg students tutor children and adults at public schools, learning centers and neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis.

Tutor Partner sites include: Benjamin Banneker School, Cooper Elementary, Hiawatha Elementary, Brian Coyle Community Center, Franklin Learning Center, Seward Montessori School, English Learning Center, Cedar Riverside Community School, Four Winds School, Franklin Middle School.

THE LINK

The Link is a student-run organization of the Augsburg Student Senate and works in cooperation with the Augsburg Community Service-Learning Program. The purpose being to "LINK" Augsburg students with community projects. Projects include: neighborhood Halloween and Christmas events, one day service projects for students, volunteers for a women's and children's program close to campus and an alternative Community Service Spring Break trip for Augsburg students. Over 100 students participate in LINK activities each year.

RESIDENCE HALLS

All Residence Assistants arrange at least one community service project for their floors each semester as part of a series of programs to enhance student life at Augsburg.

For more information regarding community service programs and activities at Augsburg College, please call Mary Laurel True, Coordinator of Community Service-Learning, 330-1775.

Integrating Service-Learning into Teacher Education
Joseph A. Erickson and Mary Ann Bayless,
Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Introduction

Over the past five years many colleges and universities have engaged in attempts to integrate service-learning (SL) into their teacher education (TE) curriculums (e.g., Olszewski & Bussler, 1993; Toole, Gomez & Allum, 1992). Integration of SL into TE implies work in two areas: 1) using service-learning as a pedagogical technique in the higher education setting, and 2) teaching post-secondary teachers-in-training to integrate SL into their repertoire of teaching techniques for use with K-12 students. Each of these spheres has some unique issues for the teacher educator. This article will attempt to highlight some of the critical issues we have encountered as we have attempted to accomplish both of these goals during the past three years at Augsburg College. In addition, we will review the particular integration model we have proposed. While this model may not be fit at some other institutions, it may set certain parameters in order to begin planning for SL integration at your institution.

Part I: Integrating Service-Learning into the Teacher Education Program at Augsburg College: One Model

Core Beliefs

In developing our model, we have attempted to clarify a set of core beliefs about SL. Here are several quotes which convey these core beliefs:

“... student learning and development through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet real...(school)...needs and that are coordinated in collaboration with the school...The service-learning is integrated into the students' academic curriculum...” (Kielsmeyer, 1990).

“To be defined as a legitimate instructional technique, service-learning must deliver a rigorous academic experience for students. Service-learning always incorporates reflection on the service activity and its application to the content domain under investigation. Exemplary service-learning must also incorporate opportunities for the development of higher-order thinking skills, e.g., decision making, problem-solving, interpersonal skill building, cooperation, etc.

Service-learning, among other things that we have learned, and which form the backbone of emerging definitions of “service-learning,” is the critical importance of “synergy” and mutual “power sharing.” Service-learning is minimally a three-legged stool in which the interests and needs of the community, the student, and the academic institution must be balanced. Each entity must be given and must take an equitable responsibility for the service and learning” (Hesser, 1994, p. 5).

“The unique combination of service and learning in the service-learning approach gives learners a unique opportunity to “do good” and at the same time realize more effective cognitive retention of important academic concepts” (Erickson, 1994).

We also endeavour to abide by the *Ten Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning* (Hounet & Paulsen, 1989). These core beliefs form the nucleus of this model for infusing service-learning into the TE program at Augsburg College.

While we believe it is imperative that individuals licensed to be K-12 teachers through our TE programs should have the competency to pursue such learning activities in their classrooms, the difficulty lies in reaching this goal when our curricula have little or no room for including additional content elements or course credits. The following model proposes a structure for accomplishing the task of producing beginning level teachers who can utilize the methodology of service-learning without proposing additional coursework.

Model

Phase I: Exposure The initial fieldwork experience for students in both the elementary and secondary education programs is in our introductory course, **Orientation to Education in an Urban Setting** (see Figure 1 for a graphic representation of the model). This class reviews American educational history and philosophy as well as involves students in a brief fieldwork practicum. Students are typically involved in a minimum of 30 hours of work in an elementary, middle school or secondary classroom. It is during this first course that Phase I of the model can take place. This phase includes a six-step process:

- Step 1: A class assignment requiring students to write down their personal needs/goals for the experience.
- Step 2: A class assignment requiring students to discuss and identify in writing the ways in which the classroom teacher to which he/she is assigned wants to use him/her.
- Step 3: Class discussion (small group) of how students can reconcile their personal needs/goals and fulfill teacher expectations.
- Step 4: Ongoing reflection in the form of individual journaling, group and or class reflections during the semester.
- Step 5: Final class discussion reflection on the benefits and effects of involvement.
- Step 6: Identification of this as a service-learning methodology and direct instruction on service-learning.

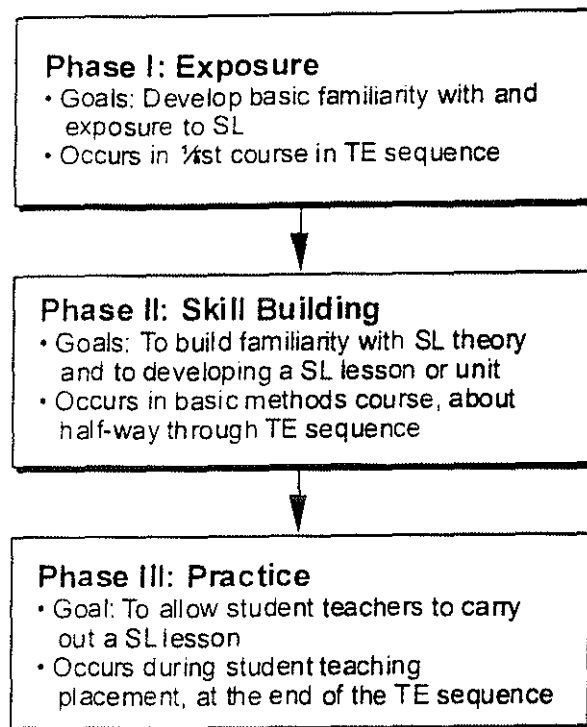


Figure 1: Model for Developing SL Knowledge Base and Methodology in Pre-service Teacher Education Students

Phase II: Skill Building will take place in Creating Learning Environments (CLE), our basic methods course. It is in this course that we introduce and practice teaching methods and strategies. This phase involves more direct instruction about service-learning as a teaching and learning methodology and requires some personal application of various approaches. (An excellent video tape entitled *Service-Learning: Transforming Education* (Spies, 1995) reviews key SL concepts and illustrates SL in K-12 school settings.) Students in CLE typically engage in a second fieldwork placement at this time, and it is in this fieldwork placement that they must carry out their application of teaching methods. These projects would typically be very short lessons, which can make full implementation of a SL project very difficult.

Phase III: Practice will occur during the student teaching or internship experience. Students would be required to design and implement a service-learning experience with their K-12 students (as appropriate) and/or be involved in service-learning at the student teaching site. Of course, written reflection, interaction with the supervisor, and small group reflection are also part of Phase III.

Phase I of this model for infusion has been designed and was implemented in the spring semester, 1995. The other phases will be implemented during the 1995-96 school year. This work requires the involvement of those individuals who teach these classes and best understand how to produce effective learning experiences within the parameters of those courses.

Evaluation activities administered by our Community Service-Learning Office are distributed at the end of each course in which SL is offered. These surveys are promptly tabulated and returned to each instructor within several weeks of the end of the course. Several critical issues are examined: appropriateness of the community sites, success of SL activities used in this course (e.g., appropriate training and orientation, adequate reflection activities). The community SL coordinator initiates several review sessions with interested faculty in order to analyze the aggregate findings from these surveys. These meetings also afford faculty the opportunity to compare experiences and share solutions to common problems.

Part II: Roadblocks to Successful Implementation

What are the Factors We Face?: When we attempt to integrate SL into a school program, we are most likely engaging in a substantial attempt at institutional change. This change has the potential to impact many areas of the school environment (Toole, et al., 1992). There are multiple issues to consider when planning a program of implementing change in schools. One list includes the following concerns:

1. Different social and cultural milieus;
2. Different school organizational structures;
3. Age and background of student population;
4. Pedagogic demands of students and teachers;
5. Curricular requirements;
6. Multiplicity of learning tasks;
7. Lack of consensus about the best teaching methods and learning strategies;
8. Lack of economic resources; and
9. Institutional inertia to change (Sancho Gil, 1994).

While there are many bibliographic resources which can help in clarifying these issues and making the case for inclusion of SL in a school's curriculum (see e.g., Batchelder & Root, 1994; Cohen & Kimsey, 1994; Furco, 1994; Council of Chief State School Officers, 1994; Covey, 1994; *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 1993, Vol. 26; Jones, 1992; Howard, 1993; Kendall & Associates, 1990), any one of these issues alone can sink one's well-intentioned plans. In this regard, we can only recommend bringing as large a group together as you can to develop some broad ownership for the problem. This community-building process is slow (it has taken us 3 years just to get this far) and not particularly efficient, but it protects you from being a "lone ranger" with an agenda who can be easily marginalized and outflanked by shallow critics.

GUIDE TO SERVICE-LEARNING SITES AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

BEFORE YOUR FIRST VISIT

Select a school or community organization from the list provided.

- Select a school or structure that you're interested in.(Magnet, Montessori, Etc.)
- If you have any questions, call Merrie Benasutti or the contact person at the site.
- Select a site that is convenient for you. (The Education dept. requires that at least 30 hours of field work must be completed in an urban setting, and while this may not be convenient for everyone, it is necessary.)
- Select an organization or school that has hours that work for you.

Call the contact person.

- Give your name, say that you are an Augsburg student, give the name of the class for which you are doing this service component.
- Ask what times during the day/evening/weekend are available for you to work.
- Let the contact person know the number of hours that you can work at the site.
- Let the contact person know what you will need in terms of information for your class.

Set a time for a first visit.

- Schedule an appointment to work well in advance of the actual work date.
- Confirm the service site address and ask for directions if you need them.
- If you are unable to work, call the site supervisor/teacher and give as much lead-time as possible (a minimum of 24 hours is necessary). The school/worksites depends on you to show up and do the agreed upon work.

AT THE SITE

- Arrive on time and be prepared to work.
- When in doubt about what you are to do, how to do it, or why to do it, ask the site supervisor/teacher directly for clarification.
- Fill out the the "Community Service Assignment Time Record" each time you go to your community site/school and have your site supervisor/teacher sign the signature sheet each time before you leave the site.
- Make sure to schedule the time and date of your next work activity before you leave.

AFTER YOU LEAVE FOR THE DAY

- Make entries in your journal as soon as possible after completing your work on a given day. The sooner you make your entries after completing your work the more vivid and accurate your memories will be.

GENERAL ADVICE

- If any concerns emerge about the quality of of your work experience and/or the supervision you receive, contact Merrie Benasutti at 330-1208 or call your instructor and discuss the matter with either or both of them.
- While you are at the school or learning center, you are a representative of Augsburg College. Remember this and act accordingly.
- Do not give your home phone number or address to students at the school or learning center.
- Keep confidential information confidential. This rule holds true while you are at the school or learning center and afterwards when discussing site activities in class or with friends.

AT THE END OF THE COURSE

- Arrange to give copies of any papers or reports that you produce about the service experience to your site supervisor/teacher. They are very interested to know what you discovered or concluded as a result of your work.
- Thank your site supervisor either in person or in writing.

SERVICE-LEARNING CONTRACT

Name of Organization: _____

Site Supervisor Name: _____

Student's Name: _____

I. STUDENT

Below, please describe three learning goals for your work at this organization. These should relate to the course goals provided by your instructor and to your own personal experience and development.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

II. SITE SUPERVISOR

Below, please describe the work that the student will be doing while at your site.

The student agrees to make at least ____ visits to the site before _____ (date) and to accumulate a minimum of ____ hours at the site.

The site supervisor agrees to be available when the student is at the site and to have work activities planned in advance for the student.

(student signature)

(site supervisor signature)

(date)

Community Service Assignment

Time Record

Name: _____

Agency: _____ Supervisor: _____

Course: _____ Semester: _____

| Date | Time IN/OUT | # of Hours | What did you do? | Supervisor signature |
|------|-------------|------------|------------------|----------------------|
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For more information regarding Community Service at Augsburg College, please call the Community Service-Learning Program at (612) 330-1775.

SERVICE-LEARNING JOURNALS

Keeping a journal is a way for you to think critically about what you are doing and what you are learning from it. A variety of journal writing structures are used at Augsburg. Some professors collect journals weekly; some never at all. Some professors write comments in journals; others do not. Some require a journal entry for each site visit; others also tie journal assignments to classroom reading, discussions, etc. What they all have in common is a goal for you to learn. The following are some general tips that should apply to any journaling assignment.

TOP TEN JOURNALING TIPS

1. Who, What, Why, Where and How? Try to answer these questions in each entry.
2. Professors look for evidence that you're relating your experience to what you're learning in class. Give plenty of examples.
3. Professors are looking for what you're learning. Let them know.
4. Be specific.
5. Stay on the topic.
6. Write about how you would do things differently. This is very impressive.
7. Write about what questions you have. This demonstrates that you're thinking about the experience even though you might not feel you're learning.
8. Don't procrastinate. Journal when the experience is fresh in your mind.
9. Type your entries. They're easier to read.
10. Use spell check. Some professors count mechanical accuracy as part of your grade.