Leadership Training and Service Learning

Ronald G. Billingsley
University of Colorado Boulder

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceslgen

Part of the Service Learning Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceslgen/102

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Service Learning at DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Service Learning, General by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.
Leadership Training and Service Learning

by

Ronald G. Billingsley
Department of English
University of Colorado at Boulder

For the past twenty years the University of Colorado at Boulder has offered a leadership training program called The Presidents Leadership Class (PLC) which uses service learning as a fundamental strategy for developing leadership values and skills. Training in PLC is focused around an eight-point vision of ideal leadership characteristics and central to that vision is the belief that leaders should conceive of their actions as they relate to the broader good in society; they should participate in community service activities and forums. The goal is to shape self-concept in ways that make service to one's community seem like a natural activity. Thus, in PLC service is a basic objective and experientially based service learning is a fundamental part of the pedagogy. For the purposes of this discussion I will use PLC as an example of some of the ways in which service learning can benefit leadership development.

Over the years service learning has been practiced by thousands of students around the world and as one might suspect there is a fairly substantial body of literature that supports the value of this type of experiential education (Cairn and Cairn, Delve and Mintz, McPherson, Parson, Stanton, Wingspread). The benefits of service learning are manifold. At the most obvious level it provides a free labor source to the local community. However, from the perspective of leadership training perhaps the greatest value of service learning rests on its ability to inculcate civic values through active involvement in the community. William Sullivan writes lucidly about the way in which civic involvement can shape individual experience.

Awareness of the interdependency of citizens and groups is basic to the civic vision because it enlightens and challenges these disparate parties about their mutual relations. The citizen comes to know who he is by understanding the web of social relations surrounding him. This realization is not only cognitive, it requires experience, finding one's way about and thus coming to know, in practice, who one is.

However, it is important to see that the civic tradition does not simply romanticize public participation. The dangers of misguided, fanatical, and irresponsible civic involvement have been well documented, and some of the most eloquent warnings of those dangers have come from the classical theorists of citizenship. The point, rather, is that the notion of involved concern within an interdependent community provides the image for a collective enterprise in self-transformation. The civic ideal is thus alluring and disquieting, at once delicately fragile and morally consuming in the responsibility it demands. (pp. 158-159)

Sullivan's point that involved concern, i.e., service to an interdependent community provides the basis for self-transformation identifies much of what service learning can offer to leadership trainees. In PLCs experience, the commitment to service seems to enable students to...
know themselves more fully in terms of mutual relationships and mutual responsibilities. Self can be experienced more as membership in an interdependent web of social relations.

I. The Vision

The PLC curriculum is organized around the eight points of its vision statement: (1) Service to the Broader Good, (2) Recognizing and Working with Interconnectedness, (3) Empowering Others, (4) Bias Toward Action, (5) Open-mindedness, (6) Ethical Behavior, (7) Balancing Reason, and (8) Intuition, and Inspiring a Shared Vision.

Service

While all eight points are important, service is especially pivotal because it provides a grid upon which the curriculum is structured. The other seven goals of the curriculum are mediated through service learning and thus it provides a sustained environment that emphasizes service as a fundamental part of life.

Interconnectedness

A commitment to service can shape experience and character in a number of specific ways. Sullivan’s remarks above give a sense of the potential for interconnectedness that resides in service. The cultivation of a sense of mutual relations is congruent with the PLC vision and is consistently experienced by people who participate in group-oriented service activities. For college students an added bonus is often the ability to build bridges between the academic community and the city that surrounds the campus. Activities such as: an Informational Slide Show for the County Humane Society, a Recycling Awareness Program with Metro Area High Schools, an Environmental Awareness Program for Grade School Children, and Pre-collegiate Development Work with a local school district are examples of activities that have served to give PLC students a sense of integration and to bring them into meaningful contact with local citizens.

It would be misleading to suggest that these service learning activities, in which people from seemingly different spheres of life are brought together, take place without conflict or effort. Clearly it is not that simple. Nevertheless, these types of exchanges can be especially valuable because they have the potential to contribute greatly to the development of civic values and civic skills. Robert MacArthur points out that experiential programs are particularly well-suited to train students in those process skills which underlie democratic functions skills related to the individual’s participation in groups; and skills such as problem-solving, forms of decision-making, and conflict resolution (p. 213).

A recent service activity enabled PLC to bring at-risk junior high school students together with elderly people from a local retirement facility. The elderly sought companionship and people to provide a variety of simple services. The junior high school students sought the companionship, concerned guidance, and the academic assistance of mature individuals. PLC scholars were able to connect the two groups and join them in a semester-long process in which values, knowledge, skills and affection were shared to the benefit of all concerned. It took a considerable amount of effort to bring the three parties together and to facilitate their work. But the final results were gratifying to all concerned especially because a sense of interconnectedness was established between groups that would ordinarily never have contact and who in the past had seen each other as strangers.

Empowerment

As students gain in skills related to participation in groups they often develop a sense of their own possibilities to excel and contribute. The student, as leader, has a chance to learn that she can be a resource
in the world and not just a passive spectator of community affairs.

Through service to the community the student leader frequently experiences
a new sense of identity as she starts to feel herself nurturing and sus-
taining the community that has nurtured and sustained her. She senses that
she is building what Robert Bellah calls the heritage of trust that is
essential for functional community (p. 3). And she comes to understand
that others, given the chance, can become empowered and contribute
just as she has.

Robert Greenleaf describes the servant leader as one who develops a
sense of identity in which he does not see himself as superior, but rather
as one among equals. His job is not so much to do things for his fol-
lowers, but rather with them; he serves as a catalyst or facilitator,
helping them to learn how to do things for themselves. So the growth of
empowerment through service activities can flow in two directions. Both
the individual and the entire community can become energized and
empowered. Similarly, Max DePree has defined leadership as liberating
people to do what is required of them in the most effective and humane way
possible. And indeed, this growing ability to relate to people in
ways that liberate them so that they can work more effectively is one of
the most gratifying parts of service work. Every Spring PLC brings to-
gether 100 high school students from around the state of Colorado to
participate in a weekend leadership conference. The students who attend
the conference report that they really feel as if they are being taken se-
riously by the conference facilitators, who are also students although
of college age. It is especially gratifying to have conference
participants express the belief that they have gained new ideas and a
sense of future possibilities.

In many ways this mutually beneficial process of empowerment through
service learning was best conceived by Kurt Hahn, the legendary founder
of the Outward Bound movement. Hahn believed very profoundly in the
efficacy of community service. As headmaster of Gordonstoun in the 1930s
he encouraged his students to engage in a wide range of service to the
local community (James, p. 44). Hahn saw service as a way to enrich the
lives of both the giver and the receiver. H.L. Brereton, Hahn's Director
of Studies at Gordonstoun, reports that Hahn followed what he called the
Platonic view of education:

The Platonic view, believes that any nation is a slovenly
guardian of its own interest if it does not do all it can
to make the individual citizen discover his own powers.
And it further believes that the individual becomes a
cripple from his or her own point of view if he or she is
not qualified by education to serve the community. (James, p.42)

Hahn's words embody the ideal that service learning offers an
educational experience that enables people to experience life in ways that
are mutually empowering.

Bias toward action

One aspect of service learning that is particularly exhilarating is its
assumption of impending action. We need to do something and we need to do
it immediately. A curriculum that includes service learning has a built-in
bias toward action and usually conveys that sense of readiness to move.
Students come to think of themselves as doers and they learn that
education can be a very active process.

In PLC, each semester students have one or more service learning
activities. The expectation of moving into meaningful action is always
present and students are encouraged to fashion their own ideas about the
best way to help others in the community.

Open-Mindedness
Students quickly discover that the process of helping others is often a delicate act which requires a variety of skills. Perhaps most importantly, it requires an attitude of empathy and openness to the perspectives and methods of other people. In recent years the emergence of multicultural and gender issues has highlighted our past failures at being open to one another and the necessity of cultivating a new sense of receptiveness to other values and strategies. For the leader it seems critically important to be open to solutions from diverse elements of the community you are attempting to serve.

So many times the problems a leader faces are enormously complex. The simple willingness to be open to that complexity and to entertain a wide range of inputs can be critical to success. For example, our nation has struggled with the issue of air pollution for many years now. When we start to look for an answer the great complexity of the situation begins to emerge. Is air pollution essentially an engineering problem? Is it an economic problem, a political problem, an ethical problem? The answer is all of the above and more. Where do we look for solutions?

In commenting on some of the qualities essential for effective leadership Heifitz and Sinder (1988) insist that it is especially important for leaders to realize that most significant civic issues are often complicated and do not lend themselves to simple solutions that can be provided by a single public-servant who is called the leader. In situations where the group’s values are unclear, the shapes of problems are indistinct, and solutions have yet to be fashioned, success requires shifting the primary locus of work back to the group. (p.194) The servant leader must be open to the range of possibilities that can come from her constituents and capable of inspiring such contributions. The fostering of openness to the contributions of others is one of the principle values of service learning for leaders.

**Ethics**

One of the great advantages of service learning is that its emphasis on direct experience often forces students to deal with complexity and paradox. Specifically, the advantages of openness can be experienced while one is simultaneously confronted with the need for some type of foundation of agreed-upon values that offer a bedrock for the structure of the community. While we recognize that the individual exercise of ethics can be inordinately complex and difficult, in the civic realm of service learning ethics can perhaps best be viewed as the ability to move beyond narrow self-interest, in order to recognize one’s moral obligation to sustain the community and to treat all other members of that community as equals. Such an ethical perspective does not bar openness to individual differences but it does require the development of a sense of values that recognizes the need to yield to common principles that will sustain civic order.

Parker Palmer argues for the necessity to sustain public life and reminds us that in the ethical domain the only limitation on self-interest is other-interest, the sense that we are members of one another for better and for worse (p. 37). The ability to perceive other-interest is a moral achievement and rests on a sense of the self which is enlarged to include other members of the community. PLC believes that such an ethical realization is vital for good leadership and that it can be successfully pursued, at least in part, by giving students the privilege of engaging in service learning.

**Balance between Reason and Intuition**

The academic world is largely based on a belief in the primacy of rationalism and empiricism. In combination these values have given the university and the state great wealth and powerful technologies. Yet rationalism does not represent the abilities or needs of the whole person and a good education will surely try to develop all of the resources of the individual. Service learning activities can be carefully planned and meticulously executed, but invariably they demand resources of emotion,
intuition, and spiritual insight to be fully realized. The experience of self as part of an interconnected community rests finally on a kind of awareness that is beyond the purely rational and empirical. Scholarship by writers such as Carol Gilligan, who speaks of knowing as a process of human relationship (p. 173) and Mary Belenky, who affirms connected knowing (pp. 100-130), have made us aware of our capacity to operate on levels that are beyond the instrumental and the purely rational. Service learning brings us into direct contact with a range of diverse people and problems that challenge us on many levels. Such challenges demand that we bring a whole response to our problems. We are obligated to acknowledge and cultivate all of our capacities, both the rational and the intuitive, if we are to find healthy solutions.

**Vision**

Almost every book on leadership takes time to explore the significance of vision. In discussing their national survey of successful leaders Bennis and Nanus reported:

> All of the leaders to whom we spoke seemed to have been masters at selecting, synthesizing, and articulating an appropriate vision of the future. (p. 101)

It may be that the most important function of a leader is to provide vision, i.e., to articulate and model the goals and beliefs of the organization that she represents. Such modeling, by teachers and other members of the organization, seems to be much more important than any specific activity that is scheduled. In this regard, PLC, and similar organizations that bring service learning to higher education, can be particularly valuable because they can envision the ideal of service and then demand that both the leader of the group that is being served and the students model that vision. Service learning requires enactment of constructive civic participation within the academy (Schultz, p. 210). The sustained presentation of a vision of service to others provides an ideal model of identity and can draw forth the emotional and spiritual resources of the young to meet that standard.

**II. The Practice**

Ideally, service learning is a win/win phenomenon which simultaneously serves and uses the local community. In serving the community organizations like PLC are able to secure an educational framework that supports a variety of teaching approaches and that allows for the development of numerous complementary skills. PLC is especially concerned that its students experience a learning methodology that is problem and issue oriented, because in the world beyond the classroom, leadership is consistently a problem solving activity that requires sustained initiative. Service learning projects are invariably focused around specific problems that need to be solved and they also often require an appreciation of interdisciplinary perspectives and a sensitivity to multicultural, gender, and age factors.

Recent service projects conducted with residents from the inner-city of Denver drew PLC students into an experiential learning situation that addressed a specific community problem (deteriorating infrastructure) but which also required the utilization of many of the skills that PLC thinks are essential for effective leaders. In addition to researching the situation before going to the site, students found that they were challenged to exercise their skills in facilitating group processes, conflict resolution and negotiation strategies, interdisciplinary thinking, basic teaching methods, effective speaking, and effective listening.

Following the practice of Kurt Hahn and most Outward Bound Programs, PLC has also found that small group organizational structures are particularly good at inspiring individual initiative while simultaneously teaching people to cooperatively solve their problems. Throughout the two-
year PLC curriculum, students are organized into small recitation groups of ten members. Much of the learning activity takes place in these groups which function as a sort of miniature society where the values, methodologies, and skill objectives of the program can be discussed and practiced.

Hahn saw small groups as a way to develop the natural leadership abilities he thought were present in most people, but were suppressed by the dependency, passivity and bureaucratic impersonality of modern life. Such groups place heavy social pressures on individual initiative, yet at the same time they require it absolutely. Small groups require tremendous amounts of energy to reach the consensus necessary to meet objectives. In a wilderness environment, effective group dynamics are paramount to survival; they rank in importance with technical skills. Natural leaders emerge when the group must solve real problems instead of playing games with an unnatural reward system. A genuine community begins to appear on a small scale at least the possibility is there. (James, 44)

Although most PLC small group activities do not take place in a wilderness environment, experience has shown that small group organizational structures in other settings can produce the results Hahn describes and are compatible with most of PLC's learning goals and methodologies. The small ten-person group also lends itself well to the execution of service activities. In pursuit of the values discussed above the PLC four-semester curriculum (students take one class each semester with PLC during their freshman and sophomore years) requires at least one service activity each semester. Although all four semesters strive to cover the eight objectives of the leadership vision statement (Service to the Broader Good, Empowering Others, Ethical Behavior, Open-mindedness, Bias Toward Action, Balancing Reason and Intuition, Recognizing and Working with Interconnectedness, Inspiring a Shared Vision), each syllabus has a thematic focus and service learning activities conform to the basic emphasis of that particular semester.

**PRLC 1810 - Ethical Leadership:** Fall Semester - Freshman
In this foundation course, students are introduced to fundamental principles of leadership and ethics. Special emphasis is given to the application of the principles for self-development and organizational effectiveness.

**Service Learning Activity**
*The Group Project* - The group project is conducted by each ten-person recitation group to provide a semester-long experiential supplement to the recitation. Specific objectives are, to increase communication and trust between members of the group, to develop leadership skills, to increase awareness of ethical concepts and to provide community involvement and service. At the end of the semester each recitation group conducts a presentation to the entire PLC community on their selected activity and its outcomes. Past group projects have included recycling drives, development of a slide show for the Boulder County Humane Society, trail-building in the national parks, bringing together at-risk junior high students and elderly citizens for mutually...
beneficial communal activities.

**PRLC 1820 - Community Issues in Leadership:** Spring Semester - Freshman
This course explores major community issues such as drug abuse, poverty, decline of infrastructure, care of the aged, etc. Particular attention is given to the development of effective leadership responses to community difficulties which occur at university, city, and state levels.

*Service Learning Activity*

*The Urban Experience* - This program is designed to provide scholars with a service activity that will increase awareness of various urban and social issues, as well as encouraging an appreciation of different cultures, environments, and value systems. The specific activity is designed in consultation with the host community and usually involves working together with local people to improve important physical facilities, such as school grounds, recreational centers, etc. within the community.

*The Colorado Leadership Conference* - Each recitation group designs and implements a workshop on leadership skills and values for a weekend conference attended by 100 sophomore and junior high school students from throughout Colorado. All of the workshops are highly interactive and participatory in nature. PLC scholars are trained in presentation skills and rehearse their workshops several times before delivery at the final program. Successful workshops allow the scholars to demonstrate/teach what they have learned about a specific area of leadership. The workshops focus on such topics as: serving the school or a larger community, instilling a bias toward action, effective communication strategies, developing a personal vision, and empowering one’s self and others. The conference provides an opportunity for PLC students to serve a variety of students from around the state and to simultaneously demonstrate the ability of young people to fashion and deliver meaningful contributions to their communities.

**PRLC 2810 - Global Issues in Leadership:** Fall Semester - Sophomore
This course examines the challenges to leadership posed by global problems. Issues in the areas of human rights, hunger, disease, large-scale collective violence, and environmental deterioration are explored with a special emphasis on effective, long-term leadership strategies.

*Service Learning Activity*

*One-Day High School Leadership Service Project* - PLC Scholars go to a local school district and put on half-day leadership workshop. Emphasis is placed on commitment to the values of service and the development of skills that can facilitate the creation of useful service projects.

*Model UN* - PLC Sophomores put on a model UN for the benefit of the entire PLC community in order to provide information and insight on the major global issues studied during the semester.

**PRLC 2820 - Multi-Level Issues in Leadership:** Spring Semester - Sophomore
Multi-level issues that originate in organizational settings but carry community and global implications are studied. Students are encouraged to explore the complexity and interrelatedness of issues with a special emphasis on leadership and ethical implications.

**Service Learning Activity**

_The Walkabout (Internship)_ - Each PLC scholar designs for herself an internship experience where she will provide service to some private or public agency in the local community. The Walkabout lasts for approximately 14 weeks and involves 12-15 hours of service each week. In addition to providing service, the Walkabout is an excellent opportunity for scholars to experience first-hand vocational areas of interest. Service through the Walkabout includes activities such as: working as a nursing assistant in an emergency Center, serving as a Victim’s Rights Advocate in the Criminal Justice System, working as assistant state manager for the Denver Center Theatre Company, working as an aide for a State Representative, assisting with the Planned Parenthood Program, the Colorado Outward Bound School, The Peoples Clinic, serving as assistant to the Curator at the Denver Museum of Natural History, etc. The Walkabout internships are quite varied but each provides an opportunity for service learning and, in particular, a chance to study leadership values and practices in a variety of settings beyond the confines of the university.

In PLC most service learning activities are structured through a Learning Contract. For both individual and group projects students are asked to very consciously think through what they hope to achieve with their service learning activity. A learning contract that is negotiated between the PLC scholar, the academic director of PLC, the recitation leader, and the on-site supervisor, where one is required, helps to provide clear focus and to ensure commitment and follow-through.

The PLC learning contract is a three-part document that requires the student to clearly articulate:
1. Their learning goals,
2. The methodology they will use to achieve those goals, and
3. The evaluation criteria that will enable an unbiased outside observer to confirm that the learning goals have been met.

The reader is encouraged to examine the sample learning contract provided in the appendix.

The purposes of the learning contract are manifold. Obviously the contract helps to ensure that the service activity is fulfilled. But, from an educational standpoint, of even greater importance is the fact that the contract encourages the student to take control of her own learning. The learning contract is a specific tool that helps to establish the idea that students are responsible for shaping their own education for the rest of their lives and that they are fully capable of doing so! Additionally, contract-based, experiential learning respects the
individuality of each scholar by recognizing and responding to the fact that all learners are unique and have their own learning styles, purposes, and potential. Contract learning takes advantage of the fact that people tend to learn most quickly and powerfully when they are immediately interested and see utility; i.e., the scholar's own questions are usually the most compelling. Also, the problem-oriented nature of service learning imposes a kind of pragmatic emphasis on learning which encourages students to seek a variety of disciplinary strategies to get the job done. This openness to interdisciplinary approaches and to experimentation encourages students to be creative. They learn that it is safe to trust their own learning styles and to try a variety of approaches to learning. When the learning contract is used to support service learning in the proper way it facilitates the experiential cycle of learning that Kolb has described, i.e., it attempts to engage the learner's capacity to learn from concrete experience and active experimentation, as well as from reflection, observation, and abstract conceptualization. By encouraging student participation in the goals and methods of the learning activity contract learning stimulates initiative and responsibility. It encourages the natural development of research interest and skills and encourages students to become more resourceful and self-reliant.

Lest it appear that PLC regards the learning contract as a perfect educational instrument, it should be emphasized that it is viewed as simply one of a multitude of pedagogical tools that can be employed to facilitate service learning. Like any tool it can be used sensitively and effectively or it can be employed rigidly and ineptly. No tool is exclusive of the intelligence that employs it. In particular the learning contract should be administered with flexibility so that students can be supported and guided by it but not restrained from shifting to new goals, new analytical strategies, and assessment methods in the middle of a learning project when the dynamic realities of life warrant such a change. Much of the potential of the learning contract is realized during the negotiation process that takes place between the student and the instructor. It is during this process that the student can be guided to fully explore his deepest learning aspirations and helped to experience the range of possibilities that exist for structuring and measuring learning. The PLC emphasis on journal writing and other strategies of introspection is often a fundamental part of the contract learning process and help to focus students on philosophical questions which are related to their central inquiry. Issues such as the very ontology of learning and the legitimacy of attempting to measure it in objective ways inevitably emerge and contribute to an enlarged understanding. Similarly, as the service learning activity develops, the process of close supervision and sometimes re-negotiation of the learning contract provides additional opportunities for reflection and insight.

When properly employed the learning contract teaches students the advantage of organizing learning around specific plans and methodologies, but it also reveals the limitations of a highly structured approach. Above all, it encourages students to take responsibility for rigorously pursuing their own education. Students gain enormously when they learn that they can be the authors of their own education and that they have the power to
make meaningful contributions to their society. One of the mottoes in PLC is:

To create a generation of young people who see problems that they can solve.

The Colorado Leadership Conference that PLC students put on in the Spring semester of their Freshman year exemplifies the effectiveness of service learning. The conference is designed, produced, and executed by the students. The students do it with very little professional supervision. They demonstrate to themselves and to the community of high school students that they are serving that they can help one another and the larger community in creative and valuable ways. The conference provides contacts with students from all over the state offering a connection with many strangers who are subsequently experienced as partners and friends in a new and enlarged, statewide community.

Service learning guided by clear ideals and sensitively administered is an extremely valuable educational strategy. It can yield rich rewards for the promotion of leadership qualities based on a development of identity that is enlarged, humane and ethical, and it can contribute to a host of other educational objectives. It demonstrates the feasibility of learning institutions enhancing civic values within their own organizations while simultaneously reaching out to unite with the communities that surround them.

References

APPENDIX

Summary Learning Contract for The Group Project
Bridging the Generation Gaps

Objectives
Sadly, society often ignores or isolates two of its most important age groups from each other: the young and the old. Children are the foundation for the future while the elderly are a warehouse of life’s knowledge. Both of these groups can mutually profit through better contacts; they can learn from the other’s unique perspectives while gaining companionship and a sense of belonging. We, a group of PLC scholars, wish to help bridge the gap between these two very different age groups and establish an affiliation with them ourselves.

Specifically, we want to help students who are prone to academic failure and senior citizens who are isolated from the community by bringing the two groups together. To accomplish this task we wish to involve twenty retirees from the Sunset Retirement Home with twenty high risk students from Washington Junior High and ten PLC scholars in interactive activities. The varying backgrounds of the participants will allow for an exchange of knowledge between members of the three groups that will benefit each individual concerned. Furthermore, all parties involved will benefit through:

1. An increased feeling of appreciation for each member of the other group.
2. Emphasis on the importance of experiential education and the ability of individuals to make a difference in the community.
3. Providing participants with a clearer perspective of other generations.
4. Providing companionship, an alternative environment, and fun for all three groups.
5. Generating a sense of personal achievement and satisfaction.

Methodology
To accomplish the aforementioned objectives we will:

1. Facilitate an introductory exchange of letters between the elderly and the students.
2. Initiate a meeting between all participants and engage everyone in a series of informal introductions and interviews.
3. Arrange weekly visits between participants so that game playing,
socializing and reading to those who need it can be performed.
4. Arrange weekly tutoring in academic subjects by elderly citizens who
   are capable of providing help to the junior high students.
5. Conduct a Halloween party; involving Pumpkin painting/carving, etc. for
   all participants.
6. Conduct a Scavenger hunt for Sunset retirees with entertaining skits.
7. Host a Thanksgiving skits/talent show with closing activities.
8. Introduce a long term effort to preserve the accomplishments made in
   the program. All participants will be urged to remain in touch with
   each other during the closing ceremonies and through a series of
   follow-up visits and phone calls.

**Evaluation of the Project**
1. PLC group members will grade each other on a standard grading scale
   based upon both quantity and quality of participation in the project.
2. Each PLC scholar will be responsible for interviewing two junior high
   students and two elderly participants to check for effectiveness in
   terms of specific criteria such as: strength of affiliation, level of
   interest, amount of learning, derived enjoyment, and suggestions for
   improvements.
3. Follow-up interviews of participants will be conducted to check for
   strengths and weaknesses of the program and to determine possibilities
   for improvement and continuation of the project.
4. The project activities will be monitored and evaluated by the
   recitation leader, the academic director of the program, the junior
   high teacher and the director of the retirement center.
5. PLC students will write a summary of the project describing what they
   have learned. The writing will describe the specific project activities
   and provide an analysis of their strengths and shortcomings while
   outlining suggestions for improvement.
6. An oral presentation on the project will be given to the entire PLC
   community. The presentation will cover the types and relative success
   of various activities. It will also discuss what we as individuals and
   as a group learned about leadership and service.