Building Students’ Civic and Moral Responsibility and Assessing Outcomes through Service Learning

2016 Gulf-South Summit on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement through Higher Education

Savanah, GA
April 14, 2016
Agenda

- Overview of Service Learning
- Introduction of Assessment Grant Project
- Assessment Process and Tools
- Sample Service Learning Projects
- Service Learning Course Development Activity
- Resources
- Questions and Answers
RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- Enrolls 8,500 students each semester of which 3,800 are part-time
- Enrolls 18,300 students in non-credit courses, including customized training, workforce development, allied health, professional development & youth programs
- Provides more than 70 associate degree and certificate programs
RVCC Service Learning and Community Engagement Participation

Annual Program Participation:

- 1,000 students perform community service
- 85 faculty offer service learning
- 80 courses from all academic disciplines
- 250 community organizations
- 30,000 hours of service provided to community
- $800,000 donated as economic equivalent to community
Evidence of College’s Success and Resulting Value to Community

- **2014 President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll “With Distinction” for General Community Service and Education.** Among 766 applicants named to the Honor Roll, RVCC was one of just 121 higher education institutions in the U.S. to be recognized “With Distinction” in the category of General Community Service and one of only 22 institutions in the category of Education. RVCC also was the only community college in the country, and the only college in New Jersey, to receive the designations in both categories.

- **2006 - 2014 President’s Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction** for eight consecutive years.

- **2015 Carnegie Re-Classification for Community Engagement and 2008 Carnegie Classification** awarded by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Websites: Presidents Community Service Honor Roll: [www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/honor-roll](http://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/honor-roll)

Why is Service Learning Important?

- National movement to increase success/completion rates
- Research validates that student engagement increases student success
- Increases likelihood of continuing involvement in school and community affairs
- Addresses multiple learning styles
- Provides exploration of a career goal and/or academic major
- Enhances resumes and transfer applications
- Develops job contacts for future employment
- Creates realistic ideas about the world of work
- Helps develop occupational skills gained from practical experience
- Offers satisfaction in doing something worthwhile
- Fosters good leadership skills and instills sense of civic responsibility
What is Service Learning?

Service Learning integrates community service with academic instruction, while focusing on reflective thinking and civic responsibility.

Sample Reflection Activities:
- Journals
- Essays
- Reflective papers
- Group discussions
- In-class presentations
- Video and power point presentations
- Web pages
- Scrapbooks
- Portfolios
- Self-evaluation or program evaluation
- One-on-one conference with teachers or classmates
Service Learning Enforces Core Learning Objectives

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Diversity & Multicultural Understanding
- Critical Thinking
- Problem Solving
- Information Literacy
- Civic and Social Responsibility
Courses Offering Service Learning

- Introductory level
- Capstone
- Leadership
- Honors
- Majors
- Independent Study
- Teacher Education
- Developmental
- Internships
- Study Abroad

Completion/success

Exposure to community issues

Career exploration

Employment

Networking
Sample Issues and Populations

Community Issues Addressed:
- Literacy
- Homelessness and Hunger
- Legal Aid/Law
- Mental Health
- Child Care
- English as a Second Language
- Cross-Cultural Understanding
- Physically Challenged

Populations Served:
- Children, youth, and families
- Elderly
- Immigrants
- Incarcerated
- International
- Low-income
- Disabled
- Homeless
Community Organizations Served

- Food banks and soup kitchens, meals-on-wheels programs
- Senior citizen centers, assisted living facilities and adult day programs
- Nursing homes, hospitals and clinics
- Churches, synagogues, mosques, temples
- Youth-serving organizations (YMCA, Scouts)
- Libraries, community centers and civic organizations
- Day care centers and pre-schools
- K-12 schools and after-school programs
- Domestic Violence, homeless and animal shelters
- Police and Fire stations and rescue squads
- Correctional Facilities, probation departments and divisions in court houses
- Nature conservancies, farms, watersheds and wildlife refuges
- Disability centers, veterans programs and women’s organizations
- National and international organizations
Service Learning Activities

- Tutoring and mentoring young children - **English, Math, Spanish and Psychology courses**
- Developing marketing plans and working on fundraising events - **Business courses**
- Designing brochures and flyers, developing social media messages, assisting with events for agencies - **Communication courses**
- Providing assistance at food banks, blood drives and hospitals - **Nursing and Science courses**
- Helping children and seniors learn about computers or developing web pages - **Computer courses**
- Assisting non-profits with video/photo documentaries of agency history and special topics - **Video and Photography courses**
- Assisting in police departments, probation offices and correctional facilities - **Criminal Justice courses**
- Researching the local history of a town and creating displays at libraries - **History courses**
Service Learning Activities

- Organizing food drives and pet adoptions - Philosophy and Sociology courses
- Providing nutritional plans and implementing low-impact cardiovascular exercise programs - Nutrition and Fitness courses
- Tackling issues on recycling and reuse, stream clean-ups, rainforest protection, endangered plant species conservation, land and open space preservation - Environmental Studies courses
- Helping in areas of low-income housing, family law, consumer protection, mediation and tax preparation - Accounting and Paralegal courses
- Assisting with health office screenings: heights, weights, BMI, vision and auditory, and learn the day to day operations of a school health office - Medical Assisting courses
Service Learning Activities

- Assisting elderly or disabled with physical care and recreational activities - Physical and Occupation Therapy courses
- Delivering mini talks to young children explaining the Zodiac constellations and the planets - Astronomy courses
- Writing oral histories of local immigrant groups - English as a Second Language courses
- Assisting with creating designs of small in-house improvement projects, determining drainage areas and calculation storm water runoff, estimating construction costs - Engineering course
- Designing a hands-on mini-workshop teaching middle-school students topics relevant to water quality and storm water runoff - Chemistry courses
- Leading writing workshops for children or helping seniors write an autobiography - English Composition courses
- Giving art appreciation talks to seniors - Art Appreciation courses
- Offering bi-lingual story-hours at libraries - Modern Language courses
- Engaging preschoolers in storytelling and reading aloud to raise their reading and confidence levels - Developmental English courses
- Participating in campus lectures or athletic events and sharing findings through social media - First-Year Experience courses
Teagle Foundation Grant Project

**Title:** “Student Learning for Civic Capacity: Stimulating Moral, Ethical, and Civic Engagement for Learning that Lasts.”

**Overview:** Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) in Branchburg is one of five community colleges nationally that has been awarded a Service Learning grant from the New York-based Teagle Foundation. The three-year, $8,500 annual grant to each college will enable five community colleges to work together to assess students learning outcomes from their service learning projects.

**Big Question:** “How do we build our commitment to civic and moral responsibility for diverse, equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities?”

**Participating Colleges:** Raritan Valley Community College, Delgado Community College, Kingsborough Community College, Queensborough Community College, Mesa Community College, Kapi’olani Community College
Assessment Questions

As part of your service learning reflection essay, please address all of the following questions:

- **Statement of the Issue/Activities:** Identify the issue you focused on and explain how it relates to diversity, equity, health or sustainability. Describe the activities you engaged in that addressed this issue. Discuss the impact your activities had on the issue.

- **Academic/Applied Learning:** Describe 3-5 central course concepts or theories that engaged you and deepened your understanding of the issue you focused on. Describe how you applied them in your activities. Explain how your activities deepened your understanding of these course concepts or theories.

- **Change:** Explain how your coursework and activities have shaped your personal, academic and/or career goals. Explain how you have come to see yourself as an agent of change as a result of your coursework and activities.

- **Moral and Civic Engagement:** As an informed individual and citizen, discuss the issue you focused on as a problem. What elements of unfairness or injustice does the problem have? Do you believe more people should care about the problem? Why or why not? As an informed individual and citizen, discuss possible solutions to the problem.
Commitment/Action: From the list below, select three actions and discuss in detail the actions you will take to reduce the impact of the problem.

1. Support people in my family and my friends who are affected by the problem.
2. Take another course to gain a new perspective on the problem.
3. Join, start, or lead a campus student group working on the problem.
4. Serve at a community-based organization working on the problem.
5. Convene a dialog with policy-makers working on the problem.
6. Advocate with public officials and legislators who work on the problem.
7. Fund-raise to support non-profit organizations working on the problem.
8. Complete a degree

Title Page: Include your name, course and service learning site and the number of hours completed. This must be on the last page of the document!
Statement of the Issue/Activities: Identify the issue you focused on and explain how it relates to diversity, equity, health or sustainability. Describe the activities you engaged in that addressed this issue. Discuss the impact your activities had on the issue.

Academic/Applied Learning: Describe 3 - 5 central course concepts or theories that engaged you and deepened your understanding of the issue you focused on. Describe how you applied them in your activities. Explain how your activities deepened your understanding of these course concepts or theories.

Change: Explain how your coursework and activities have shaped your personal, academic and/or career goals. Explain how you have come to see yourself as an agent of change as a result of your coursework and activities.

Moral and Civic Engagement: As an informed individual and citizen, discuss the issue you focused on as a problem. What elements of unfairness or injustice does the problem have? Do you believe more people should care about the problem? Why or why not? As an informed individual and citizen, discuss possible solutions to the problem.

Commitment/Action: From the list below, select three actions and discuss in detail the actions you will take to reduce the impact of the problem.

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<th>Prompt / Level</th>
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<th>1</th>
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<td>Vaguely identifies the issue. Vaguely defines diversity, equity, health or sustainability. Vaguely explains the relationship between the issue to diversity, equity, health or sustainability. Briefly describes at least one specific activity that addressed the issue. Briefly explains some impact the activity had on the issue.</td>
<td>Does not meet level one</td>
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<td>Briefly or superficially identifies the issue. Briefly or superficially defines diversity, equity, health or sustainability. Briefly or superficially explains the relationship between the issue to diversity, equity, health or sustainability. Briefly describes specific activities (at least two separate/different activities or at least two instances of one continuous activity) that addressed the issue. Briefly explains general impacts those activities had on the issue.</td>
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<td>Identifies the issue with some depth. Defines diversity, equity, health or sustainability. Generally explains the relationship between the issue to diversity, equity, health or sustainability. Clearly describes specific activities (at least three separate/different activities or three instances of one continuous activity) done by the writer that addressed the issue. Clearly explains general impacts those activities had on the issue.</td>
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<td>Identifies the issue with depth. Defines diversity, equity, health or sustainability. Specifically explains the relationship between the issue to diversity, equity, health or sustainability. Clearly describes specific activities (at least three separate/different activities or three instances of one continuous activity) done by the writer that addressed the issue. Clearly explains general impacts those activities had on the issue.</td>
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*Here is an example of the former: descriptions of tutoring second-language students, organizing a diversity campus event, and re-building an ancient Hawaiian rock wall. Here is an example of the latter: descriptions of at least three relevant second-language tutoring sessions.*
RVCC Teagle Project Courses

- Foundations of Education
- Foundations of Early Childhood Education
- Principles of Marketing
- Business Administration
- Enactus
- Introduction to Environmental Studies
- Environmental Science & Sustainability
- Trends in Nursing
- Student Nurses Association

Education 5 - 12
Early Childhood Education P-4
Business & Public Service
Business & Public Service
Business Club
Environmental Science
Environmental Science
Health Science Education
Health Science Education Club
RVCC Assessment Project Outcomes

Purpose:
- To learn about and document the impact of service learning on student learning.
- To demonstrate the value of service learning toward student learning.
- To use data driven information for continuously improving the service learning pedagogy.
- To demonstrate the rigor of this teaching method among colleagues.

Lessons Learned from Assessment:
- Helped educators respond to students’ questions of why they need to be involved in this type of learning.
- Taught students to consider the larger questions that lie outside boundaries of classroom work.
- Assisted faculty with improving the quality of student learning.
- Improved community partner understanding about students’ learning experience to help them better evaluate their work.
- Facilitated students’ reflection on their service learning experiences.
- Contributed to the growth and development of service learning courses.
Other Assessments of Student Learning

- **Reflection Activities**
  Examines subject matter through journals, essays, group discussions, role playing, power point presentations

- **Student Surveys**
  Identifies learner outcomes on personal, social and academic experiences

- **Open Letters**
  Offers feedback from students, faculty and community members

- **Agency Feedback Survey**
  Provides information on student performance

- **Community Advisory Board**
  Provides guidance and oversight for project
Improving Student Learning Outcomes with Service Learning

American Association of Community Colleges reveals that:

- Students who participate in service learning score higher on institutional learning outcomes such as critical thinking, communication, civic responsibility, academic development, and educational success.

- Students saw themselves as more competitive in the job market than those who did not have service learning experience.

- 85% of these students believed that service learning should be practiced in more courses at their colleges, and 87% would encourage other students to take courses that offer service learning.

The entire text of the research brief may be found at www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/aaccprograms/horizons/Documents/slorb_jan2010.pdf
Course Design

Step 1

- Begin by deciding what connections you would like to make between the service experience and the academic content of their courses.
- Consider a broad range of course objectives such as service that is related to teaching about values, multiculturalism, diversity, civic literacy or special topics i.e., emergency preparedness, that are included in their course syllabi.
- Identify the types of service that are appropriate for the course. How frequently? What duration?

Step 2

- Require reflection activities i.e., essays, journals, power points, etc.
- Determine the points during the term when you will assess learning and how credit will be given.
- Consider the learning outcomes: What do you want students to know as a result of taking the service learning course? What desired learning outcomes are best achieved through service learning? What new awareness do you want students to gain?
- Include in the syllabus a definition of and rationale for service learning, information about the service assignment and course expectations.
- Decide how you will evaluate how well students have learned from their experience.
Sample Course Design

- **Introduction to Chemistry course:** The students in this course take and analyze water samples from the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. At the same time, they’re studying the periodic table. That interaction brings the table alive as they study the chemicals that cause the pollution. The results are reported to an organization that uses the information to improve the ecological health of the Bay.

- **Desired learning outcome:** Identify the causes of pollution in Chesapeake Bay.

- **How it was achieved:** Students worked with a conservation organization and took water samples from the Bay, analyzed them, and added them to the organization’s database. That organization then used the information to help them lobby for additional funding to preserve the Bay.

Excerpted from Service Learning Course design: What Faculty Need to Know.
Sample Course Design and Grading

Trends in Nursing:

Course Description: Trends in Nursing is designed to examine historical perspectives, philosophical, ethical and legal aspects of nursing practice, contemporary issues facing nursing, and the influence of societal trends on nursing practice and the health care delivery system. These major areas are considered within the context of the global community and the macro and micro society.

Service Learning student objectives:

- Synthesize assessment findings from a current trend in nursing in the development of a community dissemination plan for the project.
- Design a plan for dissemination of information on a current trend based on aspects of growth and development which affect learning and prepare final products.

Grading Criteria:

- 25% - Quality of written material; presentation outline (to include detailed explanation of project); library searches, journal articles and internet material and current APA reference list.
- 25% - Dissemination of information
- 50% - Quality of class presentation (content expertise and clear/creative delivery)
Lori Moog
Director of Service Learning and Community Outreach
Lori.Moog@raritanval.edu
908.526.1200 x 8284