

Putting the “Learning” Back In Service Learning for First-Year Students

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PUTTING THE “LEARNING” BACK IN SERVICE LEARNING FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

Poll - Who is in the audience today?

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PUTTING THE “LEARNING” BACK IN SERVICE LEARNING
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After participating in this webcast, you will be able to **customize service-learning programs to first-year students** on your campus.

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Taking a look at the research...

**WHY IS SERVICE LEARNING IMPORTANT
FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS?**

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**High Impact Practices:
What we know about first-year students**

2009 NSSE Data:

- Men were less likely than women to participate in a high impact practice (44% to 55%)
- 1 in 5 students frequently came to class unprepared
- 40% of first year students never discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class

2008 NSSE Data:

- 70% of first year students NEVER engaged in service-learning
- 50% NEVER talked to faculty outside of class

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High Impact Educational Practices: Six Conditions

- Time on task
- Faculty & peer interaction
- Interaction with diversity
- Frequent feedback
- Connection with learning and real world
- Coherent, academically-challenging curriculum

(Chamberlain, 2009)

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High Impact Educational Practices

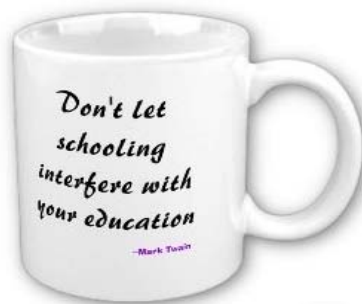
1. First-Year Seminars
2. Learning Communities
3. Service-Learning
4. Common Intellectual Experiences
5. Writing-Intensive Courses
6. Collaborative Projects
7. Undergraduate Research
8. Diversity/Global Learning
9. Internships
10. Capstone Courses

LEAP, AAC&U (2007)

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**Education cannot be limited to
the activity of “schooling.”**



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**CREATING STUDENT LEARNING
OUTCOMES FOR SERVICE LEARNING**

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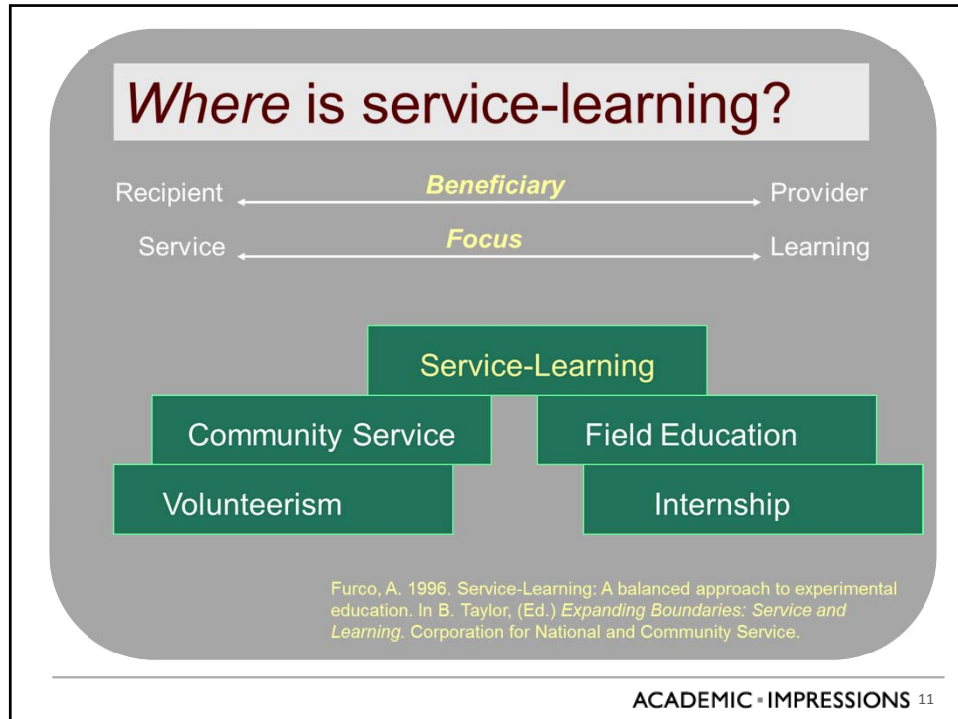
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Service-learning is a form of experiential education characterized by all of the following...

- student participation in an ***organized*** service activity
- participation in service activities ***connected*** to specific learning outcomes
- participation in service activities that meet ***identified*** community needs
- ***structured time*** for student reflection and connection of the service experience to learning

(Abes, Jackson & Jones, 2002)

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Key Themes in Service-Learning

- Collaboration with the community (reciprocity)
- Importance of reflection
- Active learning (meaningful work)
- Development of a sense of caring
- Promotion of a sense of civic responsibility
- Ameliorate societal problems

(O’Grady, 2000)

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Outcomes of Service-Learning

- “Transformative potential”
- Ability to connect subject matter with “real-life” experience: *experiential learning*
- Personal development, critical thinking, sensitivity to diversity, and development of citizenship

(Eyler and Giles, 1999; Jones, 2002)

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Handout - Program Characteristics as Predictors of Service-Learning Outcomes

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Design matters!

Think carefully about learning outcomes and objectives for service-learning course/program:

Outcomes: *evidence showing the degree to which goals are attained and appropriate skills and competencies are achieved*

Learning Objectives: *description of the skills and competencies learners should achieve as a result of the course/program. They define the standards or criteria by which learning will be measured.*

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Sample course objectives

As a result of participation in the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of social, cultural, and economic environment in Latin America/Honduras through development of web page(s).
2. In collaboration with community partners and with background information provided through the course, develop project ideas to be implemented during the in-country experience.

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**ADAPTING LEARNING OUTCOMES TO
MEET FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS’ NEEDS**

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**Service-Learning in the First-Year Experience:
What is “up” with first-year students?**

- Higher work loads
- More out of class time on task
- Theoretical and analytical thinking expectations
- Less-personalized student-teacher relationships
- Decrease in self-confidence



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First-Year Experience in Brief

Defined by AAC&U and LEAP Initiative as:

“First-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis.”

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First-Year Experience in Brief

“The highest quality FYE place a strong emphasis on:

- critical inquiry,
- frequent writing,
- information literacy,
- collaborative learning; and
- skills that develop students’ intellectual and practical competencies.”

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Outcomes of First-Year Experience

- Higher graduation rates
- Higher persistence rates
- Short-term positive effect on grade point average
- Gains in commitment to social justice / multicultural awareness
- Greater academic and campus engagement
- Greater faculty and peer interaction

(Swaner & Brownell, 2008)

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Sample learning objectives for First-Year Experience Programs

Portland State - “ROADS to Success”

- Learn effective study strategies
- Improve critical and creative thinking skills
- Learn how to access your resources at PSU

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**Sample Learning Objectives for
First-Year Experience Programs**

George Mason University

- to develop a network of supportive peers, upper-class students, faculty and staff;
- to critically evaluate information, both in and out of the classroom in order to make valid, sound decisions on your own;
- to achieve your maximum academic potential

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**INTEGRATING SERVICE LEARNING
INTO FIRST YEAR PROGRAMS**

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Incorporate Best Practices for the First-Year Experience

- Institutional commitment
- In and out of classroom learning
- Student-Academic affairs partnership
- Balance challenge and support
- Inclusive and supportive climate
- Systematic Assessment
- Dignity and respect for first year students
- Faculty involvement
- Students are responsible for success
- High expectations

(Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Assoc, 2005)

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Design matters!

- High quality placements matching students’ interests and developmental readiness
- Application/Connection between course subject matter and issues raised by service experience
- Structured reflection in the form of writing and discussion
- Diverse life experiences, view points, and ways of knowing are integral to design
- Presence and validation of the wisdom of community voice

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Program design

- Start with your learning outcomes
- Add value to the institution and first-year programs
- Understand the limitations of projects that last a single quarter or semester

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Collaborate with faculty and staff:

- Connect with others on campus engaged in service-learning or community-based teaching and learning initiatives
- Explore existing university support systems
- Where are long-term partnerships already in place?

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**Choose service sites appropriate for
first-year students**

- Organizations with infrastructure for supervision and mentoring for students
- Organizations with a history of short-term project success (mutual benefit)
- Organizations with large amount of flexibility in scheduling

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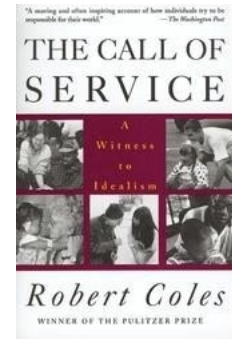
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Create strong community partnerships.

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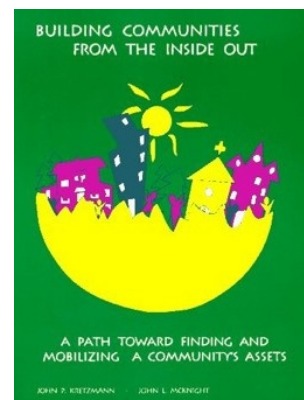
**Begins and ends
with the community...**



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- Our language informs what we know and believe to be possible- our orientation to the world and to the work.
- An “Asset” approach, is critical to community partnerships.



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A **focus** on the **assets** of the partners in service-learning works **against** the power of misinformation and negative stereotypes that undermine relationships.

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Reciprocity as the goal

“...what affects me affects the wider community, and what affects the wider community affects me. The consequences are indistinguishable.”

~J. Saltmarsh (1998)

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Characteristics of Good Partnerships

1. Time
2. Fit
3. Attention to Power Dynamics
4. Communication
5. Acknowledging Expertise
6. Evaluation and Assessment...but done differently!!!

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Create meaningful assignments

- Start with student learning outcomes
- Provide structured reflective assignments and discussion

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Sample assignments

- California State University-Chico: Town Halls at Chico State- English 100 doing research presented at town hall meeting with community
- Philanthropy project
- Guided Journal Assignments

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COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE MODEL FOR SERVICE LEARNING IN THE FIRST YEAR

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Use High Impact Educational Practices



1. First-Year Seminars
2. Learning Communities
3. Service-Learning
4. Common Intellectual Experiences
5. Writing-Intensive Courses
6. Collaborative Projects
7. Undergraduate Research
8. Diversity/Global Learning
9. Internships
10. Capstone Courses

LEAP, AAC&U (2007)

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High Impact Practices: Why they matter

First-Year	Learning Communities	Service-Learning
Deep Learning Outcome	***	***
Self-Reported General Education Gains	**	**
Self-Reported Personal Gains	**	**
Self-Reported Practical Gains	**	**
Level of Academic Challenge	**	**
Active and Collaborative Learning	***	***
Student-Faculty Interaction	***	***
Supportive Campus Environment	**	**

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Kuh, G. (2008)

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Learning Communities

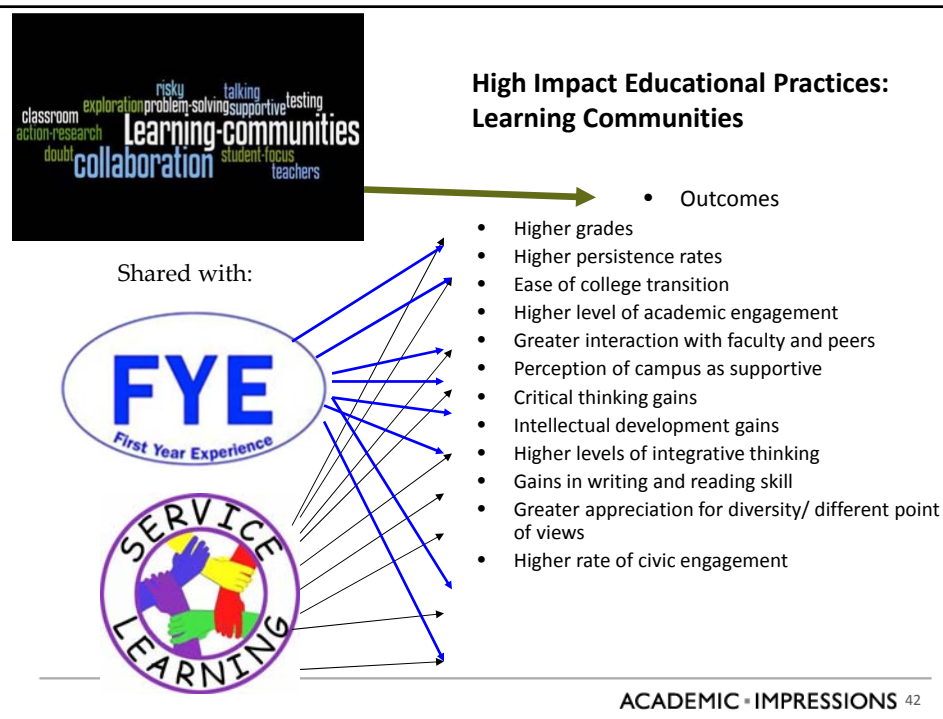
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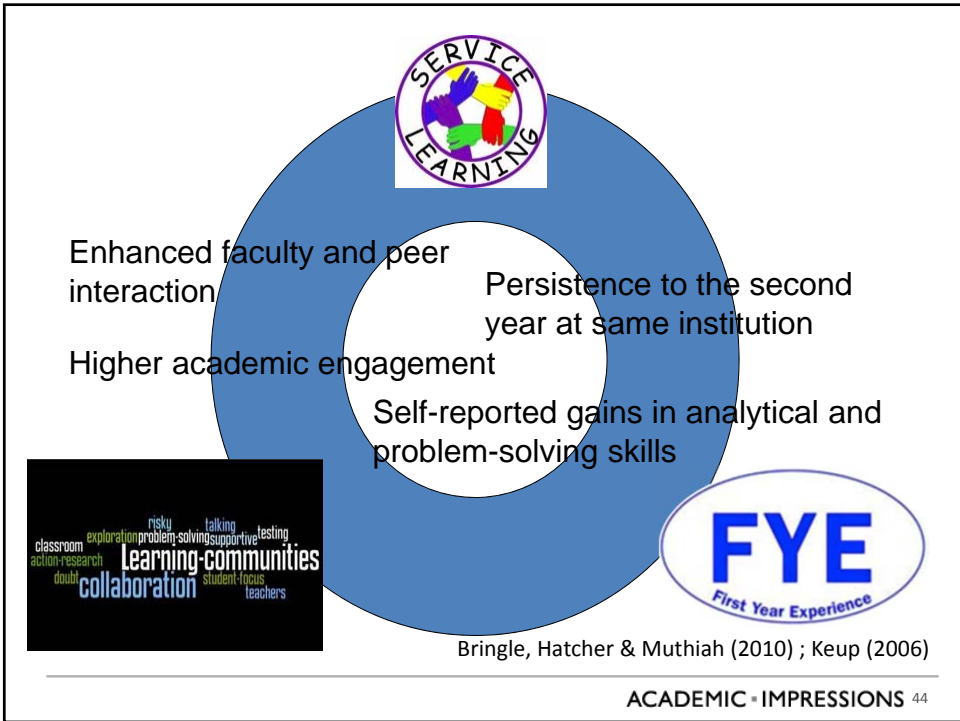
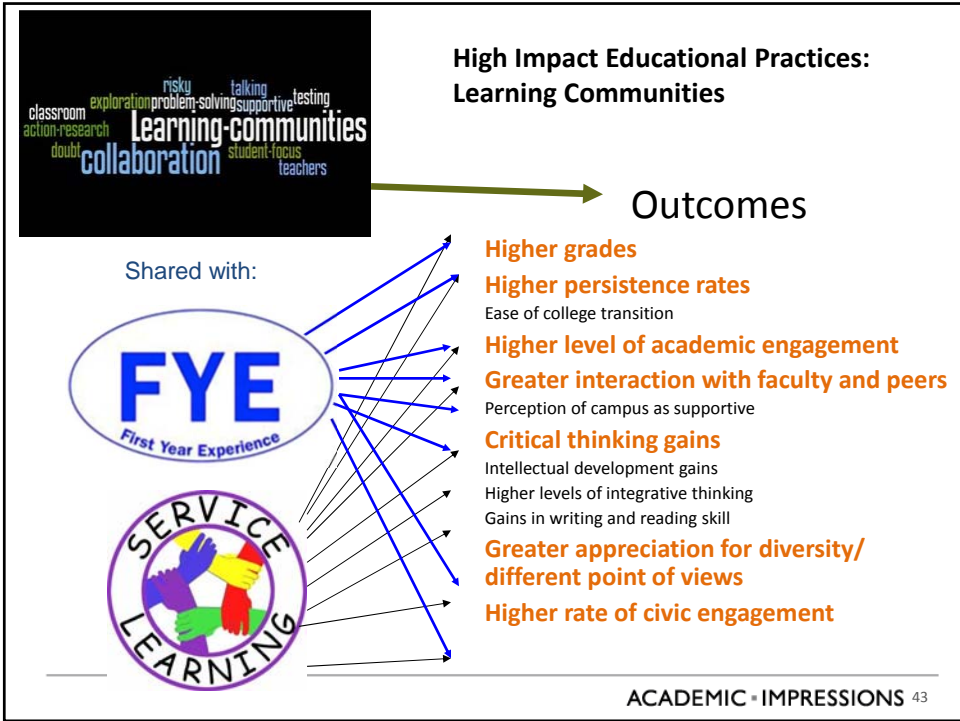
- Integration of learning across courses and involve students in “big questions” beyond the classroom.

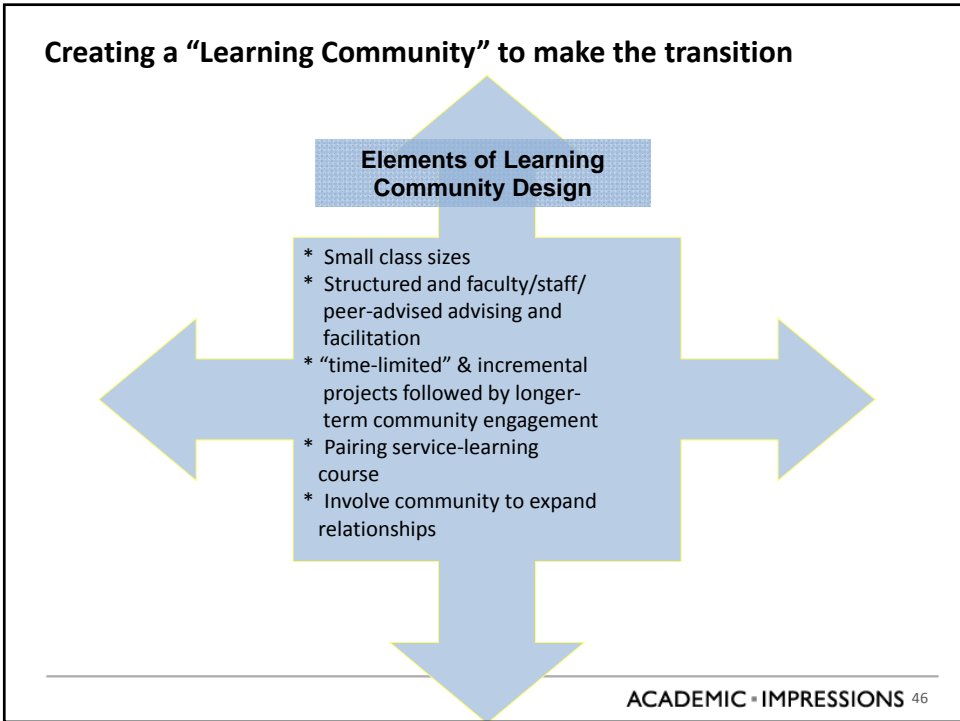
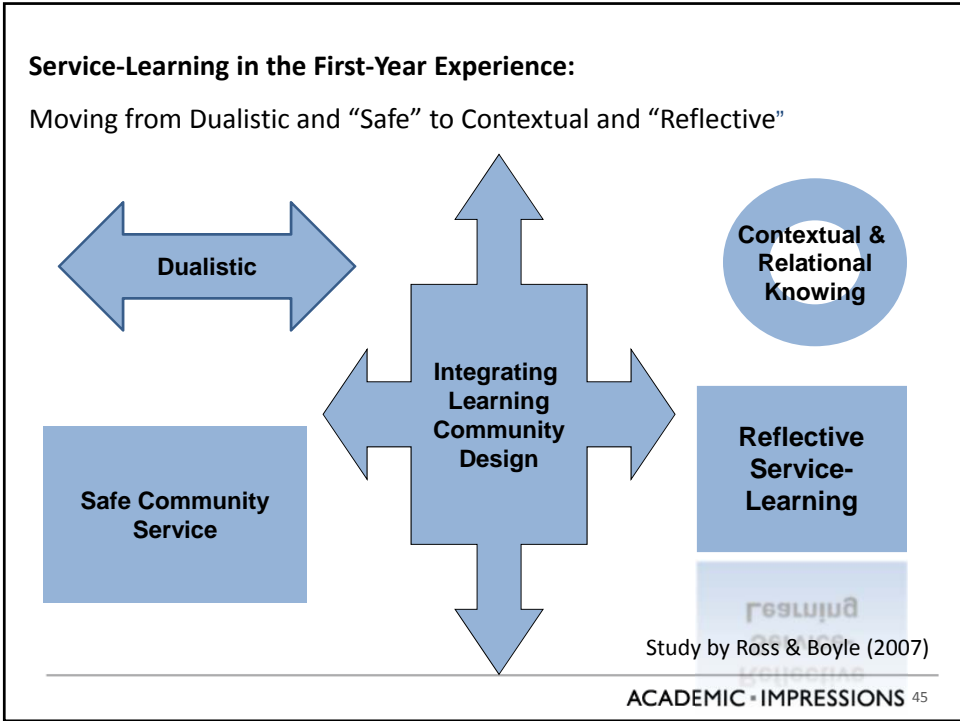
Characteristics:

- Integrative course or discussion group (64%)
- Related to academic major (54%)
- Required out of class activities (46%)
- Courses closed to LC students (44%)
- Assignments integrate material (42%)
- Undergraduate peer advisors (42%)
- Majority of courses in LC (33%)
- Residential (18%)

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**SOME IDEAS ABOUT PUTTING
THEORY INTO PRACTICE**

HikingArtist.com

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**Service-learning in the First-Year Experience:
A Learning Community Approach**

- * Small class sizes
- * Structured and faculty, staff / peer advising & facilitation
- * “time-limited” & incremental projects followed by longer-term community engagement
- * Pairing service-learning courses
- * Involve community to expand relationships



**From “community service” in FYE to “co-
curricular service-learning”**

- Transitioning from large group “community plunge” events to groups formed by residence, course, interest group.
- Pairing upper class peer mentor and/or faculty-staff with smaller FYE group
- Connecting “community service” event with content of course to be taken in fall semester
- Pairing smaller group with community mentor or liaison
- Year-long co-curricular engagement in smaller group with community org/member

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**Service-learning in the First-Year Experience:
A Learning Community Approach**

- * Small class sizes
- * Structured and faculty, staff / peer advising & facilitation
- * “time-limited” & incremental projects followed by longer-term community engagement
- * Pairing service-learning courses
- * Involve community to expand relationships



**A residentially-based FYE with a
“service-learning” track**

- Pairing upper class peer mentor sand/or faculty-staff mentors with smaller FYE group
- Welcome week activities with introduction to community opportunities from which to build year-long relationships
- Pairing floors or interest groups with community mentor or liaison
- Resident Advisors trained as service-learning liaisons and using reflection as community building tool.
- Community work woven into common curriculum.

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**Service-learning in the First-Year Experience: A Learning
Community Approach**

- * Small class sizes
- * Structured and faculty, staff / peer advising & facilitation
- * “time-limited” & incremental projects followed by longer-term community engagement
- * Pairing service-learning courses
- * Involve community to expand relationships



**A course-based FYE using a
service-learning approach**

- Service-learning pedagogy implemented in all common courses in FYE
- Small class sizes with high FYE identification
- Pairing upper class peer mentor sand/or faculty-staff mentors with smaller FYE group
- Welcome week activities introducing course and community opportunities from which to build year-long relationships
- Co-instruction with community liaison
- Common, year-long , community-influenced theme woven into common curriculum.

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Looking for exemplars in practice

Savage Chickens

by Doug Savage



www.savagechickens.com

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Institutional Example #1: Orientation Model

- University of Rhode Island- Leadership Institute
(<http://www.mu.uri.edu/leadership/institute.html>)
- Immaculata University- FYE Serves
(<http://www.immaculata.edu/academics/cus/fye>)

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**Institutional Example #2:
First-Year Seminar Model**

- Wright State University- UVC 103: Campus-Community Connections in the First Year
 - Tied in to common book program
 - <http://www.wright.edu/uc/firstyear/experience/index.html>

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**Institutional Example #3:
Living learning community model**

- University of Wisconsin-Madison: Chadbourne Residential College
 - <http://www.housing.wisc.edu/crc>
- Portland State University: The Global Leadership FYE
 - <http://www.pdx.edu/housing/the-global-leadership-fye-living-learning-community>

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QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

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