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

Poll - Who is in the audience today?
After participating in this webcast, you will be able to customize service-learning programs to first-year students on your campus.

Taking a look at the research...

WHY IS SERVICE LEARNING IMPORTANT FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS?
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

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)
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

Education cannot be limited to the activity of “schooling.”
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)
**Where is service-learning?**

- Recipient
- Beneficiary
- Provider
- Service
- Focus
- Learning

- **Service-Learning**
  - Community Service
  - Field Education
  - Internship


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

**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)*
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)

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.

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

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
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.”

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.”
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)

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
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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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)

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

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS
PUTTING THE “LEARNING” BACK IN SERVICE LEARNING
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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

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

Create strong community partnerships.
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Begins and ends with the community...

• 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.

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)
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!!!

Create meaningful assignments

- Start with student learning outcomes
- Provide structured reflective assignments and discussion
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
Use High Impact Educational Practices

1. First-Year Seminars
2. Learning Communities
3. Service-Learning
   4. Common Intellectual Experiences
   5. Writing-Intensive Courses
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LEAP, AAC&U (2007)

High Impact Practices: Why they matter

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<tr>
<th>First-Year</th>
<th>Learning Communities</th>
<th>Service-Learning</th>
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<td>Deep Learning Outcome</td>
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ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS 40
Learning Communities

Defined as:
- 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%)

High Impact Educational Practices:
Learning Communities

Outcomes
- Higher grades
- Higher persistence rates
- Ease of college transition
- Higher level of academic engagement
- Greater interaction with faculty and peers
- Perception of campus as supportive
- Critical thinking gains
- Intellectual development gains
- Higher levels of integrative thinking
- Gains in writing and reading skill
- Greater appreciation for diversity/ different point of views
- Higher rate of civic engagement

Shared with:

FYE
First Year Experience

SERVICE
LEARNING
High Impact Educational Practices:
Learning Communities

Outcomes

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Shared with:

Ehanced faculty and peer interaction
Persistence to the second year at same institution
Higher academic engagement
Self-reported gains in analytical and problem-solving skills

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

Service-Learning in the First-Year Experience:
Moving from Dualistic and “Safe” to Contextual and “Reflective”

Creating a “Learning Community” to make the transition

Elements of Learning Community Design

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

Study by Ross & Boyle (2007)
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SOME IDEAS ABOUT PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

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

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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

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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.

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS

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

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.

ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS
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Looking for exemplars in practice

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)
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](http://www.wright.edu/uc/firstyear/experience/index.html)

Institutional Example #3: Living learning community model

- University of Wisconsin-Madison: Chadbourne Residential College
  - [http://www.housing.wisc.edu/crc](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](http://www.pdx.edu/housing/the-global-leadership-fye-living-learning-community)
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QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

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