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2023

SERVICE-LEARNING COURSE HANDBOOK

Service-Learning (S-L) has been identified as one of the major high impact practices in higher education today.

A form of experiential learning, S-L involves developing partnerships between faculty-led academic courses and community-based organizations.

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WHAT DOES SERVICE LEARNING LOOKS LIKE?

PARTNERS
LOGO



Community service, as many of us know, has been a part of educational systems for years. But what takes service learning to the next level is that it combines serving the community with the rich academic frontloading, assessment, and reflection typically seen in project-based learning.



In a service-learning unit, goals are clearly defined, and according to [The Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement](#), there are many kinds of projects that classrooms can adopt. Classes or students can be involved in direct issues that are more personal and face-to-face, like working with the homeless or performing a data analysis survey for an institution or company. Involvement can be indirect when the students work on broader issues, perhaps a local environmental problem. The unit can also include advocacy to educate others about pertinent issues. Additionally, the unit can be research-based where the students act to curate and present on information based on public needs.

SOME IDEAS OF SERVICE

- Work on a Habitat for Humanity building site.
- Pack up food bags for the homeless.
- Adopt-a-Highway.
- Set up a tutoring system or reading buddies with younger students.
- Clean up a local park or beach.
- Launch a drought and water awareness campaign.
- Create a “pen pal” video conferencing group with a senior citizen's home.
- Perform data analysis for an institution or company



THE BREAKDOWN OF A SERVICE-LEARNING UNIT

During service learning, it is not enough to help others. Deep service learning is not afraid to tackle the rigorous standards along with the service. You might find it helpful to split your unit into four parts:

1. PRE-REFLECTION

Values to be discussed are understood as the degree to which the student expresses altruistic and humanitarian concern for others:

- **Understanding:** the degree to which service-learning will provide opportunities for new learning experiences and to use of knowledge, skills, and abilities;
- **Social:** the degree to which service-learning allows the person to be with friends and receive the recognition of others;
- **Career:** the degree to which service-learning promotes clarity about vocational choices;
- **Protective:** the degree to which service-learning allows the person to avoid guilt and better cope with personal problems; and
- **Enhancement:** the degree to which service-learning promotes an individual's sense of personal growth and positive feelings.



CONSTRUCTING

Have your students brainstorm in writing how they can help their world or their local community. Check out your local community needs either by observing them, their news local page, or their local papers for articles on current events and issues of interest to get in informational reading, as well.



2. RESEARCH:

Guide your students in techniques to help them search wisely and efficiently. They should conduct online polls (crowdsourcing) and create graphs to chart their findings. Students should summarize their findings using embedded images, graphs, and other multimedia elements. (Try an infographic tool like Piktochart.)

At this point, it is important to guide your students while they discover and experience the service they are doing. Provide them with a bibliography related to the actions and people served by them. It is an opportunity for them to learn how to do a topic research, how to collect data, how to use software, and how to be critical about solutions they found or that are presented to them. Propose different types of meetings where they can explain their needs and are also able to learn what your curricular unit topic is about.

This process phase is crucial in terms of students' engagement and knowledge construction. Students must feel confident with teachers' support but free to be creative and apply their ideas.



3. Presentation

Have your students present their findings to the school, to each other, and to outside stakeholders. They can develop posters to promote their call to action, write a letter campaign, or develop a simple website.

Students can “go on the road” with their findings to local schools and organizations or produce screencasts for the school website.

With their presentations, students may draw society's attention to community problems and need that, due to lack of time or life-running style, we are not aware of.



4. Reflection

Ask your students to think back on what they gained from journeying through this project. Have them reflect on the following:

- What did you learn about the topic?
- What did you learn about your community?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What were your feelings while serving others?
- How do you now think differently about your community, yourself, and the topic you are studying?

Reflection stands as a cornerstone of Service-Learning (S-L), serving as a pivotal link between course assignments, academic content, and service experiences. It provides faculty with a means to evaluate students' fulfillment of learning objectives. As John Dewey famously articulated, "We do not learn from experience...We learn from reflecting on experience." This underscores the importance of students not only recounting their actions but also contemplating how these experiences resonate with their lives and future decisions. Preceding reflection, students should engage in "pre-reflection," wherein they consider the project before its initiation. All reflective activities should center on the connection between service, learning, and the individual student's development.

Personal or team meetings are important to share how students experienced the service-learning process. Their conclusions and inputs are valuable for continuously updating and improving teachers' next service-learning proposes.



ASSESSING SERVICE LEARNING

Evaluation in S-L courses is the same as for any course. The focus of the evaluation is on the student's ability to meet course learning objectives. It is the same for service-learning as well. Students should be graded for their learning, not for their service (Howard, 2001). Nevertheless, community partners also participate in the evaluation of students' fulfillment of service objectives.

Like any assignment, a rubric facilitates faculty evaluation of student's work and provides students with clear expectations for the S-L assignment. You may ask your students to complete a self-evaluation using the rubric and discuss any disparities between students and your evaluations. Additionally, community partners may offer evaluations of student work, which may differ from your rubric.

The categories within the rubric will vary based on the student's S-L assignments. Typically, S-L rubrics include multiple formal reflections and a final individual or group reflection.

WHAT DO WE TAKE FOR LIFE?

Service-learning provides a platform for both teachers and students to make meaningful connections between academic learning and real-world issues, fostering personal, academic, and social growth that extends far beyond the classroom.

As a teacher, you will certainly enhance your teaching skills, build relationships with your community, develop yourself professionally, and renew your passion for teaching. Your students will have the opportunity to build their knowledge based on real-world applications, gain empathy and social awareness, improve their personal growth, increase their engagement with society and learning, and expand their perspectives.

PROJECT APPLICATION MODEL PROPOSAL

GIRLS

Service-Learning Project



VNIVERSIDAD
D SALAMANCA



Politécnico
de Coimbra



Universidad
Francisco de Vitoria
UFV Madrid



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Civil Engineering Bucharest



AELCLÉS

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Arquitectura e Ingeniería de la Construcción



maristas

Colegio Champagnat Salamanca



UNIVERSIDAD VASCO DE QUIROGA

Student data

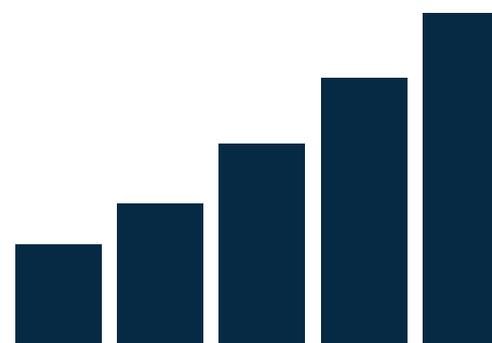
NAME

TEAM

DEGREE COURSE

CURRICULAR UNIT

UNIVERSITY/POLYTECHNIQUE



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INTRODUCTION

Service Learning (ApS) allows you to connect the academic world with the social environment, providing a benefit to the community. We seek to help the closest society with our knowledge and skills. It is important to remember that our task is to help meet a need or solve a problem that those affected cannot solve on their own.

More specifically, ApS projects can emerge from different organizations such as schools, institutes, associations, non-profit organizations, occupational centers, residences/nursing homes, social service entities or vulnerable groups. The activities that are carried out can fall into different areas: education, health, support, environment, seniors, violence prevention, etc.

ApS projects originate from the analysis of the needs of our closest realities. It is not about volunteering or professional internships, but rather about carrying out a specific service based on a previously identified need.



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

2

Different types of projects can be developed. A possible classification is as follows:

Direct or external projects: these are those that are carried out on-site, in the association itself or in the community, outside of classrooms or university spaces.

Indirect or internal projects: take place mainly on campuses or university facilities. Research projects or research for information that the community needs can be included here.

In all projects it is necessary to take into account the following phases:



1. Observation



2. Preparation



3. Action



4. Reflection



5. Data registration



6. Evaluation



7. Recognition

To detect needs that may occur close to the academic environment, we can observe and investigate what is happening in our community, what associations or social entities exist, what their scope and purpose are, and look for what problems they have. Lists of organizations and entities can help in this search process.

Likewise, research into other projects already carried out previously can serve as an idea or basis for carrying out something similar or proposing an improvement to one of them.

Part of this phase is carried out in the classroom and part outside. Once this phase is complete we will have available the name of the entity with which to collaborate and the problem or need to work on.

Find out about associations, social entities, or possible recipients of our projects. Create a list with some examples and describe the association in which the project will be carried out.



Create a list of the requirements you want to meet, that is, the demands that are imposed on the project you are going to develop:



1. The title. After identifying the problem, what title do you propose for your project?

2. Motivation. After detecting the origin of the proposal that will improve someone's life, what is the need for the project you propose and why do you propose that project and not another? What is your motivation?

...from management. Problems arise among group members, taking into account that you will need, at a minimum, a team leader or coordinator (manage the team), a secretary (take note of all meetings and development of the project) and a spokesperson (will give voice to the group).

sources that developed previous projects, that carried out similar initiatives and that could be useful for your work?

5. Purpose of the project. Decide what you will do and where this process will take you, what are the objectives you set out to achieve?

6. Service planning/design. Make a sketch or diagram of the different stages of the project.

7. Schedule. Carry out a detailed study of possible infrastructure, economic, material, and human needs, which must be validated by the teacher and the organization.

This is the phase of launching the project and carrying out the necessary activities to solve the problem or satisfy the detected need. New needs may arise during the development of the project, or it may be necessary to modify the previously proposed design. An analysis will be necessary and the feasibility of possible changes will be verified. If it is not possible to include them in the current project, they will be discussed in the reflection phase and studied for future activities.

Provide a detailed description of the challenges and obstacles that arose during the specific tasks you performed, as well as the solutions you implemented to address them



Some examples:

- Data characteristics: Incomplete, inaccurate, or inconsistent data requiring extensive cleaning. Ensuring data privacy and security is essential and can present challenges.
- Technological Resources: limitations on access to specific tools and software for data analysis.
- Task Coordination: difficulties in coordination and communication between members of the multidisciplinary team.
- Meeting deadlines: Time management can be a challenge, especially if students have other academic obligations.
- Interpretation of Results: the correct interpretation of statistical results can be complicated and require the use of theoretical methods and experience.
- Association Expectations: Align association expectations and needs with available resources and skills.
- Conflict Management: resolve differences of opinion or conflicts within the team constructively.
- Adaptation to Change: being flexible and able to adapt to unforeseen changes in the project or data.
- Presentation of Results: Effectively communicating results can be challenging.



Reflect on the work carried out, the results obtained, and the learning achieved. Reflection is carried out at each of the project phases: at the beginning to be able to plan the action, during development to evaluate the effectiveness and propose necessary modifications, and at the end of the process to analyze the results.

Learn from the reflection that takes place from the execution of the project itself, the problems of group work, difficulties due to lack of resources, or any unforeseen event, and analyze one's own experience and personal perceptions to present them in a group.

The reflection process synthesizes all the information from the ApS experiences and details the connections between the knowledge acquired: what was learned both curricularly and emotionally?

1. Can you reflect on how you provided the service and/or how you developed the project?



2. Describe your relationship and communication with people or contacts at the entity where you provided services:



3. Did you have to make adjustments to the initial planning? If yes, please detail them:

4. Are you fulfilling your commitments? What difficulties are you encountering?

5. Are all people involved in fulfilling their duties?

6. Are you correctly recording the actions you are taking?

7. What are you learning?

8. Preparation of communication and dissemination of the project. Detail

It is necessary to make a report recording the entire in-service learning process with each of the phases carried out.

The document/report created (any digital proposal, such as text editor, presentation, video, Google Sites, Genially, Canva, Publuu, issue, etc.) must include, at a minimum, information related to the detected need, the solution proposal, the work carried out, the level of satisfaction of the beneficiaries and the students themselves (testimonials) and the results achieved.

Insert the link to that document below:

It is also necessary to make an oral presentation of the project, to make it known to other people. The following aspects will be taken into account:

It is visually attractive (design, oral presentation, etc.).

The content is presented in an organized way. A coherent and interesting story is told.

All aspects worked on during the project are included.

Tables, figures, and images improve understanding of the content.

It's grammatically correct.

Appropriate responses are given to questions raised by the public

Insert the link to that presentation below:

The evaluation consists of taking stock of the entire project development process, analyzing the results obtained, and the fulfillment of the proposed objectives. A self-assessment is also necessary, evaluating possible improvements and future projects.

The following page includes a service learning rubric adapted from Coverdell's World Wise Schools publication Looking at Ourselves and Others (Washington, DC: PeaceCorps, 1998, p. 6).

We suggest that you respond to the following questionnaires to assess the importance of the aspects included for you.

The first must be completed before starting ApS activities:

<https://forms.gle/mVyiUvLjLCTbeQrq7>

You must answer the second one when you finish the Aps activities:

<https://forms.gle/whXz2ijpuvB1Sntz5>



SERVICE-LEARNING RUBRIC

Service learning integrates the academic context with a community need. The following rubric can help you evaluate the impact of service learning initiatives based on seven guidelines for quality service learning.

		Strong impact	Good impact
Meaningful service	Responding to the real needs of the community	Determined by current research conducted or discovered by students with teacher's help, if applicable	Determined by previous research discovered by students with teacher's help, if applicable
	Connecting with the community	Active and direct collaboration with the community by the teacher and student	Community members act as advisors in the development of the project
	Improve the quality of life of the people being served	Facilitate change or understanding; help alleviate a suffering; solve a problem; meet a need or address an issue	Changes improve an already good community situation
Learning objectives	Integrated into the academic curriculum	Academic content is well integrated into the service experience	Academic content is somewhat integrated into the description of the service experience
	Using new skills/academic knowledge in real world situations	Students directly apply new skills or knowledge in community service	Students actively apply new skills or knowledge
Civic development	Facilitate active student reflection	Students think, share and produce reflection products individually and as a member of a group	Students only think, share and produce reflections in groups
	Helps develop a sense of caring for and about others	Reflections show personal growth regarding self in the community and the importance of service	Reflections show generic growth regarding the importance of service to the community

Source: Coverdell World Wise Schools publication Looking at Ourselves and Others (Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 1998, p.6).

<i>Some impact</i>	<i>Minimal impact</i>
Determined by guesses about community needs	Community needs are secondary to what the teacher wants to do; the project only takes into account student needs
Community members are directly informed of the project	Community members are casually informed or have no knowledge at all
Mainly decorative changes, but with new and unique benefits to the community	Mainly decorative changes, of limited benefit to the community or that are not new or unique
Service-learning is part of the curriculum, but connections are vague, with emphasis on service	Service-learning is complementary to the curriculum, in essence just a service project or good deed
Some students are more involved in community service than others	Practical knowledge used mainly in the classroom; no active community service experience
Students share without individual reflection projects	No time for real reflection; only provided a summary of events
Reflections are limited to the pros and cons of a particular service project in relation to the community	Reflections limited to egocentric pros and cons of the service project

Action impact.

How publicized can your project be and how do you think you can continue it?

The value of the work carried out by the group of students will be recognized through a certificate of participation.

To celebrate the completion of the project, a public presentation will be made.



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MEET THE TEAM

Project Coordinator



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LET'S WORK TOGETHER

