

The activities of this service-learning project have obviously provided a valuable service to the town of Upland. This work by students to complete the WHPP, approved with commendation by IDEM in March 2002, has provided an excellent opportunity for the town of Upland to meet state requirements with sufficient expertise at a significant financial bargain. This partnership has also increased the goodwill between the town manager and the Taylor University Earth and Environmental Science Department for potential future collaborations.

This service-learning project has helped me develop professionally in the three areas of teaching, research and service. I developed as a teacher by guiding students through the preparation of a potential-sources inventory and public educational materials about ground water protection. I developed a new research project by advising an undergraduate in developing a human health risk assessment of potential contamination sources. Finally, I contributed professional service to the community by providing leadership and expertise as the chair of the local groundwater planning team, and to the Taylor University faculty by providing greater exposure of the educational and community benefits of service-learning.

Having little prior experience in service-learning activities in the classroom, I now feel initiated in the basic and critical aspects of service-learning. Among the benefits, I have developed a strong relationship with the Upland town manager. I fully expect this cooperative relationship to develop more fully through the remainder of the WHPP and other projects that would provide learning opportunities for students by serving the community.

I was pleased to receive support from the Indiana Campus Compact, including funding and encouragement that provided the impetus and opportunity for desired advancement toward goals I had been unable to accomplish since the faculty workshop that sparked my interest in service-learning several years before. The ongoing and recurring interaction with the other Faculty Fellows, who were equally committed to developing and implementing service-learning courses at their institutions, provided great support for my efforts. I am thankful for the opportunity, encouraged by the results, and excited for the future.

WHY DO SERVICE-LEARNING? ISSUES FOR FIRST-TIME FACULTY

Elizabeth A. Coles

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
Construction Technology

Introduction

Why would a newly hired, tenure-track professor with a heavy teaching load and an underlying pressure to publish as well as secure grants for research be interested in embracing the concept of service-learning? The professor had been assigned a new course for development and was working on that during her first year in the university system. This paper will explore the value of service-learning as seen by those experts who have researched the topic, as well as provide a more contextual view on the topic from the vantage point of that faculty member who dove into the experience during her first year of appointment. Examples of personal and student service-learning experiences embedded within interior design coursework will assist the reader in linking the literature findings with concrete examples in the field.

Pedagogical Issues

Let us then assume that our faculty member believed that there would be value in offering a service-learning course. She felt that before she fully committed, she should examine some of the pedagogical issues of integrating service-learning into her course. Enos & Troppe (2000) have found that students with service-learning experience learn to question issues of knowledge; who it is for and what it can do for you. They found

that, through service-learning, students can be empowered to ask the larger questions as well as consider the applications of their knowledge base within the real world. They suggest that service-learning pedagogy works best when it is used to meet course objectives and help faculty revisit the aims or goals of a course. Sometimes integrating service-learning pushes faculty to broaden the scope of the course or examine it in the light of its relevance with global issues.

Service-learning options take on a variety of configurations within different universities or colleges. Sometimes the pedagogy is best carried out as a fourth credit or stand-alone option offered for some students, but not a required component of the course. Sometimes, depending on the discipline, an introductory course could focus more on the service-learning aspect as a method to encourage discussion about people and cultures, especially when their needs and concerns are different from the students involved in the course. This faculty member also discovered that according to a 1994 Campus Compact member survey, 39% of the 114 colleges surveyed revised their core curriculum to include service-learning (Enos & Troppe, 2000, pp. 69). It is recognized that this is easier to do in smaller colleges than in large universities. However, the number of community agencies for placement does enter into the equation since small towns may not have enough placement agencies, whereas urban areas have abundant opportunities for placement. Other universities have institutionalized the concept enough that it is a requirement for graduation as either a capstone course or as part of course clusters often offered during the freshman year.

Service-learning has been defined as a method of teaching in which academic subjects, as well as skills, are taught within the context of citizenship through community service. The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 indicates that the three basic components of teaching effectively using this method are:

- Plan sufficiently so that objectives for learned skills or acquired understanding of issues are included in the learning projects or activities;
- Incorporate community service as part of the learning component;
- Provide ample opportunity for students to analyze and mutually discuss and reflect on the work undertaken.

As a new hire, the faculty member desired to be a successful teacher and to inspire her students through their learning experiences for the time she would be with them. She understood her subject matter; it was the methods of imparting that knowledge and/or skills to her students that drew the challenge. She remembered her own classroom days as a student, recalled the teachers that motivated her to choose her field of study and the events that cemented her decision to become an educator.

Facing the task at hand, she contemplated the reasons why service-learning would strengthen her ability to teach and enrich her course as well as motivate her students to go beyond the expected norm.

A recent connection with a local, non-profit, community organization interested in promoting sustainable design within community settings—Ecology House—provided the perfect opportunity to provide students in her sustainable design course with an avenue to implement concepts learned in class into a community setting; in other words, a real project in which to apply classroom knowledge. The plan was to work with the group as they moved forward on the design to renovate and complete a community learning center which would exhibit sustainable practices that could be adapted by “common folk” for use in their own homes. It was determined that the students would help gather information for the center’s library as well as assist in the design of the center, researching and recommending sustainable products and processes. The goal was to partner with Ecology House as the organization moved forward in their efforts to purchase the facility, an abandoned church, in a neighborhood near the university. The timeline was such that a service-learning project would fit within the semester course.

Following the guidelines of the three components identified in the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, the faculty member decided to integrate the course objectives into her service-learning activity; incorporate community service compatible with Ecology House needs; and develop feedback assignments via required classroom discussions regarding the student’s service-learning experience. As often happens in the real world, four weeks into the semester, circumstances beyond anyone’s control prevented Ecology House from purchasing the property and forging ahead with the project. The students had begun with their library assignments and were able to complete those and reserve them for future use by Ecology House when a facility could be located.

Something not found in the literature had surfaced and provided a challenge for the teacher: what happens when a service-learning partnership must be put on hold? She and the students had embraced the concept of service-learning. Students and course objectives were all focused on a service-learning component related to sustainable design, but the facility to be used was unavailable! This teacher was fortunate because she discovered an alternate opportunity in her own collegiate unit. A team of faculty and administrators were planning to assist in the financial and volunteer support of a four-day build of a Habitat for Humanity house, scheduled to occur near the end of the same semester. The teacher contacted the Habitat staff

and an agreement was reached in which the sustainable design students would help with the interior design as well as construction of a Habitat for Humanity house that would exhibit and support a number of "green," or sustainable, products and practices. In this setting, sustainable or green products refer to those that are designed and manufactured using materials that are natural, recycled or recyclable, benign or non-toxic, energy efficient, and certain to not harm the environment in the present or in the future. Close collaboration with the contractor assigned to the home began when the two managers of the project met with the students and assisted in identifying specific tasks and responsibilities for them. These included goal setting with the family, identification and specification of products to be used, estimation of quantity for correct specification, and locating vendors who could donate the green products for the project. Team assignments were made and a new service-learning project was underway. The group would help facilitate the first-ever green Habitat House built in the Indianapolis metro area. In the research implications below, you will find a number of student and faculty experiences/examples from this project that help to personalize the implications provided in the literature.

Research Implications—Service-Learning

Research has shown that there are many benefits for the integration of service-learning into a teaching format. Our faculty member had been given the following research-based outcomes for support of service-learning pedagogy and the effect of service-learning on students. As a teacher, she wanted to carefully weigh the pros and cons of this new method of teaching. An annotated bibliography done at Vanderbilt University (Eylar, Giles, Stenson & Gray, 2000) indicated the following research outcomes and studies pertaining to each. They are:

- Service-learning has a positive effect on student personal development in the areas of personal efficacy, personal identity, spiritual growth and moral development;
- Service-learning has been shown to have a positive effect on interpersonal development and the ability to work well with others to develop leadership and communication skills;
- Service-learning has been found to have a positive effect on reducing stereotypes and facilitating cultural and racial understanding;
- Service-learning has a positive effect on the sense of social responsibility and citizenship skills;
- Service-learning has a positive effect on commitment to service;

- Volunteer service in college is associated with involvement in community service after graduation;
- Service-learning has a positive impact on students' academic learnings;
- Service-learning improves students' ability to apply what they have learned in the "real world," however the impact of service-learning measured by grades or GPA is mixed;
- Service-learning also impacts demonstrated complexity of understanding, problem analysis, critical thinking and cognitive development;
- Service-learning contributes to career development;
- Service-learning students develop stronger faculty relationships compared to those not involved in service-learning;
- Service-learning improves student satisfaction with college.

A number of the above findings had relevance in the Habitat service-learning project and were exhibited by students who participated in the Green Habitat for Humanity House. Specific outcomes for the project that relate to the above findings included:

- One student became a leader in the project and was able to encourage the group to go beyond the expectations of the Habitat staff and provide them with a better understanding of sustainable design and its relationship to building homes for families of all income levels. The uniqueness of the green project was promoted by the organization and featured on local television stations covering the build, while providing an added dimension to an already worthwhile project.
- The entire class recognized the unique needs of the family when the parents came to school to meet and plan with the students. The family consisted of older parents, two adult children, and a grandchild, who had always lived in public housing and therefore had never been concerned with maintenance of their home. They would need to be taught how to take care of their new home and its green features. Additionally, upon interviewing the family, the students discovered that the parents could not read or write but, nevertheless, were thrilled to be able to have choices regarding the paint and other green products being suggested for their new home. This observation was a shock to many of the students, and it became a discussion issue in the reflection section later that week.
- The students' service-learning project forced them to have a heightened sense of commitment to service, as each team member contacted vendors and secured donations of green products such as low VOC paint, ceramic floor tiles made from recycled windshields for the kitchen and bathroom, energy efficient appliances and

lighting fixtures, low flow water fixtures, as well as water-tolerant plants for the exterior landscaping. They now had an agency depending on them for materials. Their accomplishments meant that this family received green products worth approximately \$3,000. The students noted that the family exhibited a sense of pride in the new green home and shared knowledge about green building materials and their unique factors with other new neighbors and friends. Their house, in essence, became a learning lab within Habitat for Humanity and its constituents.

The above outcomes identified some of the benefits to students participating in service-learning. A follow up question that the faculty member posed was: What kind of program did I create that made these student outcomes possible? Those characteristics have also been examined in the literature, and the results suggest that programs with the following attributes can provide the respective outcomes:

- Placement quality (with a community agency) has a positive impact on student personal and interpersonal outcomes;
- Written reflection has an impact on student-learning outcomes;
- Duration and intensity of service have an impact on student outcomes;
- Diversity has an impact on students, particularly personal outcomes of personal development and cultural understanding;
- Community voice in a service-learning project has an impact on student-cultural understanding.

The green Habitat project included a number of the above characteristics as the duration and intensity of the assignment expanded with the students' enthusiasm for their project. Students expressed, both orally and in written format, the warmth they experienced in having the chance to be involved in a project that personally affected their own growth, knowledge, and understanding of differences in cultures.

The teacher also questioned the impact service-learning had on her as a faculty member. Studies suggested the following:

- Faculty using service-learning report satisfaction with the quality of student learning;
- Faculty using service-learning report commitment to research;
- Faculty report that a lack of resources can be a barrier to providing service-learning;
- Faculty increasingly integrate service-learning into courses.

Students in the green Habitat project expanded their learning outside the classroom as they were able to plan for, and visualize, the green products they had studied and were able to procure for installation in the house. Additionally, since the

completion of that project, the teacher has continued a relationship with Habitat for Humanity and is now co-teaching with a service-learning student a one-night, interior space-planning seminar for all the Habitat families receiving houses each year in the metropolitan Indianapolis area. Commitment to service-learning as a pedagogy has spread to other courses she teaches, as well as to those taught by other interior design faculty in her program.

Furthermore, academic institutions—that is, colleges and universities—are impacted by service-learning. Findings indicate the following connections:

- Enhanced community relations are a by-product of service-learning.
- Student retention is affected by community service.
- A willingness for institutional commitment to service-learning curriculum is evident in many colleges and universities.
- An availability of service-learning programs is evident in many colleges and universities.
- Few colleges and universities make service-learning a requirement of their academic core.

Communities—the recipients of the benefits of service-learning—report that they are satisfied with student participation, that it provides useful service in communities, and that communities have enhanced relations with universities.

Cross-Disciplinary Involvement: An Integral Part of a Teacher Education Curriculum

Our teacher had many students enrolled in the sustainable design course who may decide to major in education, either at the elementary or high school level. She discussed service-learning as a teaching strategy with one of the faculty in her university who holds her appointment in the teacher education department. She was interested in why that department was beginning to include service-learning in the education curriculum. The reasons her colleague shared came from the findings of research completed by a number of educators examining the value of service-learning as part of education courses. Some of the findings were valuable to anyone who teaches at any level. For instance, the research done by Susan Blackwell and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (2000) found that service-learning experiences could assist education majors in learning how to connect with communities, while at the same time increasing their own knowledge base, performance skills as student teachers, as well as dispositional learning. According to another education professor, Jill Mielis (2000), it was concluded that in her freshman

level education course, some of the power of service-learning was evident in assisting education majors to understand the role and responsibilities of a professional teacher. She cites a number of entries from student reflection journals that were used as a tool to encourage dialogue in the classroom and to construct new perspectives of teaching. Most of the classroom discussion occurred as a result of reflection activities now thought to be an integral part of a service-learning activity. Furthermore, in working to construct a model for service-learning, another researcher, Michael Katula (2000), identified the following characteristics as important in a well-designed service-learning program:

- **Student input** that takes into consideration the nature of the service to be performed, how it is performed and its goals;
- **Explicit connections** between the service performed and facts, principles, or ideas that are being studied and discussed in the classroom;
- **Perceptible impacts** to allow students to perceive the value of their efforts in the service-learning activity;
- **Reflection** that allows students to better understand the experience they have had, why it was done, and how their work might relate to broader concepts of citizenship, morality, and public responsibility;
- **Time spent** in service-learning that is adequate so that the student views the effort as worthwhile, but not enough to color his/her image of the task to the extent that he/she may not want to participate in the future.

Taken as a whole, the above findings help to support the value of service-learning as an integral part of teacher education. Service-learning activities and experiences can become central to future teachers as they form their knowledge and skills base for good teaching techniques that help support global views of specific disciplines.

The Academic Fit—How Does Service-Learning Support Faculty Promotion and Rewards?

Our tenure track professor was aware of dossier development and how that eventually influences promotion and tenure at her university. She found that there are a number of considerations that define institutional support, or the lack of, when it comes to service-learning. Kelly Ward (2000) points out that the interpretation of the word 'service', as it is found in many college mission statements, varies considerably. She suggests that some colleges and universities view service only within the confines of the university and encompass it under committee work or faculty senate membership. Other institutions define faculty service as a form of professional outreach in the

form of consulting, while some view service as a way for academics to actively engage in community outreach. If teaching and research are the basis for the reward system within an academic organization, the faculty member must recognize that service-learning may be altruistic as well as beneficial to students and learning, but may not count toward promotion and tenure in his/her institution.

Ward (2000, pp. 151-154) suggests that in order to have an organizational culture that will support academic-based service, there must be institutional commitment at a number of levels. These include administrative support, funding for service-learning, and faculty involvement.

Support from top administration down to department chairs is a necessary component for successful service-learning activities among the faculty and students. If a college or university is a member of Campus Compact—an organization of college and university presidents—and will see service-learning as a way to "smooth relationships with constituencies" as well as help students prepare for life after college, then the institutional support for faculty engaged in service-learning is most likely to be valued. Some universities will have created offices of service-learning, which provide staff support and professional development opportunities for faculty interested in the pedagogy. Others have less costly initiatives but ones that shout support by including the topic in the orientation program for new faculty.

In order to institutionalize service-learning into the academic culture, funding support must be evident. This could be in the form of professional-development training for interested faculty or faculty release time to incorporate service-learning into a course. Other indicators of institutional commitment would be evidence that there are travel funds available to attend conferences or visit campuses with strong service-learning activities. A specialized staff person who assists with connections among the students, faculty, and the community agencies interested in participating in service-learning programs would provide even more evidence of a supported program. Such support was available at the university where the green Habitat project was implemented.

The final indicator of strong institutional support is faculty involvement. As Ward points out, curricular decisions affecting course design and content are often determined through faculty committees. If those committees support service-learning and see its role within promotion and tenure parameters, efforts by faculty to integrate service-learning into their courses may be viewed as a worthwhile effort. Newly hired faculty could view service-learning as a part of the faculty rewards system. Some of the criteria that committees have put on service-learning in order to measure its importance in the overall dossier include the following guidelines:

- Service-learning must relate to the faculty member's area of scholarship;
- Service-learning contributions must fill community needs and have lasting value to the community;
- Students must be able to integrate both the service and the academic content in a way that assists in application of course knowledge as a part of the service-learning activity.

Conclusion

With the types of support for service-learning from upper administration, funding, and faculty, it is apparent that service-learning courses can benefit a new, tenure-track faculty member from the onset of a college teaching career. Additionally, it is possible that, for such persons, the investment into service-learning as a teaching model can also influence individual research emphasis. Many questions are still to be investigated in this newly emerging teaching strategy, and in an atmosphere of ever increasing accountability for educational efforts in higher education, the newly hired professor may discover a research direction never anticipated while in graduate school. Service-learning may not only become her preferred teaching method but her avenue to a research specialty as well.

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E-mail: lin@uindy.edu

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