

Service-Learning Agency Workshop
Miami-Dade Community College
11:30AM - 3:00PM
Annotated Agenda

1) 11:30 WELCOME, LUNCH AND NETWORKING

After a brief welcome and announcements, participants are encouraged to complete the following networking exercise during lunch. Each table contains copies with these instructions:

As you eat lunch, introduce yourself to each person at the table with:

?? Your name

?? Your agency and its primary responsibility

?? How long you've been there

?? Where you worked before

?? Answer the following: *"You have been given an opportunity to travel into the future to see how the world will change in the next 25 years. What changes in particular interest you the most?"* (or a similar thought provoking question)

2) INTRODUCTION/RATIONALE FOR SERVICE-LEARNING

i. Solicit as much information from the participants as possible before beginning your presentation. Questions to ask the audience:

?? "How many of you know what service-learning is?"

?? "What distinguishes service from service-learning?"

?? "What are benefits of service-learning to students and your organization?"

ii. Provide an overview of service-learning using powerpoint or overheads.

iii. Use the "Double Dipping" case study to illustrate the essence of service-learning (see **Appendix 1** for the double dipping handout).

?? Participants discuss in small groups how they believe this case study should be resolved.

?? Discuss in large group. The following are points to make when debriefing the case study:

☞☞When faculty understand that service-learning is not about “number of hours” but rather “academic credit for demonstrated learning,” then double dipping becomes a non-issue. Faculty who are concerned with double dipping generally have little to no reflective assignments and basically are giving students a grade for hours of service completed—which isn’t service-learning. If the faculty member has a strong reflective component which guides students to connect service with course learning objectives (i.e., concrete academic assignments for which grades/credit can be assigned), then the hours are no-longer an issue. Of course, the assumption here is that the service project is relevant to both courses, which sometimes is not the case (For example, a student who was in English Composition and College Prep Reading could tutor children in reading for his/her service project and use this for both classes – doing all his/her writing about the tutoring, as well as completing all the reflective assignments from the Reading class; however, a student in a math class and a biology class might have to do two separate service projects since it might be hard to find one service project that fits both classes.). Students should do separate reflective/academic work for each class related to that class’s particular learning objectives.

3) THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY SITES/AGENCIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY

Make overheads of both of the paragraphs below (Astin quotation and Rutgers student quotation) and discuss the questions with the large group:

1. Crisis in American Democracy – What Can You Do?

“We [higher education] educate a large proportion of the citizens who bother to vote, not to mention most of the politicians, journalists, and news commentators. We also educate all the school administrators and teachers, who in turn educate everyone at the pre-college level. And we do much to shape the pre-college curriculum through what we require of our college applicants. In short, not only have we helped create the problems that plague American democracy, but we are also in a position to begin doing something about them. If higher education doesn’t start giving citizenship and democracy much greater priority, who will?”

Alexander Astin, professor and director of the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA on the unparalleled power higher education has to strengthen American democracy (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 10/6/95)

As an agency supervisor working with service-learning students, what can you do to join with higher education in “preparing students for a life of engaged, democratic citizenship”? What are specific actions you can take to help students grow and develop in this way?

2. Student Impact

“Over the course of this semester I have become a citizen of New Brunswick. It could be argued that I was a citizen here well before registering for the course, but I did not feel as if I were one. Having taken the course, I now know why I felt as I did. A citizen must play an active role in his or her community. A citizen must work for change, and never accept the status quo--things can always be better. I am now aware of what is happening around me...I now see the city differently. I'm no longer scared walking to [my service site] --far from it. I feel like I know that small portion of the city now. Now when I pass people on the street, some say hello to me, and call me by name. Through my work I've gotten to know individual people, and they've gotten to know me. I enjoy my community service. It has opened my eyes as to the role I play as a citizen in my community.”

Rutgers University service-learning student from Professor Rick Battistoni's class

What are your reactions to this quotation? What do you think contributed to the student changing his views and attitudes towards community and citizenship? “What can you and your other agency personnel do to contribute to a student's experience so that he/she will demonstrate a similar shift in his/her thinking?”

4) REFLECTION

i. Present an overview of reflection and its role in service-learning. Make overheads to utilize the following quotations to demonstrate the importance of reflection:

“Thinking is not the case of spontaneous combustion; it does not occur just on ‘general principles.’ There is something specific which occasions and provokes it.”

- John Dewey (How We Think, 1910)

“ ... learning is a bit more complex than “learning by doing.” It is not just learning through experience, but experience plus learning that is significant.”

- David Kolb

Organizations can model democracy in action by strengthening civic skills in their volunteers/service-learners.

ii. Agency reflection activity suggestions.

?? See Appendix 2 for Reflection Strategies 1-8. Divide the audience into 8 groups and give each group copies of one of the Reflection Strategy pages. Each group discusses its assigned reflection strategy and brainstorms a bit about other strategies. Each group then reports back to the larger group and shares the strategy it was assigned and other ideas they came up with.

?? The "Neighborhood Clean-up" case study (Appendix 3) is used to demonstrate how an agency can best prepare for events and/or their students when they arrive for their assignments. Participants discuss in small groups solutions from the agency perspective followed by a large group debriefing.

5) STUDENT/AGENCY HANDBOOKS

Review most pertinent information from the Service-Learning Student Handbook so agency supervisor is familiar with forms students will be bringing. Also, review Agency Handbook including Memorandum of Agreement (for an electronic copy of these handbooks, email Josh Young at jyoung@mdcc.edu).

6) CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The sheet "Turning Challenges into Solutions" (see Appendix 4) is used for this participatory exercise. Each person writes his/her name on the sheet and a challenge they face in their agency related to service-learning. The sheet is passed around the table and everyone writes the first solution that comes to mind. It is done fast and there is no encouragement to labor on determining the best or most creative idea. At the conclusion, when the sheet is returned to the "owner," several workable solutions should have been noted. Time permitting, these can be shared with the entire group.

7) STUDENT/FACULTY PANEL – EXPERIENCES WITH SERVICE-LEARNING

Several service-learning students and faculty members share their thoughts and suggestions about service-learning. Both should share what they want/expect of the agency, problems that occur and how to avoid them, and the impact service-learning has had on their lives and/or their teaching or learning.

8) ACTION PLAN - THE NEXT STEPS

- ?? Have participants work in small groups on the Agency Action Plan (Appendix 5). They should discuss each question and write down their ideas. Reconvene the large group and allow people/groups to share their ideas. This serves as a review of best practices (Emphasize that this document is for them to take with them and utilize.).

The following questions are provided as background information that may be raised with the agency representatives:

- I. WHAT KIND OF ORIENTATION/TRAINING IS PROVIDED? Is it structured? Comprehensive? Well organized? Are written materials provided? Will students understand the agency's mission and how their service-learning assignment will contribute to that mission? Will students feel welcome and appreciated?
- II. TYPE AND QUALITY OF SUPERVISION: Will students feel comfortable and be encouraged to talk/share issues and problems with the agency supervisor? Will other workers/staff understand the students' role? Will they be friendly and help the students feel comfortable? Does the supervisor view him or herself as a "partner in education"?
- III. RECOGNITION: What will the agency do to show appreciation & recognition to the students?
- IV. OVERALL EXPERIENCE: Will the students be challenged to learn and grow from the experience? Will the experience strengthen the students' commitment to service and community involvement? Will the students gain a better understanding of the relationship between service and citizenship?

9) WRAP-UP, AGENCY DESCRIPTIONS, Q & A, AND EVALUATIONS

Questions are answered, agency opportunity descriptions are reviewed, and the evaluation form (Appendix 6) is completed. Final comments, thanks, and closure.

APPENDIX 1

"Double-Dipping" Case Study

Understanding Service-Learning

You are very excited about your first semester of college. Although you are taking a full class load and working part time, you feel ready for the challenge. Two of your classes include service-learning. Professor Jones (Communications 101) asks for 20 hours with a community agency where you can "interact with people." Professor Smith (Intro to Education) also uses service-learning and requires 25 hours. You are able to find a placement as a tutor in your local elementary school. When you tell your professors that you have a service-learning assignment for two classes, they each tell you that the hours you do for their course can't be used for another class as this would be "double dipping." You don't think you could find time to do 45 hours and may not be able to do service-learning in one of the classes.

Questions: Should this student be able to use one service placement for two classes? How would you define service-learning? What characteristics make service-learning different from volunteerism?

APPENDIX 2

Miami-Dade Community College
Agency Workshop
Reflection Suggestion 1

Please discuss this reflection technique and be prepared to share it with the large group in a few minutes. Write down additional reflection strategies in the space below.

1) Think about your agency's mission statement. How can you use it as a teaching tool for the students? How can it enhance their experience at your agency?

Other Reflection Ideas:

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APPENDIX 2

Miami-Dade Community College
Agency Workshop
Reflection Suggestion 2

Please discuss this reflection technique and be prepared to share it with the large group in a few minutes. Write down additional reflection strategies in the space below.

2) Learning Objectives - work with students to set objectives related to their learning. Have them put several objectives in writing and help them develop a plan to meet these objectives (Ask them what they want to learn...about the agency, about the clients, about the profession, about the work you do, about connections with their M-DCC course, etc.,.)

Other Reflection Ideas:

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APPENDIX 2

Miami-Dade Community College
Agency Workshop
Reflection Suggestion 3

Please discuss this reflection technique and be prepared to share it with the large group in a few minutes. Write down additional reflection strategies in the space below.

3) Gather articles about your agency/your clients/the societal problem you address. Give the students one of these articles and ask them to read it and discuss it with you the following week.

Other Reflection Ideas:

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APPENDIX 2

Miami-Dade Community College
Agency Workshop
Reflection Suggestion 4

Please discuss this reflection technique and be prepared to share it with the large group in a few minutes. Write down additional reflection strategies in the space below.

4) Exit Interviews - design an exit interview questionnaire and administer it to students before they leave your agency to elicit their feedback. (What did you like best about your experience here? What recommendations do you have for us? How can we improve our program? Are you willing to continue to serve with us in the future? What was the most important thing you learned? Etc...)

Other Reflection Ideas:

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APPENDIX 2

Miami-Dade Community College
Agency Workshop
Reflection Suggestion 5

Please discuss this reflection technique and be prepared to share it with the large group in a few minutes. Write down additional reflection strategies in the space below.

5) “Mini-research project” - Ask students to find and read a short article related to their service project (Internet, magazine, etc.). Ask them to bring it in and then discuss it with you.

Other Reflection Ideas:

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APPENDIX 2

Miami-Dade Community College
Agency Workshop
Reflection Suggestion 6

Please discuss this reflection technique and be prepared to share it with the large group in a few minutes. Write down additional reflection strategies in the space below.

6) Weekly or bi-weekly "processing" meetings: meet with your students regularly to process their service experience with them. E.g., "What have you learned? What has surprised you? What can we do to reduce "homelessness/environmental contamination/fraud against the elderly (your issue)" in our society? As you move on with your life, how can you use the information you are learning here?"

Other Reflection Ideas:

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APPENDIX 2

Miami-Dade Community College
Agency Workshop
Reflection Suggestion 7

Please discuss this reflection technique and be prepared to share it with the large group in a few minutes. Write down additional reflection strategies in the space below.

7) Weekly/Bi-Weekly Writing Assignments - every week or two weeks give the students a question to answer. Ask them to write a one-page response and turn it in. E.g. "What can we do to improve society to the point that the work our agency does is no longer necessary? How can we get more people involved as volunteers with our agency? What are the most important things you are learning from this experience? What were you're your expectations before starting with us...how have these changed as a result of your experience?"

Other Reflection Ideas:

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APPENDIX 2

Miami-Dade Community College
Agency Workshop
Reflection Suggestion 8

Please discuss this reflection technique and be prepared to share it with the large group in a few minutes. Write down additional reflection strategies in the space below.

8) Critical Thinking Questions - give students a list of questions that challenge them to explore and think critically about your agency and the issues it addresses. Ask them to find answers to these questions during the course of their service and then process what they discover with them periodically. (Why does this problem exist [homelessness, children who can't read, etc..] ... interview at least two staff members to get their opinions? How can society reduce the incidence of this problem? Interview a staff member and ask them why they work in this field. Make a list of all the different types of jobs that exist at this agency and the skills and education required. Etc...).

Other Reflection Ideas:

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APPENDIX 3

Service-Learning Case Study – Great American Cleanup

You are the service-learning coordinator at your college. In February you received a call from a representative of *The Great American Cleanup Inc.* He explains that his group, sponsored by the *Keep America Beautiful Foundation*, in partnership with city government, and a local community center are organizing a major cleanup, beautification, and community improvement program in one of your city's most impoverished areas. He asks the college to become a partner and to help recruit 70 volunteers. You make a recruitment flyer and get it to all your service-learning faculty members.

Environmental Studies Professor Don Jones sees the flyer and posts it in his class as an option for students. He decides to give any student who participates extra credit if they go to the cleanup, get someone there to sign off on their hours, and write a half page about what they did and what they learned.

One of Professor Jones's best students, Hector Sanchez, decided to help out because he believes in "keeping the environment clean." He called the RSVP number at the service-learning office on your campus and was told to "just show up." When he got there Saturday morning he couldn't tell who was in charge. He found a table inside with people where he signed in. When he asked what to do they told him to "go outside." Although there were many people there, he didn't know any of them and it was unclear what to do. He saw some people laying mulch so he tried to help there, until someone shouted to him, "Hey, come with us to pick up trash." He spent several hours picking up little pieces of trash. He saw people working on a vegetable garden but there were already more than enough people to help so he didn't bother going there. He saw a person dressed like superman with trash stuck all over him and the words "Great American Cleanup Person" on his chest. Although he wondered why this person was dressed like that, Hector didn't speak to him. When his group finished picking up trash he went back to the center to get the lunch that was provided. He ate by himself, and left.

After the event, the Great American representative wrote a letter to your president thanking her for the college's outstanding contribution to the project and saying "this event brought together 160 volunteers who worked hand in hand with local residents to pick up 400 bags of trash, plant two large vegetable gardens, landscape several community centers, and help a neighborhood association clean up an illegal dump. By all accounts this was a very successful event...."

The next day, Professor Jones came to see you. He said his best student, Hector Sanchez, went to volunteer at the event and was very disappointed. Professor Jones said that it "was a waste of time and wasn't well organized, and that Hector was very disappointed and felt he didn't learn or contribute anything."

Your Task: Critique this case study from the standpoint of learning and reflection. What could the agency/project organizers have done to make this a learning experience for Hector? What errors did they make?

(If time permits, discuss with your group, 1) what could the faculty member have done to make this a better learning experience?, and 2) what could the Service-Learning Center have done?)

APPENDIX 4

Turning Challenges into Solutions

Name: _____

A Challenge we have encountered at our agency is:

Solutions are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

APPENDIX 5

SERVICE-LEARNING AGENCY ACTION PLAN (for use in last part of workshop)

Please discuss what your agency does or will do in each of the following categories to ensure that the service-learning partnership is as successful as possible. Write down ideas that you want to implement next semester with your service-learning students:

Reflection (What will you do to ensure that students reflect on their experience with your agency?)

Initial Orientation/Training (What will you do to ensure high quality orientation/training?)

On-going Support/Communication (What will you do to ensure on-going support and open lines of communication?)

Recognition (What will you do to recognize your service-learners?)

Miscellaneous (What other best practices can you think of? E.g., how will you evaluate your service-learning program, etc.?)

APPENDIX 6

Service-Learning - Community Agency Workshop

Evaluation

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Disagree 4 = Strongly Disagree

1. I have a greater understanding of service-learning than I did at the beginning of this workshop.

1 2 3 4

2. I understand the educational base for the partnership my agency has with the service-learning program.

1 2 3 4

3. I have a greater understanding of the roles and expectations each participant must fulfill in order for service-learning to be successful.

1 2 3 4

4. I believe that the written materials provided shall be helpful in the future.

1 2 3 4

5. I have a better understanding of both the role of reflection in service-learning and ways that I can help students reflect at my agency.

1 2 3 4

6. I have new ideas that will help improve service-learning at my agency.

1 2 3 4

7. I believe that this workshop has been informative and helpful.

1 2 3 4

COMMENTS /FEEDBACK /SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT /Etc.,:

Thank You! *(Please leave completed evaluations in the center of the table. They will be collected after the workshop.)*

Date

Dear _____:

Thank you for your interest in entering into a partnership with Miami-Dade Community College and its service-learning program. We are now in the process of updating our service-learning agency list in an effort to keep it current. Attached is sample page from our agency list for your review. Please use it as a model and provide us with information from your organization, ensuring to include hours needed, contact name, telephone number, and **e-mail address** (A format is also attached for your convenience.). Please return it to the attention of (name) by fax (number) no later than (date). If you prefer, you may e-mail this information to (e-mail address).

One of the most critical components of service-learning is developing and maintaining strong partnerships with community agencies. As an agency supervisor working with our students, your role is essential to the success of service-learning. With this in mind, we would like to invite you to attend a very important Agency Workshop, where we will be discussing basic information of service-learning and then delving into more advanced issues. This informal workshop is **designed for the person at your agency who will serve as our students' initial contact and overall supervisor.** *We ask that every agency on our list of approved service-learning placement sites have their coordinator attend this workshop.* Some of the topics that will be covered are:

- ?? What is service-learning and how is it different from volunteerism?
- ?? What is my role as agency supervisor in the service-learning partnership?
- ?? What are the legal implications surrounding the service-learning program and what insurance issues need to be addressed?
- ?? What can I expect from service-learning students and from the service-learning program? What tasks are appropriate for service-learners?
- ?? How can I recruit service-learners for my agency?
- ?? How can my agency and our clients most effectively utilize and benefit from the partnership?
- ?? What is reflection and how can I help students get the most out of their service experience with my agency?
- ?? How might I be able to come to M-DCC to recruit students to work at my agency?

This **mandatory** agency workshop will be held at (location), on **(date and time)**. Lunch will be served! **Please RSVP by (date)** so we can order your lunch **by faxing page three** of this letter to (fax number).

Because this agency workshop will include new, essential material, **attendance is required in order to be placed on our agency list.**

We look forward to your partnership and to a year of successful service-learning experiences for our students.

Sincerely,

Ossie Hanauer
Kendall/Homestead Campus Director
(305) 237-0859
ohanauer@mdcc.edu

Luciano Ramos
Wolfson/Medical/InterAmerican Campus Director
(305) 237-7470
lramos@mdcc.edu

Abby Powell
North Campus Director
(305) 237-8358
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Attachment

APPENDIX
**HERE ARE OTHER ACTIVITIES YOU MIGHT
WANT TO INCLUDE IN AN AGENCY WORKSHOP**

1. Visioning Exercise – “Perfect Service-Learning Partnership”

This is based on Steven Covey’s “Start with the end in mind” principle. When embarking on a new project it is important to think first of the end result we want – the goal we are shooting for, and then to use this “end” as we design and implement our plan of action. In this way, we can be more certain to be able to get to where we want to be.

Explain this concept to the agency representatives. Then tell them the following: “imagine a perfect service-learning partnership, imagine that you got all the service-learning students you wanted, that they did a great job for you, that everything went exactly as you would want with service-learning.” Ask them if things go the way they hope with service-learning, what would the impacts/outcomes be on the following groups:

- ~~✍~~ Students – (e.g., students will stay involved with volunteerism the rest of their life; students will become a life-long supporter/contributor to their agency, etc.)
- ~~✍~~ Their agency/clients – (e.g., children will improve their reading scores, the agency will get additional people power, the agency will get new energy and ideas, etc.)
- ~~✍~~ The greater community – (e.g., students will become better citizens and will be more engaged in their communities, community life will improve – safety, education, sense of community, etc.,)

Have participants work in small groups to come up with their impacts in each of these three areas. Reconvene as a large group to share and discuss the impacts. You will end up with a long list of outcomes for each area. Final message: these outcomes do happen with service-learning, however, the agency must plan and act in such a way to ensure this (orientation, supervision, meaningful work, recognition, etc...all these things the agency must do to ensure that the hoped for outcomes do occur...)

2. Choose a discipline (i.e., psychology, sociology, English, political science, philosophy, humanities, business, reading and writing, etc.), keeping in mind the difference between volunteers and service-learners, how could you use these service-learners in your agency?

3. Other discussion questions might be:

- ?? What do you as an agency representative expect from the students?
- ?? What does your agency expect from the service-learning program?

4. Questions agency representatives may want to ask the students:

- ?? Why do you want to do your service here?
- ?? What class are you doing this for?
- ?? May I see your syllabus?
- ?? Why did you choose this option?