

Service-Learning Case Studies—Draft, 1/01

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1. You are the service-learning faculty coordinator at your college. Two weeks into a new semester you bump into Dane Smith, one of your campus's new faculty members. Dane excitedly tells you that he is using service-learning in his Intro to Psychology courses by 1) asking his students to do 20 hours of service, and 2) asking them to write a one page summary of their experiences at the end of the semester. He tells you that students can earn up to 10 points through service-learning (a letter grade).

Question: As faculty coordinator, what concerns might you have about Professor Smith's use of "service-learning"? How would you assess the academic integrity of his use of service-learning? What suggestions would you have for Professor Smith?

2. 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.

Question: How should the faculty coordinator handle the issue of "double dipping"? What would you say to the faculty members involved?

3. You organize a brown bag luncheon for faculty interested in service-learning. Two faculty members get in a heated debate about whether service-learning should be required or optional.

Question: Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

4. Professor Lopez decides to use service-learning in her Criminal Justice class. She revises her syllabus to include a 15 hour service-learning option and looks forward to having many of her students involved. Four weeks into the term she comes to you to lament the fact that only 3 of her 30 students signed up for service-learning.

Question: What strategies to increase student involvement can you suggest for faculty who use service-learning as an option and want as many students as possible to sign up?

5. Your college's Academic Managers Council asks you to make a 15 minute presentation about service-learning.

Question: *How would you do this presentation--what are the key points to make, what strategies could you use to get their support?*

6. Your Academic Dean tells you that she has \$750 each semester available as a stipend for a "Service-Learning Faculty Coordinator" position. She asks you to describe, in writing, the specific responsibilities and activities of the coordinator.

Question: *Develop a list of projects your faculty coordinator would work on.*

7. You are just beginning your program. A veteran faculty member calls you to say that this service-learning thing is nothing new as he has been sending his students to do community service for more than 20 years as part of his Psychology 1000 course. He explains that in return for 40 hours of service, students receive a one letter grade bonus. When you try and speak to him about reflection and connecting the service to the class more, he cuts you off to say that the mere fact of having his students out in the community results in learning and the reflection component, although a nice idea, isn't necessary. You invite him to come to an upcoming workshop and offer to stop by to meet with him but he says he is too busy right now. He asks if you will help place and track his students as part of the service-learning program.

Question: *What should you do?*

8. One of the most frequently mentioned goals of service-learning is to "help promote civic responsibility." You wholeheartedly support this goal but are concerned that your students, despite doing a wonderful job in their service projects, really aren't any more knowledgeable about this concept at the end of the term. You do some research and find that unless students are purposefully taught about civic responsibility, they will not necessarily gain an increased understanding of it from simply being involved in service.

Question: *What is civic responsibility and how might you "purposefully teach" your students about it?*

9. Helping students think critically about the social problems our society faces is an important goal of service-learning. Although you have 10 outstanding faculty involved in your program, you notice that the depth of the students' experience is not what it could be. Although faculty are doing an adequate job of connecting the service experience to their class, you worry that students are not being challenged to fully understand the complexities of the social problems they face via their service.

Question: How could you strengthen this component of your program?

10. Your President hears that a rival college is starting a service-learning program and asks you to put together a plan to create a service-learning program at your institution.

Question: What recommendations would you make?

11. You have received a \$5,000 grant to start a service-learning program.

Question: How would you use this money?

12. You have a lot of administrative support for service-learning but you just can't seem to get more faculty interested.

Question: What strategies could you use to increase faculty involvement?

13. Your President is interested in beginning a service-learning program, however, she has some concerns about liability.

Question: Make a list of "best practices" to recommend to your president to alleviate her concerns about liability (i.e., ways to reduce liability in service-learning).

Case Studies – Service-Learning

1. You are the service-learning faculty coordinator at your college. Two weeks into a new semester you bump into Dane Smith, one of your campus's new faculty members. Dane excitedly tells you that he is using service-learning in his Intro to Psychology courses by 1) asking his students to do 20 hours of service, and 2) asking them to write a one page summary of their experiences at the end of the semester. He tells you that students can earn up to 10 points through service-learning (a letter grade).

Question: *As faculty coordinator, what concerns might you have about Professor Smith's use of "service-learning"? How would you assess the academic integrity of his use of service-learning? What suggestions would you have for Professor Smith?*

Concerns:

- The service is not sufficiently connected with course learning objectives—service-learning requires reflection throughout the service experience, ideally beginning before the service starts, occurring regularly throughout the experience, and culminating in some type of post-service reflection on the experience. Having students simply complete a one page summary at the end of the course is too little too late.
- The academic integrity is compromised in this example, students are basically being given academic credit for completing 20 hours of service rather than for demonstrating learning.
- The professor's approach merely offers a means for students to elevate their grade through community service without sufficiently relating it to the course material.

Suggestions:

- Explain concept of reflection and give concrete examples of how it can be utilized to create a true "service-learning" experience. Review reflection in terms of definition, purpose, and procedures for integrating into curriculum.
- Provide written materials about reflection techniques (e.g., "*Reflection Activities for the College Classroom*").
- Review faculty handbook with faculty member.
- Share web sites and Listserv information.
- Organize workshops and seminars on reflection.

2. 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.

Question: *How should the faculty coordinator handle the issue of "double dipping"? What would you say to the faculty members involved?*

Handling "double dipping."

- 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 would be hard to find one service project that fits both classes).

- Each could use different reflective techniques for this student.

3. You organize a brown bag luncheon for faculty interested in service-learning. Two faculty members get in a heated debate about whether service-learning should be required or optional.

Question: Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

1. Advantages of requiring service-learning:

- Get more people involved.
- Can be more difficult to discuss if the entire class is not involved.
- Some otherwise resistant students will lose out on the opportunity (the students who wouldn't normally choose service-learning often are those who get the most out of it!).
- Benefits provided are not offered elsewhere; i.e. skills enhancement, job experience, resume enhancement, major and career assessment, making contacts, etc.
- Students—including those who didn't want to participate—overwhelmingly report, at the end of the experience, that they are glad they did service-learning.
- If students are given flexible options – weekends, evenings, a variety of service opportunities, -- a suitable placement can be found for almost any student.
- Faculty require many assignments in their classes – research projects, papers, etc., service-learning is simply another tool to help students learn course content and can be required just like anything else.

Disadvantages of requiring service-learning:

- Can create resentment of being required to do something.
- Semblance of additional work on the part of student and faculty.
- Concerns of faculty for application to their curriculum.
- Some students are going to school, working and raising a family and find it difficult to participate.
- Some students may be ill prepared for service (psychological problems, etc.)
- Legal issues may be raised if require all the students to go to one activity on a particular day.

Advantages of service-learning as an optional part of the class:

- Students may feel more willing to participate.
- Choice is usually more appealing.
- Faculty new to the program may feel less overwhelmed and less stressed about “forcing students to participate” since not everyone will participate and they can “feel” their way through what works and what does not.
- If presented properly, service-learning can be enticing and exciting and the entire class can be convinced to participate without “forcing them.”

Disadvantages of Service-Learning as an optional part of the class:

- Disproportionate grading system for those who take part and those who don't.

4. Professor Lopez decides to use service-learning in her Criminal Justice class. She revises her syllabus to include a 15-hour service-learning option and looks forward to having many of her students involved. Four

weeks into the term she comes to you to lament the fact that only 3 of her 30 students signed up for service-learning.

Question: *What strategies to increase student involvement can you suggest for faculty who use service-learning as an option and want as many students as possible to sign up?*

Strategies to increase student involvement:

- Increase value (make it more significant part of their grade).
- Improve manner in which service-learning is presented.
- Get students who have participated in service-learning in the past (student ambassadors) to speak to class about value of service-learning.
- Have existing faculty who use s-l do a workshop.
- Open discussion (review) between professor and class of benefits of service-learning.
- Have someone from the Service-Learning Center speak to class, opening discussion....
- Have agency speaker come and talk with class.
- Take class on tour of an agency.
- Correlate service-learning and the Criminal Justice system and the contribution the students can make in a short time. Emphasize experience and the fact that if they are truly interested in this field then service-learning should be natural progression of their interests.
- Require service-learning.
- Have students research importance and benefits of service-learning.

5. Your college's Academic Managers Council asks you to make a 15-minute presentation about service-learning.

Question: *How would you do this presentation--what are the key points to make, what strategies could you use to get their support?*

Service-Learning Presentation – Key Points:

- Service-learning is first and foremost an academic teaching strategy
- Link to academic integrity/rigor, credit for demonstrated learning, not just hours of service.
- Discuss research on active learning/experiential learning, and research on service-learning
- Review benefits (to faculty, students, college, community)
- “Wow” them with statistics....”96% satisfied....” (Utilize national program and national statistics)
- Consider having an agency partner, student ambassador, or experienced faculty share their expertise
- Discuss how reflection is utilized and clear definition of service-learning
- Summarize the tie-in between s-l and the course curriculum

6. Your Academic Dean tells you that she has \$750 each semester available as a stipend for a “*Service-Learning Faculty Coordinator*” position. She asks you to describe, in writing, the specific responsibilities and activities of the coordinator.

Question: *Develop a list of projects your faculty coordinator would work on.*

Projects/responsibilities of faculty coordinator:

- Voice/advocate for s-l
- Promote s-l to faculty

- Guard academic integrity—ensure that every faculty member who uses “service-learning” has truly integrated the service into their course and is assessing and grading learning, not hours of service
- Help plan and lead program
- Liaison between faculty and Service-Learning Center
- Hosts brown bag lunches/seminars to encourage faculty to utilize s-l
- Spokesperson/proponent for program at faculty events
- Lead Faculty Skills Workshops on service-learning

7. You are just beginning your program. A veteran faculty member calls you to say that this service-learning thing is nothing new as he has been sending his students to do community service for more than 20 years as part of his Psychology 1000 course. He explains that in return for 40 hours of service, students receive a one letter grade bonus. When you try and speak to him about reflection and connecting the service to the class more, he cuts you off to say that the mere fact of having his students out in the community results in learning and the reflection component, although a nice idea, isn’t necessary. You invite him to come to an upcoming workshop and offer to stop by to meet with him but he says he is too busy right now. He asks if you will help place and track his students as part of the service-learning program.

Question: What should you do?

Plan of action for faculty member not interested in reflection:

- Ask to meet with him to discuss key characteristics of service-learning
- Testimonials from faculty and students
- Outline benefits of service-learning as instituted with reflection
- Examples of reflection techniques
- Advantages of reflection techniques:
 - Opportunity to discover purpose of work
 - Offers connection of work to coursework, issues of democracy, citizenship, or the community organization itself.
 - Additional learning about themselves, communities, and nation.
 - Offers connection between doing and thinking
 - Enables student to discover connection between what they do and the resulting consequences
 - Provides opportunities to:
 - Develop critical thinking skills and improve basic academic skills
 - Gain a better understanding of self, the community organization, societal problems, and course content
 - Strengthen civil literacy
 - Examine personal, academic, and occupationally related issues
 - Higher level thinking and problem solving

Note: If this faculty member refuses to include reflection in his class, it might be better to not include him as using service-learning. If not, your program will be tainted by calling “volunteerism” service-learning which will cause you to lose a lot of ground in your efforts to define service-learning as course connected and academically rigorous.

8. One of the most frequently mentioned goals of service-learning is to “help promote civic responsibility.” You wholeheartedly support this goal but are concerned that your students, despite doing a wonderful job in their service projects, really aren’t any more knowledgeable about this concept at the end of the term. You do

some research and find that unless students are purposefully taught about civic responsibility, they will not necessarily gain an increased understanding of it from simply being involved in service.

Question: What is civic responsibility and how might you “purposefully teach” your students about it?

Civic Responsibility: Demonstrating citizenship skills:

- Participating in democracy.
- Working for the common good.
- Giving up some of your rights for the good of all.
- Exhibiting rights and responsibilities
- Endorsing our multicultural nation
- Listening
- Expanding our imagination to try and understand others points of view
- Respecting our differences
- Knowledge of our country’s history, values, and political system
- Problem solving and decision making
- Exhibiting communication skills that endorse consensus building

How to Teach Civic Responsibility:

- Monthly “brown bag” faculty lunch to discuss concept and ways to foster civic responsibility
- Hold campus forums for faculty and students to discuss civic responsibility
- Look for ways to purposefully explore and reflect on this concept through a mixture of reading, writing, and dialogue

9. Helping students think critically about the social problems our society faces is an important goal of service-learning. Although you have 10 outstanding faculty involved in your program, you notice that the depth of the students’ experience is not what it could be. Although faculty are doing an adequate job of connecting the service experience to their class, you worry that students are not being challenged to fully understand the complexities of the social problems they face via their service.

Question: How could you strengthen this component of your program?

Strengthening the s-l program:

- Good training of agencies so they build in reflection on-site
- Build in critical thinking assignments that ask students to reflect on underlying social issues and how they can contribute to alleviating these problems
- Invite community organization speaker to class or visit agency
- Forum on Civic Responsibility emphasizing social issues in our community. Tie this back to their service through small group discussion.

10. Your President hears that a rival college is starting a service-learning program and asks you to put together a plan to create a service-learning program at your institution.

Question: What recommendations would you make?

Recommendations to institute a s-l program:

- President's support required
- Need infrastructure – office, staff, etc.
- Designate an energetic, committed, respected faculty member as coordinator
- Need investment, and time.
- Need students to staff office
- Training program for agencies
- Visit a model program
- Research Internet for s-l
- Engage at least one Dean, Assistant Dean, Chair and three faculty members in the process (Get one faculty member to take the lead and be spokesperson)
- Focus on quality vs. quantity
- Emphasize academic rigor
- Orient and train all participants
- Focus on academic integrity from the beginning

11. You have received a \$5,000 grant to start a service-learning program.

Question: How would you use this money?

Utilizing grant money:

- Stipend for Faculty Coordinator
- Training events (materials and food!)
- Bring in outside experts to lead seminars/workshops
- Send a team to a conference
- Create an advisory team that includes all stakeholders
- Visit a model program
- Hire a part-time coordinator
- Give several students stipends to help coordinate program
- Hire FWS Community Service Students to help coordinate program (at no-cost to college)
- Faculty mini-grants

12. You have a lot of administrative support for service-learning but you just can't seem to get more faculty interested.

Question: What strategies could you use to increase faculty involvement?

Strategies to increase faculty involvement:

- Food events! (Invite the President)
- Mailings that attract attention
- Find one faculty member to do service-learning well and be your champion
- Bring in outside expert to do workshops/presentations
- Dean, Assistant Dean, and Chair support – attend meetings
- Committee involvement – be on their side and network
- Provide customer service
- Rapport – rapport - rapport
- Testimonials from satisfied faculty

- Get faculty to recruit more faculty
- Celebrate/recognize the faculty: gift certificates, letters of commendation, etc.
- Set up opportunities for faculty to interact with agency representatives so they can learn what the needs are
- Share research on effectiveness

13. Your President is interested in beginning a service-learning program, however, she has some concerns about liability.

Question: Make a list of “best practices” to recommend to your president to alleviate her concerns about liability (i.e., ways to reduce liability in service-learning).

Best practices for reducing liability in s-l:

- Ensure that all agencies are screened by the Program Director
- Ask all agency partners to attend a workshop and complete a letter of understanding
- Have students complete a contract/confirmation agreement with the agency to clarify expectations
- Make sure agencies have insurance for volunteers
- Ensure that s-l is listed in syllabus and makes sense for the course
- Faculty is encouraged to disqualify students that appear to jeopardize either his safety or that of the public
- Avoid forcing student to go to an agency at particular time
- Establish Service-Learning Center with professional staff to oversee program