

# Reflections on Service-Learning in Higher Education

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## Overview

- My story
- Characterization of service-learning
- Service-learning as “deeper education”
- My identification of tenets
- Examples & What Could it Look Like?
- Next steps

## Once Upon a Time, There Was...

- Tenured faculty member
- Established research agenda and publication record
- Classroom experience = “entitled transaction model”

## A Knock on the Door

- Student requested assistance with a service-learning project...
- My response...

## His Project...My Education

- Jr. High Students with Learning Disabilities
- Their concern = rain forest
- Cross curricular instruction using the rain forest as a context
- Students' role as citizens → adopt acreage
- Fundraising project → "Hidden curriculum" of communication, problem solving, collaboration

## Profound Pedagogy

- Classic role reversal
- My ignorance – field experience vs. service-learning
- My continued education in service-learning
  - "Brown bag" lunch presentations
  - Technical assistance from Bennion Center
  - Began my own service-learning course
  - I learned what it is and what it "isn't"
  - Integrated my research + teaching

## What It Is...

- “a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service learning.”  
(Jacoby, 1996, p.5)

## Bennion Center definition of Service-learning...

- An experience-based form of pedagogy in which students, faculty, community partners work together to integrate and apply empirically-grounded knowledge in authentic settings to address the needs of the community and meet the instructional objectives using action, critical reflection, and research to prepare students for careers and to become contributing members to a democratic society.

## What It Isn't...

- Charity – not just doing good deeds or taking pity on others
- Volunteering – required voluntary good deeds is an oxymoron and the service is a required part of the course (like exams & readings)
- Service-projects – short-term events that have no instructional objectives
- Internships – (see next slide)

## Service Learning vs. Internships

- Traditional “internships” (student teaching, practica) focus on acquisition & demonstration of professional skills for licensure (sometimes at the expense of the partner)
- BUT...internships CAN be service-learning!
- Service learning is reciprocal in nature...the student is the teacher and vice versa.
- Service learning promotes civic responsibility & social justice
- Service learning incorporates a reflective process

## Compare & Contrast

	Community Service	Enhanced Academic Learning	Purposeful Civic Learning
Volunteer Service	Yes	No	No
Internship & Practica	Yes/No	Yes	No
Service-Learning	Yes	Yes	Yes

## Best Practice of Service-learning

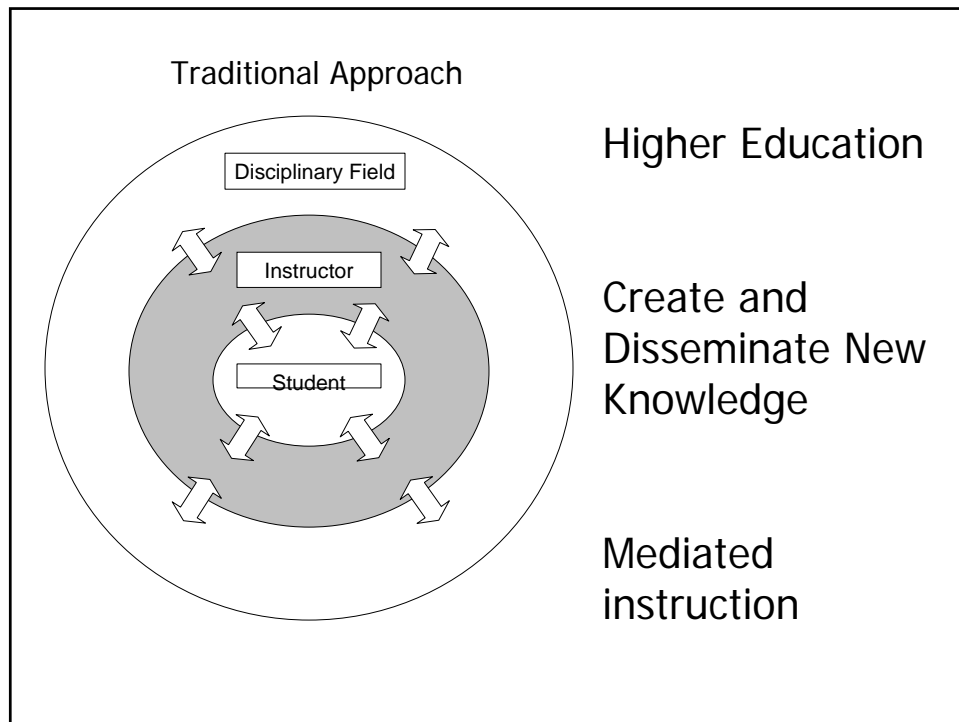
- Engage people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good.
- Provide structured opportunities for reflection.
- Articulate service AND learning goals for all involved.
- Clarify roles/responsibilities for everyone.
- Flexibly match service with needs.

## Best Practice of Service-learning

- Expect genuine, active, sustained organizational commitment.
- Include training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals.
- Insure flexible time commitments.
- Commit to participation by and with diverse populations.
- *(Honnet & Paulson, 1989 – Johnson Foundation Wingspread Conference)*

## Service-learning as Deeper Education

- Service-learning is a pedagogy – *a* way (not *the* way) of teaching and learning using service to meet instructional objectives while meeting a need in the community and reflecting on the experience in terms of meeting instructional and societal goals.
- WHAT? + SO WHAT? + NOW WHAT?



## Challenges

- Students have come to expect this “transactional” model.
- Students resist “extra work” and “volunteering.” (we avoid the “V” word)
- Takes time for faculty to establish the partnerships.
- Less “control” over the learning experience.

## Service-learning Moves Us Toward Deeper Education

- Complimentary epistemology to focus on "WHAT?" + "SO WHAT?" + "NOW WHAT?"
- Faculty and students co-create new knowledge AND understanding
- Applied theory and learning
- Contributions to disciplinary field AND to society as a whole
- The academy as partner & citizen
- Increased student role/responsibility in the process
- Broader student development & civic engagement

## Direct & Indirect Service

- Tendency to think/practice direct service:
  - Nursing students → blood pressure/pulse
  - Education majors → reading tutors
- Indirect service might include...
  - Nursing students → companionship, nutrition education, research/policy reports
  - Education majors → conducting assessment and/or analysis/reports

## Some Examples

- Pharmacy & Nursing – Befriend the Elderly
- Chemical Engineering – Solar Powered Hydrogen Cells + AMES H.S. Students + Integral Perspectives
- Urban Planning – Students designing business corridor
- English Majors – Literacy Program + Literature of Poverty
- Education Majors – Site-based Transdisciplinary Educational Partnerships (STEP)\*
- Katrina: Eye of the Storm – Interdisciplinary perspective of race, culture, health, environment, policy

## Overview: Tenets of Deeper Education In Service-Learning

- Theoretical Constructs
- Education of the WHOLE student
- Civic Engagement
- Critical thinking & problem solving
- Active learning
- Dynamic Roles
  - (continued)

## Tenets of Deeper Education

- Reflection
- Transactional → Transformative → Transcendental Learning
- Expanded Classroom
- Head + Heart + Hands
- “Perspectivism” of Power & Privilege

## Theoretical Constructs

- John Dewey – Learning through experience & creating democratic society
- Ernest Boyer – Scholarship of Integration + Application + Teaching
- L.S. Vygotsky – Construction of knowledge
- Judith Ramaley – Discovery + Learning + Engagement

## Education of the Whole Student

- Professional development
- Civic development
- Personal development
- “Spiritual” development – NOT religious  
(although it could be)...
  - Give and take
  - Sense of self + Connection to other + Sense of purpose
  - “The way we live our lives is a political & spiritual act.”

## Civic Engagement

- Battistoni (2002)
  - Political knowledge and critical thinking skills
  - Communication skills
  - Public problem solving
  - Civic judgment
  - Civic Imagination & creativity
  - Collective Action
  - Community/coalition building
  - Organizational analysis

## Active Learning

- Looking at the “WHY” and “HOW” rather than passively receiving information.
- Application of knowledge & skills beyond traditional assignments.
- Service promotes assimilation of knowledge & skills for professional AND civic development.

## Dynamic Roles

- Role of instructor = facilitator vs. disseminator (guide on the side vs. sage on the stage)
- Co-construction of knowledge AND understanding – students & community representatives are partners in teaching and learning experience
- Role of service provider & service recipient “blurs”

## Reflection

The intentional consideration of an experience in light of particular learning objectives (Hatcher & Bringle, 1997).

Many methods, formats – written, oral, small group, large group, thread discussions, activities (this is a whole another workshop presentation)

## Transactional Transformative Transcendental Learning

- Transactional learning = dissemination, accumulation, regurgitation of information
- Transformative learning = change in students' understanding (empathy)
- Transcendental learning = going beyond the students' own learning needs to helping and serving other by applying new knowledge

## Expanded Classroom

- Authentic settings
- Application of knowledge & skills
- Testing theory
- Society is beneficiary of knowledge & experience

## Head + Heart + Hands

- Intellectual growth
- Compassion and awareness
- Application of skills & making a difference

## “Perspectivism”

- Awareness of our personal lens
- Power of the academy vs. perspective of community
- Students’ privilege & “stewardship”

## Mission Match

- The mission of this system is to develop human resources, to discover and disseminate knowledge, to extend knowledge and its application beyond the boundaries of its campuses, and to serve and stimulate society by developing in students heightened intellectual, cultural, and humane sensitivities; scientific, professional, and technological expertise; and a sense of purpose. Inherent in this broad mission are methods of instruction, research, extended education, and public service designed to educate people and improve the human condition. Basic to every purpose of the system is the search for truth.

## UWSP Vision 2015

Building on traditions of excellence and service to Central Wisconsin, UWSP will CONNECT TO THE FUTURE by:

- Providing challenging learning and leadership experiences that prepare students to be GLOBAL CITIZENS
- Projecting our history and values in the LIFE AND LOOK OF THE CAMPUS
  - Experience of the liberal arts and sciences
  - Responsibility for personal and community wellness
  - Stewardship of natural resources
  - The power of communication and the arts
- Partnering with others for a VIBRANT ECONOMY

What Could All of This Look Like?

## Service-Learning at the University of Utah

- Bennion Center established in 1987 to honor the legacy of Lowell Bennion and sponsor student VOLUNTEERISM
- Service-learning introduced 1992
- 150+ service-learning courses on the “books”
- Service-Learning advisory committee (SLAB)
- 9 criteria to receive S-L designation by class committee

- Lowell Bennion Community Service Center
  - 40+ Student-directed volunteer programs
  - 150+ Service-learning courses
  - Service-learning scholars
  - Service-politics & civic engagement (SPACE)
  - Service House (Living/Learning Community)
  - Alternative Spring Break (ASB)
  - America Reads
- Mentoring & technical support to faculty
  - Consultants/fellows + service-learning coordinators + database
  - Community Partners Coalition\*
- Bennion Center Advisory Board + Development Committee (full time development officer + Administrative Assistant)
- Conversations & Consortium
  - Workshops + panels + guest speakers
  - Sponsored International Conference on Research of Service-learning in 2003

## Service-learning Criteria

- Service relates to the academic content of the course
- Students provide service to individual, organizations: 20-30 hours per 3 cr. hr. course\*
- Knowledge from the discipline enhances the understanding of the service experience and the service enhances understanding of the academic content.
- The course offers a method to assess learning derived from the service – credit is given for learning & its relation to the course – not for the service alone

## Service-learning Criteria

- Service interactions in the community respond to the needs of service recipients, and offer an opportunity for recipients or agency representatives to be involved in the evaluation of the service
- The course and service aim at having students gain an appreciation for citizenship & academic achievement.
- Activities in class provide opportunities for students to think about what they've learning through the service and how it relates to the class content.
- The class provides ways for students to learn from each other as well as the instructor and community partners
- Course options ensure that no student is required to participate in a service placement that creates a religions, political, and/or moral conflict for the student.\*

## Service-Learning at the University of Utah (continued)

- Academic Vice Presidential Support:
  - 3 hard-line positions (Director, S-L Manager, S-L Scholar coordinator) + 6 “soft” positions
  - \$70,000 to \$80,000 committed to institutionalization of service-learning through mini-grants & initiatives
  - Public Service Professorship -- \$10,000 Award
  - Service-learning Coordinators (TAs) (\$1,000)

## Service-Learning at the University of Utah (continued)

- Service-learning Scholars
  - 400 clock hours of VOLUNTEER service
  - Minimum of 10 credit hours of S-L course
  - Supervisory committee to oversee a capstone project that meets the needs of a community agency and is self-sustainable
  - Graduates receive special recognition at commencement
  - 120 in the program – about 20 per cohort

## Future Directions for U of U

- International Service-learning
- Integrating S-L and Community-based Research
- Creating a research center on civic engagement
- Promoting interdisciplinary programs that incorporate service-learning -- Sustainability

## Future Directions Nationally

- Extramural Funding Opportunities
- Civic Engagement
- Interdisciplinary focus
- Undergraduate community-based research tied to service-learning courses
- Global perspectives & international service-learning\*
- Research

## Challenges & Realities

- Clarity on definitions & terminologies
- TIME!
- Revisiting traditional roles of the academy and faculty – not in lieu of or replacing traditional roles...as a complimentary role where applicable
- Revisiting the reward structure
- Infrastructural support & funding
- Establishing & maintaining partnerships with community\*
- Establishing rigor & standards
- Continued research and assessment

## Conclusion

- Not for everyone – but recognize & support those who want to be engaged in this work
- Professional growth
- Personal growth
- Political growth
- Spiritual growth
- Catalyst to tenure (integrate research & teaching)
- Includes & transcends traditional role of creating and disseminating new knowledge
  - Academy & scholar as citizen