



# Service-Learning at Delaware: Basics for Course Construction

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# Principles of Service-Learning

adapted from Kerrissa Heffernan

Experiential learning through service in the community:

- #1 Priority: Learning the academic course content/skills
- Community Engagement regarding a REAL need
- Reciprocity: ONLY DO win-win-win contracts
- Guided Reflection is the key to the learning: linking the why's to class content, to career, to society, to self
- Public Dissemination: Focus on your stakeholders!  
Who wants to know? Why? How and when?

The rest is flexible and creative!!



# Service-Learning Forms

Richard Cone

- General Education Service Learning
- Discipline-Based
- Problem-Based
- Integrative Capstone Courses
- Service Internships
- Community-Based Action Research
- Extra/Fourth Credit
- Co-Curricular (Student Clubs)



# Service-learning choices

- Type of scholarship involved
  - Discovery, Integration, Application, Dissemination
- Focus: Community, Issue, Partner, or Individual, or a combination
- Small or large portion of course
- Structured task or creative task
- Homogeneous or heterogeneous projects
- Required or optional component of course
- In the classroom or in the community



## Course Design Exercise

- Think of a course that makes sense to try service-learning. Describe the purpose of the course.
- Do you envision this course as a Landing Pad or Launching Pad for your students' knowledge and/or passion in the subject matter?
- Who in Delaware do you consider to be a viable community partner for the service-learning? How do you plan to develop a relationship with them?
- Who are all of the stakeholders involved with your new course vision? Write at least one primary motivation for each of these stakeholders who would want to work with you or to support you in this service-learning process.



# SL Syllabus Components

- Service Learning Purpose, Rationale and Description
- Course Goals and Objectives:
  - Focus on learning process and outcomes, not teaching inputs! Clearly show where service-learning is utilized as the process.
- Course Points Allocations and Choices/Options
- Weekly schedule of events and out-of-class time
- Overview of assignments and journals: provide examples and set expectations
- Explanation of grading policies regarding service-learning



# Clear Syllabus Statements

- Expressly link service to course content
- Describe the nature of the service project and the course and community needs it fulfills in terms consistent with student motivations
- Depict the Roles/Responsibilities of students
  - Time, transportation, contacts, protocol, etc.
- Explain What, When and How performance will be measured
- Describe reflection process: do not assume they know!
- Describe expectations for public dissemination of results and get signatures of release



# Academic Benefits to the Students

- Theory Reinforcement, Application, and Extension
- Connection of Theory to Practice
- Connection of Theory to Community Realities
- Connection of Community Realities to Personal and Professional Roles/Ethics
- Strengthening of Analytical and Critical Thinking Skills: Development of Cognitive Complexity
- Strengthening of Interpersonal Skills (professional, leadership, communication, teamwork, project management, etc.)
- Promotion of Values of Inclusiveness
- Promotion of Civic Engagement habits and choices



# Student Motivations

- Improve Learning: Get a better education
- Have More Fun While Learning
- Live a life of Greater Value: Democratic, Faith-based, Political or Social Ethics
- Hone Professional Skills & Attitudes
- Develop a Portfolio of Projects
- Develop a Network of Supportive People
- Develop as a whole person



# Service-Learning Accountability

adapted from Zlotkowski, Heffernan, and Howard

1. Articulate Course Content Areas
2. Articulate learning objectives (specific) for each area of content.
3. For each learning objective: articulate the learning strategies and the planned assessments: the variables, the measures, and the sources.



# Service-Learning LOGISTICS

1. **Matchmaking:** Course with Community Needs & Partner
2. **Project Planning**
3. **Course/Syllabus Design**
4. **Orientation of Students and Agency**
5. **Project Implementation**
6. **Project Process Feedback: Continuous/Often**
7. **Project Deliverables:** Journals/Final Products/Presentations
8. **Project Evaluation and Debriefing**
9. **Project Dissemination**



# Orient Your Community Partners

(From the University of Maryland)

1. What is service-learning and how it is defined at your university and in your course. Present overview of the organizational structure of the campus community service office (if one exists). Provide tips and advice for navigating the structures on campus to get the assistance they need, particularly student volunteers (but also information on internships, practicum, research, ...)
2. Overview the course plan for preparation, action, reflection, and evaluation. Share expectations, and agree on designated responsibilities and outcomes.
3. Explain how to reach faculty and how to reach students.



# From Placements to Partnerships

- **PLACEMENTS**

Minimalist relationship

Focus of service project is on meeting short term goals and hours put in.

Relationship between community partner and educational institution ends when project is completed.

Reflection only occurs in the classroom.

Community partner role accepts placement, supervises student in placement and may complete an evaluation on student work.

Impact of student on organization is minimal and short-term.

- **PARTNERSHIP**

Partners share ownership of projects and work together to define and tailor the specifics of the relationship.

Partnership is long-term, ongoing, and transforming.

Partners together design and develop service-learning projects (contracts, syllabi, evaluations)

Community partners may be co-teachers and may co-facilitate reflection activities.

Faculty members are active advocates for their community partners, and visa versa.

From Inland Northwest Service-Learning Partnerships



# Suggested Course Design Plan

- Articulate Goal(s) and Objectives for your course.
- Specifically identify which of those learning outcomes can result from a service-learning project you can do.
- Prepare an argument for why the service-learning is the best way or at least a great way to organize the course regarding those outcome goals.
- Design the stages or steps of the service-learning project, and budget how much time they would take.
- Write your syllabus.



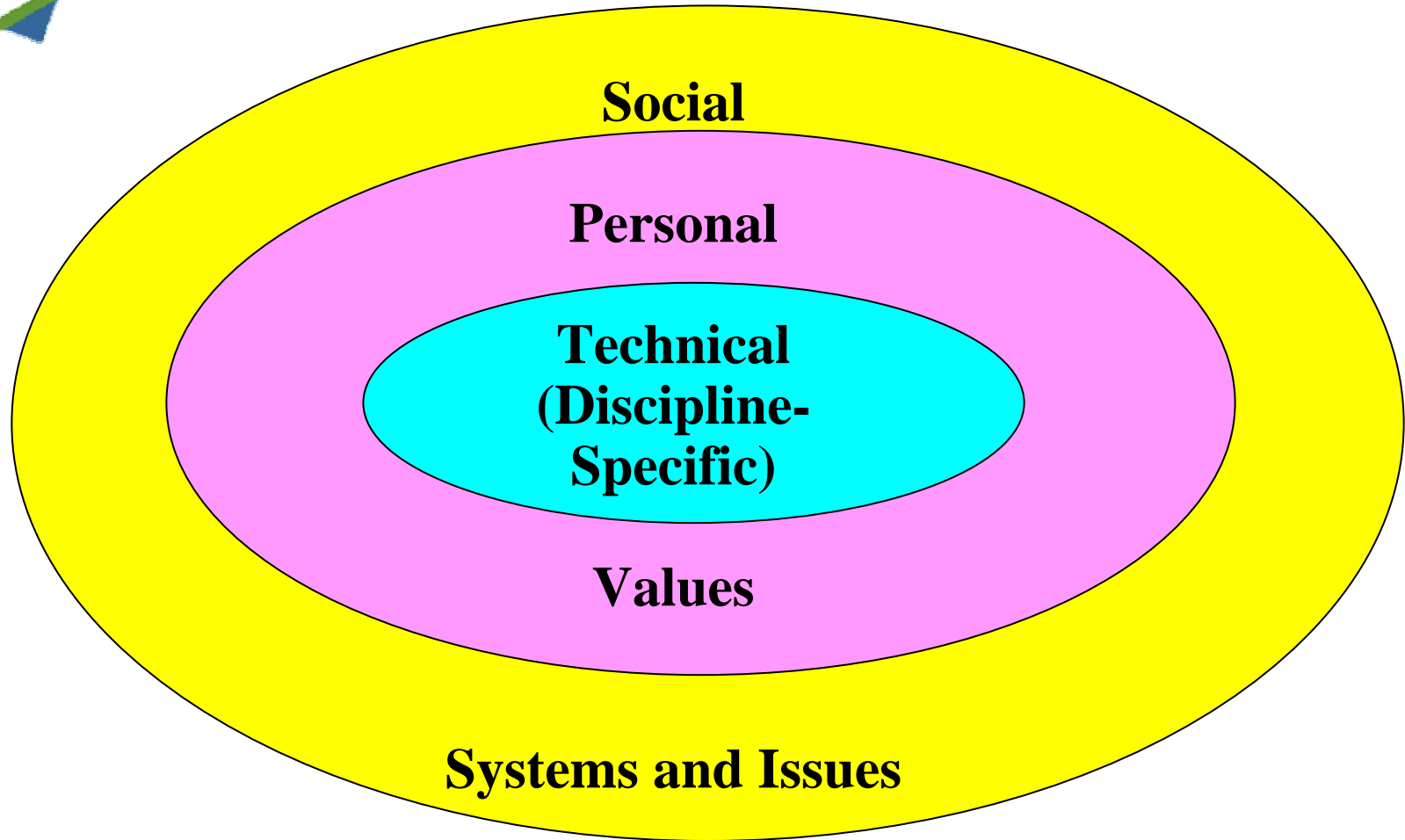
# Best Practice REFLECTION

(Bringle and Hatcher)

- Link experience to learning.
- Guide with suggestive topics, issues, and/or examples. Present opposing viewpoints. Require defenses of opinions.
- Periodic and regular rather than one-time.
- Pre-service, during service, and post-service writing.
- Involve feedback.
- Link service to personal values.



# Levels of Reflection





# Easy Grading: 3-Part Journals

from Edward Zlotkowski

1. What happened? What did you see/do?  
the daytimer (regular font)
2. **How did you feel, react, learn about  
yourself, your biases/assumptions, your  
community, your profession?**  
the diary (bold font)
3. *How can you demonstrate that you better  
understand course texts & concepts from  
what you did and what you felt? (italics font)*



# Civic Engagement Definitions

*Source: Rick Battistoni*

## **Constitutional citizenship:**

A focus on individuals and their rights

## **Communitarianism:**

A consensus/sharing of community values

## **Participatory democracy:**

A personal responsibility to be active

## **“Public work”:**

Work that benefits the public at large

Doesn't require shared values

## **Social capital:**

The power of people putting their heads, hearts or hands together to get something done.



# How much student preparation?

Depends on:

- Your risk tolerances
- Nature and significance of the work
- Logistics
- Personal skills, attitudes, biases, stereotypes of the students
- Fears and anxieties
- Expected questions

Design a list of dos and don'ts: very telling!



# Assessment: You Get What You Ask For

- What do you want to know?
- How can you know it?
- How will you measure if you know it?
- What difference will it make to know it?
- What resources can you allocate to support this assessment work?
- What will be done with the results when they are presented?



# Assessment Issues

Plan assessments to match your targeted outcomes:

- For your students learning
- For your teaching quality
- For your research quality and quantity
- For your service quality and quantity
- For your community/relationship quality
- For your department/college/grant mission and requirements



# Summary of Key Elements

from Eyler and Giles "Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?"

- Application to Course Objectives
- Quality of Community Placement and Impact: Did you make a difference?
- Reflection: Timing and Depth
- Assessment: Show the Results
- Dissemination: Many stakeholders care!



## S-L Scholarship Quality is affected by:

- Clarity of goals
- Relevance of goals
- Mastery of knowledge
- Appropriate use of resources
- Effective communication
- Significance of results
- Dissemination of results
- Consistent ethical behavior



# Service-Learning Courses: Principles of Good Practice

adapted from Jeffrey Howard (2001)

- Establish specific learning objectives: do not compromise academic rigor
- Establish criteria for the selection of service placements: correlate them with the learning objectives
- Prepare students for learning from their experiences
- Utilize validated learning strategies
- Academic credit is for learning, not for service (don't just measure what is easy to count)



# Principles of Good Practice (cont.)

adapted from Jeffrey Howard (2001)

- Minimize differences between classroom and community learning
- Rethink your instructional role:
  - Process versus Product
- Be prepared for variation in student learning outcomes:
  - it feels like a loss of control for some
  - it may be a loss of control for some
- Emphasize the community responsibility aspects of your course content: social rather than just individual role of learning



# Effective Service-Learning

(Porter Honnet and Poulsen 1989)

1. Engages people in responsible and challenging action for the common good.
2. Provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically and deeply.
3. Articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved.
4. Allows for those with needs to define those needs.
5. Clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization.
6. Matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances.
7. Expects genuine, active, and sustained commitments.



# Effective Service-Learning (cont.)

(Porter Honnet and Poulsen 1989)

8. Expects genuine, active, and sustained commitments.
9. Includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals.
10. Insures the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interests of all involved.
11. Is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations.



# Available Resources

- Campus Compact [www.compact.org](http://www.compact.org)
- California Campus Compact  
[www.sfsu.edu/~cacc/resources/servicelearning/higher.html](http://www.sfsu.edu/~cacc/resources/servicelearning/higher.html)
- Maricopa Community Colleges  
[www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/sl/resources.html](http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/sl/resources.html)
- Steps for Better Thinking  
- [www.wolcottlynch.com](http://www.wolcottlynch.com)