SERVICE LEARNING, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: A DISCUSSION ON EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

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- Patrick Eccles, Northwestern University
- Erica Haas-Gallo, University of Wisconsin-Madison
What is Service Learning

- Many institutions have different definitions, but they generally include the following characteristics:
  - Engaged in community
  - Student learning
  - Meaningful Service
  - Community-identified needs
  - Sustainable
  - Collaborative
  - Reflection
HOW IS SERVICE-LEARNING SUPPORTED ON YOUR CAMPUS
Service Learning on Campus

- UW Madison’s Morgridge Center approves courses and study abroad experiences as service learning. On-campus courses are noted as SL on UW transcript.

- MSU’s Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement provides students with a Record of Service.

- Northwestern’s Center for Civic Engagement supports an undergraduate certificate program; Center for Global Engagement focuses on international experiences; NU Study Abroad offers SL programs for credit.
IS SERVICE-LEARNING DOCUMENTED BY YOUR INSTITUTION
Ethics, Integrity, Professionalism, and Reciprocity

All VIEW programs should seek to uphold the highest standards of ethics, integrity, and professionalism among staff, faculty, students, and partner organizations. VIEW programs should also aim to create relationships of reciprocity and mutual benefit between organizational and community partners (page 3).
Doing Service Learning

Types of Engaged Learning

- **Volunteerism**: Students engage in activities where the emphasis is on service for the sake of the beneficiary or recipient (client, partner).
- **Internship**: Students engage in activities to enhance their own vocational or career development.
- **Practicum**: Students work in a discipline-based venue in place of an in-class course experience.
- **Community Service**: Students engage in activities to meet actual community needs as an integrated aspect of the curriculum.
- **Community-Based Learning**: Students engage in actively addressing mutually defined community needs (as a collaboration between community partners, faculty, and students) as a vehicle for achieving academic goals and course objectives.
- **Service-Learning**: Students engage in community service activities with intentional academic and learning goals and opportunities for reflection that connect to their academic disciplines.

What does service learning accomplish?

“Changing our worldview is an implicit goal of most service-learning programs. Unless we understand how political, economic, and judicial systems tend to favor one group over another, we will be unable to truly assist those in need.”

Quote adapted from:
6-Day Visit To Rural African Village Completely Changes Woman’s Facebook Profile Picture

ST. LOUIS—Calling the experience “completely transformative,” local 22-year-old Angela Fisher told friends she would never forget her recent mission trip to a remote village in Kenya.
To Hell with Good Intentions

Ivan Illich

An address by Monsignor Ivan Illich to the Conference on InterAmerican Student Projects (CIASP) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, on April 20, 1968. In his usual biting and sometimes sarcastic style, Illich goes to the heart of the deep dangers of paternalism inherent in any voluntary service activity, but especially in any international service "mission." Parts of the speech are outdated and must be viewed in the historical context of 1968 when it was delivered, but the entire speech is retained for the full impact of his point and at Ivan Illich's request. Reprinted with Ivan Illich's permission.

North Americans spend millions of dollars each year on Mission/related trips to developing nations. Many of these efforts do more harm than good.

BY JO ANN VAN ENGEN

The Cost of Short Term Missions
Models and Methodology: What Makes up a Quality Community Engagement Experience?

Photo by Connie Currier, Public Health in Ghana: Community-Based Field Research Methods

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Types of models and methods of delivery depend on:

- The purpose of the engagement and the agenda.
- The level of participation sought and the community to be engaged.
- The types of information required.
- The length of the process.
- The resources available.
# The spectrum of MSU programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rainforests and Reality in Nicaragua</th>
<th>Community Engagement in the Peruvian Andes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring break (1 week)</td>
<td>Summer (11 weeks)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus on how community interacts with environment</td>
<td>Projects involve applied research +/- or training activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects done by entire class</td>
<td>Projects done by teams of 2-3 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE not part of syllabus and assessment</td>
<td>CE credits part of program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing in research stations + hostels</td>
<td>Homestays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No language requirement</td>
<td>Two years Spanish pre-requisite, culture and language course part of program</td>
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Logistics

- Include experienced leaders
- Be prepared to listen, be flexible, take responsibility and give time and effort
- Keep the group small, take the incremental approach, and be open to continual evolution and experimenting with programming
- Provide full immersion programs with realistic goals and carefully selected students

Photo by Jeanne Gazel, *Race Relations in South Africa*
Logistics (cont.)

- Provide safe, structured, diverse experiences with a balance of professional and fun, and identify projects that are stimulating and mutually beneficial and will benefit the community in ways that they cannot do so themselves.
- Obtain long term commitment of the University so the program is not dependent on one leader.

Photo by Betty Okwako, *Sustainable Community Development in Tanzania*
Academics

- Establish a clear set of realistic academic goals and objectives that the students can understand.
- Students need to speak the local language, have a good understanding and exceptional cultural competency.

Photo by Michael J. Leahy, *Disability in a Diverse Society (Ireland)*
Academics (cont.)

- Provide thorough pre-departure planning: prepare students culturally and linguistically, clarify expectations and find the right fit; the students need to learn how to be part of a team, flexible, and communicate with the local community in a personal and genuine manner.
- Be clear on the assignments, grade the community engagement portion, and have continual assessment.

Photo by Jerry Urquhart, Rainforests and Reality in Nicaragua

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Community

- Community partner needs to be selected with an eye towards those with a good reputation, well respected, well known, and whom you trust; clear and healthy communication with a commitment to the time to build a long standing relationship
- Secure commitment from all involved
Community (cont.)

- Treat the community as shared decision-making equals, discussing outcomes in advance and allowing time for feedback and mutual problem solving
- Tap into the skills and capacity of the community
- Develop an open, long term relationship with community built on trust, mutual respect and responsibility: erase the lines of poor them vs. us and operate as a family

Photo by Jeanne Gazel, Race Relations in South Africa
Community (cont.)

- Be prepared for tension and the desire to do more; be intentional about your thoughts, power and privilege and stress the interconnectedness and commonality of humanity
- Conduct shared review and evaluation of engagement strategies and approaches
- “It’s all about mutually respectful and beneficial relationships”

Photo by Diane Doberneck, Community Engagement in Rural Ireland
Research Overview

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Greatest Benefits and Goals

**Greatest Benefit**
- 10% community
- 15% program leaders
- 75% students

**Goals**
- 21% contribute to the community
- 79% provide students with academic and personal gains
Greatest Challenges

- **28%** collaboration with community
- **26%** student behavior
- **25%** logistics on-site
- **12%** MSU administrative barriers
- **9%** time and effort of program leaders
Future Goals

Next research steps are to interview students and community partners.

Next action steps at MSU include:
- Encourage leaders to involve small community settings in their study abroad programming to open more opportunities for community engagement;
- develop a faculty series on campus and an annual symposium to assist leaders in improving programs and better serving communities;
- provide a “tool kit” of best practices, including on-campus resources, etc.;
- tap into returnees to continue student experiences at home or abroad;
- encourage college and departmental support of programming to remove the dependence on single program leaders.

Photo by Jennifer Olson, ICT for Development in Tanzania
El Salvador: the Land and People

- Edgewood College and University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Fall course alternates between Edgewood & UW; team-taught by professors from both institutions
- Winter session: 10 days in El Salvador to meet with communities and organizations focused on....
- Spring course in Madison to reflect, and continue projects formulated in El Salvador
- Designated as Service-Learning through Morgridge Center
El Salvador: Course Goals

- Develop and understanding of El Salvador’s history, people, and political situation today.
- Learn about social justice, sistering and solidarity movements and theory
- Participate in sistering in El Salvador through Arcatoa, El Salvador and Madison, WI Sister Cities
El Salvador: Lessons Learned

- Change language in materials from Service-Learning to Community-Based
- Proposal to increase history of El Salvador and US political policy in Fall course to better prepare students
- Create concrete expectations for Spring follow-up project
Program Highlights

While abroad, students spend two months:

- Living in homestay families
- Interning with community-based organizations
- Designing and implementing collaborative small-scale development projects with local partners
- Completing academic assignments designed to:
  - create deeper sustained reflection
  - increase communication and collaboration with community members
Our Approach

Reciprocal Competency:
Students and community partners will become more competent in whatever they are doing together – enhancing each other’s resiliency to meet future challenges and seize new opportunities.
Ethical Dilemmas

- Balancing Student Learning and Community Impact
- Financial Value
- Communities as Laboratories
- Undergrads as Development Workers
Lessons Learned

Best practices for ethical service-learning programs should include:

- Shared development of program structure and content with program partners
- Creating realistic expectations for the experience and outcomes
- Collaborative experience for faculty, students, program partners, internship hosts and community members with shared engagement activities and joint evaluation
- Articulating and aligning mutual interests and shared values
Research Questions

• GSL knowledge community
• Diversity and inclusion
• International service learning economies
• Ethical standards
Global Education. Collaborative Change.
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Web Resources

- Fair Trade Learning


- Book forthcoming, June 2014 (Stylus Publishing)

- UW Morgridge Center, Service Learning
  [http://www.morgridge.wisc.edu/programs/servicelearning/Faculty-Definition.html](http://www.morgridge.wisc.edu/programs/servicelearning/Faculty-Definition.html)

- The Forum on Education Abroad
  [http://www.forumea.org/standards.cfm](http://www.forumea.org/standards.cfm)
Books and Journals


- *Journal of Higher Education Outreach & Engagement*, The University of Georgia