

Creating A Service-Learning Course

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Concept Development

- Decide where it fits into the curriculum, and what you are trying to accomplish. Consider using as resources: CAPTE criteria, the “Normative Model for PT Professional Education,” and the “Guide to Physical Therapist Practice”
- Enlist administrative support
- Enlist faculty and/or advisors
- Create course objectives and syllabus
- Based on course objectives, determine need for service-learning agreements/contracts, informed consent process and IRB approval
- Include opportunities for reflection
- Establish a realistic timeline that includes all phases of program planning and implementation
- Determine if students will have a budget for projects, or explore other sources of funding

Establishing Relationships With Community Partners

- Ideas for community partners can be generated by students, faculty, or site self-identification
- Recommend allowing at least 6 months prior to students entering the community
- Recommend choosing a variety of community partners that represent diversity in participant age and culture, and underserved populations
- Recommend a sufficient number of community partners to create a reasonable student group size, as well as a number that your faculty can support in terms of advising responsibilities
- Establish site contact person who will assist with program development and implementation

Assigning Student Groups

- Recommend giving students an opportunity to express their own interests
- Consider prior clinical experiences in assigning students to a group, and where they will either be an asset to the current project, or might fill a gap in the students’ clinical preparation
- Consider ability to travel to community site

Program Planning

- Needs Assessment
 - Include needs/preferences of community partners and potential participants in establishing a topic and intervention plan
 - Include Review of Literature to support topic and intervention plan
 - Consider timeline in assigning responsibility for different components of Needs Assessment

- Program Design
 - Intervention may target individuals, groups, or organizations
 - Types of intervention activities may include screening, education, and traditional PT interventions such as exercise.
 - Consider a “Train the Trainer” model for intervention plans that could be carried out beyond the length of the students’ involvement
 - Include opportunities for follow-up if time allows, to assess longer-term effectiveness of program
 - Students should establish a resource plan and a projected budget, which includes supplies, space, and personnel
 - Students should establish a marketing plan for the program; site contact people can be very helpful in suggesting the most effective mode of advertising, and in disseminating the information

- Evaluation Plan
 - Program Evaluation-assesses process and outcomes of program, based on previously established objectives. May be both formative and summative.
 - Student Evaluation-assesses student performance based on course objectives and performance criteria
 - Student Self-Assessment-may be included in reflective activities