

Service Learning Networking

Linda Eargle, PT, MIn Ed, Western Carolina University
 Barbara Bradford, PT, MS, Bishop State Community College
 Mary Ann Herlitzke, PT, MS, Western WI Technical College

I. Who are the partners?

a. University/College

- 1). A positive correlation exists between success in service learning (SL) programs and support for service learning from the university/ college administration.
- 2). SL activities requires substantial faculty time that should be recognized by the university. (Schamess, Wallis, David, Eiche,).
- 3). No one method or structural framework can work for all colleges or universities.
- 4). Developing a campus wide infrastructure for service-learning involves the entire institution as well as community partners.
- 5). A campus committed to institutionalizing service-learning does not promote service-learning solely for its own benefit or for its students' educational opportunities. Service learning MUST be grounded in reciprocal, authentic partnerships with the community.

b. Community

- 1). Based on the concept of reciprocity (avoid town-gown gap) (volunteering/community service often one-directional...not reciprocal)
- 2). The community defines the needed "service".
- 3). Service-learning can not happen within the confines of a classroom, a discipline, or even a campus. It must be grounded in a network of authentic, democratic, reciprocal partnerships (Jacoby, p. 6)
- 4). The community, students, and faculty build upon shared knowledge, skills, and resources in order to accomplish more together than they can on their own.

c. Students

- 1). Show the connection of the service-learning project to course content. (Austin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, Yee)
- 2). Establish relationships of 'trust and mutual respect'
- 3). Provide forums to support frequent and open communication;
- 4). Establish clear lines of accountability
- 5). Encourage participation by culturally diverse group of students
- 6). Provide an appropriate degree of structure, guidance, and clarity of purpose to help students make powerful contributions and be strong leaders.
- 7). Allow considerable time and energy to develop high-quality lasting partnerships with students.
- 8). Believe in the students' ability to achieve important outcomes
- 9). Develop an ability to live with ambiguity.
- 10). Provide students with choices that appeal to them.

d. Faculty

- 1). Faculty are resistant to add activities that will take additional time and efforts to current courses without a strong rationale for change.
- 2). Service Learning requires faculty to coordinate and communicate with all the involved parties and give up complete control of the project.
- 3). Require resources to begin to incorporate service learning into courses.

2. Framework for Development of Campus-Community Partnerships

a. Transformative vs. Transactional Relationships

Transactional relationships are those that are

- instrumental,
- designed to complete a task with no greater plan or promise.
- exists within existing structures.
- No change is expected, and little disruption occurs in the normal work of the organization and its players.
- Individuals leave satisfied with the outcome but not much changed. Commitments are limited and project-based.

Transformative relationships

- proceed with less definition,
- with an openness to unanticipated developments, with a deeper and more sustained commitments.
- expectation that things may change, that the order may be disturbed, and that new relationships, identifies, and values may emerge.

Transactional vs. Transformative Relationships

Criteria	Transactional	Transformative
Basis of relationship	Exchange-based and utilitarian	Focus on ends beyond utilitarian
End goal	Satisfaction with exchange	Mutual increase in aspirations
Purpose	Satisfaction of immediate needs	Arouses needs to create larger meaning
Roles played by partners	Managers	Leaders
Support of existing institutional goals	Accepts institutional goals	Examines institutional goals
Boundaries	Works within systems to satisfy interests of partners	Transcends self-interests to create larger meaning
Partner identity	Maintains institutional identity	Changes group identity in larger definition of community
Scope of commitment	Limited time, resources, personnel to specific exchanges	Engages whole institution in potentially unlimited exchanges.

Jacoby, 2003 p. 25

b. Partnership Development (change in depth and complexity over time):

1. One-time events and projects.

- Typically a drain on an organization's resources, requiring more effort in planning and coordinating than in generated in return.
- May be a way of discovering potential for future collaboration.
- Important to discuss with the community agency whether the objectives are only short-term or if the possibility exists more sustained, work.

2. Short-term placements (typically semester's duration).

- Provide direct labor to a community partner sustained over a long enough period to justify the efforts associated with training and supporting volunteers.
- Arrangement is likely to identify simple problems for the partners to solve (which helps with learning).
- Managing placements of relatively short duration puts significant stress on the resources of both campus and community partners.
- Partners are able to sustain the placements, but it is unlikely that they will generate new resources or knowledge.

3. Ongoing placements, mutual dependence
 - Short-term placements are continued over time.
 - Dependable resource commitments are made by both sides; an understanding of the missions and interests of all parties is established
 - Relationship is more established and expectations for accountability begin to increase.
 - Faculty, students, and community partners join together in learning about their relationship
 - Transformation becomes a possible outcome as the partners begin to challenge their initial assumption that the community holds the problem and the campus holds the solution. Community and campus begin to examine the possibility that they share the problem and the solution.

4. Core partnerships
 - Partners are able to empathize and accurately represent one another's interests.
 - Interpersonal relationships are often deepened. Significant risks may be taken.
 - The objective of this type of partnership is mutual learning.
 - As the partners come to believe that they share a common domain, that each contributes experience and knowledge, their relationship becomes based on interdependence rather than mutual dependence.

3. **Principles for Establishing Partnerships**
 - a. Principles of Good Campus Community Partnerships (CCPH)
 - 1). The partnership develops mutually agreed upon mission, goals, and measurable outcomes
 - 2). The relationship between partners is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment
 - 3). The partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, but also addresses areas that need improvement.
 - 4). The partnership balances power among partners and enables resources among partners to be shared.
 - 5). Partners communicate clearly, make listening a priority, develop a common language, and validate/clarify the meaning of terms.
 - 6). All partners participate and agree upon roles, norms, and processes for the partnership
 - 7). All stakeholders in the partnership provide feedback with the goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcome.
 - 8). Partners share the credit for the partnership's accomplishments.
 - 9). Partnerships take time to develop and evolve over time.

 - b. Healthcare Campus Community Partnerships
 - 1). Healthcare partnerships (medicine, dental and nursing) frequently target service learning activities at uninsured citizens. The National Service learning clearinghouse identified three multidisciplinary programs that included physical therapy students and faculty. (The University of Kentucky pharmacy, PA, Medical, and PT students received a grant for a homeless individuals and Salvation Army home residents. The College of Misericordia in Dallas, PA developed a program to serve patients with Alzheimer's and individuals at a center for aging. A gerontology course at the University of Nevada included physical therapy students in a swimming program for seniors.)

 - 2). Dr. Sarena Seifer, describes learning opportunities in service learning to uninsured individuals through opportunities to care for chronic illnesses; observe the natural progression of diseases through continuity of care, practice health promotion and disease prevention strategies, develop patient-communication and negotiation skills, deal with social, financial, and ethical aspects of medical care, and increase capacity

for and interest in addressing relevant health issues of rural and underserved communities.

- 3). Dr. Chloe Little describes the Western Carolina University department of physical therapy service learning projects in *Service-Learning: Developing Community-Campus Partnerships for Physical Therapy Education*, Academic Exchange, Winter 2000.

4. Challenges to developing campus-community partnerships:

A. loosely coupled nature of colleges and universities

- Units are fairly autonomous and nondependent upon other parts of the organization to accomplish their work.
- Little communication and coordination among the units; a lack of common understanding about mission, direction, and goals; and competition for resources that does not address the key issues facing the organization
- Community involvement is often considered an individual faculty member's personal interest or pet project
- Campus may consider the work "nice to do" but not essential to the campus mission and not integral to faculty reward structures.

**individuals in higher education who are interested in significant partnerships with the community must become organizationally literate (they must understand how their institution works, how it makes decisions, how resources are allocated, what problems and issues are important to leaders, and what opportunities exist for innovation and change).

B. Risk and trust

- The creation of a new partnership, the entrance of a new partner, or an old partner taking on a new role can shift the social and political ecology of the partners' respective interests, often with unintended consequences
- Trust is required. Trust is the mutual understanding of the interests of the partners, together with some faith that the partners will stay with the relationship despite obstacles or difficulties that will surely arise

C. Neutrality of scholarship and expertise

- Too often, higher education faculty and students reserve for themselves the authority to name an experience or situation and to determine what is or is not meaningful.
- Campus "experts" determine how the community is to be interpreted and understood by defining the communities' problems, the likely strategies for response, what resources exist, and the ways in which those resources will be allocated.
- Campus-community partnerships are about the process of arriving at an agreed-upon description of a situation, a description in which both partners are actors and both are changed, dramatically or subtly, by their inclusion in the story. As a result, they challenge and transform traditional roles.

D. Problems of accountability

- Higher education seeks to place some boundaries around itself to minimize and control demands from the environment.
- Accountability in the academy most often does not focus on the tangible and local impact of our work.
- The issue of accountability also calls particular attention to the networks of which the partners are a part and asks the partners to understand or deliberately the significance of those networks.

5. **Lessons learned** (from Ramaley in Jacoby, 2003 p. 16-17).
- a. Partnership must be based on the academic strengths and philosophy of the university. However, it is the needs and capacity of the community that should guide the approach used by the university in forming the partnership.
 - b. Ideal partnership matches the academic strength and goals of the university with the assets and interests of the community.
 - c. It takes time to understand the community and all the special interests found within the community.
 - d. Unless the university on whole embraces the value and validity of community engagement (as scholarly work) and provides both the support and concrete resources to sustain it, engagement will remain sporadic and individually centered.
 - e. Important to take time to think about the value that the university brings to the partnership.
 - f. To be successful, collaboration must be built on new patterns of information gathering (assessment), communication, and reflection that allows all parties to be decision makers (this requires face-to-face interactions).
 - g. Do not exhaust your community partner! Help to develop ways for them to build capacity.
 - h. Early enthusiasm can be replaced by fatigue and burnout. Begin early to identify and recruit additional talent.
 - i. It is important to have a strong commitment to a “culture of evidence”. How will you know that you have accomplished what you think you have?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Association Of American Medical Colleges (1998) Report 1: Learning Objectives for Medical Student Education. Guidelines for Medical Schools. Medical School Objectives Project (Washington,).
- Austin, A., Vogelgesang, L., Ikeda, E. & Yee, J. (2000). Executive summary: How service learning affects students higher education research institute UCLA.
- Campus Compact (n.d.). Generating new power for building communities: Innovative Models for corporate/campus/community partnerships. Retrieved 8/29/03 from <http://www.campuscompact.org/ccpartnerships/GE/GE-brochure.pdf>
- Cooper, M.C. (n.d.) The Big Dummy's Guide to Service Learning. Retrieved 11/12/2003 from <http://www.fiu.edu/~time4chg/Library/bigdummy.html>
- Holland, B. & Gelmon, S. (1998). The state of the "engaged campus": What have we Learned about building and sustaining University-Community Partnerships. AAHE Bulletin, (October), 3-6.
- Jacoby, B. (2003). Building partnerships for service-learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Jacoby, B. (2001). Service learning in today's higher education. Concepts and Practices, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Leiderman, S, Furco, A, Zapf, J, Goss, M. (2002) Building partnerships with College Campuses: Community Perspectives. Consortium for the Advancement of private Higher Education's Engaging Communities and Campuses Grant Program. The Council of Independent Colleges Washington, DC Retrieved November 12, 2003 from http://www.cic.edu/caphe/grants/engaging_brochure.pdf .
- Little, C. D. (Winter, 2000). Service-Learning: Developing community-campus partnerships for physical therapy education. AcademicExchange, 80-88.
- Points of Light Foundation and Volunteer National Network. (2001) Building Effective Partnerships for Service Learning. Retrieved November 12, 2003 from The National Service Learning Clearinghouse at <http://www.servicelearning.org/filemanager/download/15/> .
- Rubin, V. (2000). Six types of analytical writing about campus-community partnerships. Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research. HUD, Washington D.C. 5(1)2119-230.
- Seifer, S. D. (1998). Recent and emerging trends in undergraduate medical education: Curricular responses to the rapidly changing health care system. The Western Journal of Medicine British Medical Association, 5, 400-412.
- Seifer, S. D. (1998). Service-learning community- campus partnership for health professions education. Academic Medicine, 73(3), 273-277.
- Shumer, R., Duttweiler, P., Furco, A., Hengel, M., Willems, G. & Shumers. (2000). Self-assessment for service-learning. Center for Experiential and service-learning department of work, community, and family education, college of education and human development, U of Minn., St. Paul, MN.

Speck, B. (ed.) (2001). *Developing and implementing service-learning programs*.
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Torres, J., & Schaffer, J. (2000). *Benchmarks for campus/community partnerships*.
Providence RI: National Campus Compact.