

Sustaining Service-Learning & Maximizing its Benefits: Lessons from a National Demonstration Program

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this session participants will:

- Be familiar with the experiences of a national cohort of 17 health professions schools related to sustaining service-learning (SL) programs from 1998-present.
- Understand the impacts of SL on students, faculty, community partner organizations, community-academic partnerships, and institutional capacity
- Identify forms of SL program sustainability, and key factors that can facilitate sustainability
- Identify common challenges to both the implementation and sustainability of SL, and strategies to address these challenges
- Reflect on these factors in the context of their own situations

Outline

1. Service-Learning (SL)
 - Definition
 - Growth
 - Goals
2. The Health Professions Schools in Service to the Nation (HPSISN) Program
 - Overview
 - Evaluation during program implementation
3. 10-Year Follow-up Study
 - Study aims
 - Preliminary findings
4. Facilitated Discussion

SL Definition

“a structured learning experience that combines community service with **preparation and reflection**. Students engaged in SL provide community service in **response to community-identified concerns** and learn about the **context** in which service is provided, the connection between their service and their academic coursework, and **their roles as citizens.**”

Seifer SD. (1998). Service-learning: Community-campus partnerships for health professions education. Acad. Med. 73(3):273-277.

SL Definition

- Balance between service and learning
- Emphasis on addressing community-identified concerns and broad determinants of health
- Integral involvement of community partners
- Emphasis on reciprocal learning
- Emphasis on reflective practice
- Emphasis on developing citizenship skills and achieving social change

Seifer SD. (1998). Service-learning: Community-campus partnerships for health professions education. *Acad. Med.* 73(3):273-277.

Growth in SL

- Campus Compact
 - Membership growth: from 3 in 1985 to 1100+ in 2007
 - 98% offer SL courses
 - 86% have a service learning/community service office
- Community-Campus Partnerships for Health
- Canadian Association of Community SL
- International Association of Research on SL & Community Engagement
- SL in health professions training endorsed by:
 - Pew Health Professions Commission (1993, 1998)
 - Institute of Medicine (2002)
 - Accrediting bodies in medicine and pharmacy (2006)

SL Across the Disciplines

(Titles of Stylus Book Series)

- Accounting—Learning by Doing
- Biology—Life, Learning & the Community
- Communication Studies—Voices of Strong Democracy
- Composition—Writing the Community
- Engineering—Projects that Matter
- History—Connecting Past and Present
- Medical Education—Creating Community Responsive Physicians
- Peace Studies—Teaching for Justice
- Philosophy—Beyond the Tower
- Sociology—Cultivating the Sociological Imagination
- Spanish—Construyendo Puentes (Building Bridges)

Goals of SL in Health Professions

Students

- Gain community health competencies, population health perspective
- Develop an ethic of civic professionalism

Communities

- Receive direct health services, health benefits
- Develop capacity to address health and social concerns

Academic Institutions

- Develop a culture of civic engagement
- Contribute as members of their communities

Both Communities and Academia

- Build capacity to engage in future community-academic partnerships of mutual benefit: service, research, training

HPSISN

- First and only national demonstration program in SL in health professional schools in the US
- Implemented many recommendations of Pew Health Professions Commission regarding core competencies
- Aims:
 1. Strengthen partnerships between health professional schools and communities which address unmet health needs
 2. Instill an ethic of community service and social responsibility in health professional schools, students, faculty
 3. Equip the next generation of health professionals with community-oriented competencies necessary to practice in a changing health care environment

HPSISN

- Subgrants to 17 health professional schools, 1995-8
- Each Institution:
 1. Established SL partnerships with communities to address unmet health needs
 2. Developed SL curriculum
 3. Created infrastructure to support SL: program coordinator, advisory group
 4. Received technical assistance & faculty development
- Funders: The Pew Charitable Trusts, Corporation for National Service
- Administered by: Center for the Health Professions, University of California-San Francisco

Grantees

1. Georgetown University, Washington DC
2. George Washington University, DC & George Mason University, Arlington VA
3. Northeastern University, Boston, MA
4. Ohio University, Athens, OH
5. Regis University, Denver, CO
6. San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA
7. University of Connecticut, Farmington, CT
8. University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
9. University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY
10. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC
11. University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
12. University of Scranton, Scranton, PA
13. University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA
14. University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT
15. University of Utah & Purdue University, Indianapolis, IN
16. Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA
17. West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckannon, WV

Grantees: Diversity

- 11 public, 6 private, 4 faith-based
 - 5 South, 5 Southwest, 4 Mid-Atlantic, 2 Northeast, 1 Midwest
 - Principal investigators located in:
 - 9 schools or departments of nursing
 - 5 schools of allopathic medicine
 - 1 school of osteopathic medicine
 - 1 school of dentistry
 - 2 school of pharmacy
 - 1 at the university level
- * Does not sum to 17 because 2 schools had co-PIs

Grantees: Community Partners

(examples)

- AIDS task force
- American Red Cross
- Boys and Girls Club
- Catholic Church
- Middle Schools
- Free Clinics
- Head Start
- Hospice
- Housing Authority
- Planned Parenthood
- Salvation Army
- Senior Center
- Sheltered Workshop
- Youth Center
- Wilderness on Wheels
- WIC Program

Grantees: Project Focus

(examples)

- School-based health education
- Health promotion and disease prevention
 - teenage pregnancy
 - domestic violence
 - oral health
- Worksite-based health education
- Companionship
- Case management
- Mentoring and tutoring
- Rural access to care

Project Focus (examples)

- School-based health education
- Health promotion and disease prevention
 - teenage pregnancy
 - domestic violence
 - oral health
- Worksite-based health education
- Companionship
- Case management
- Mentoring and tutoring
- Rural access to care



Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

Transforming Communities & Higher Education



To promote health (broadly defined) through partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions



HPSISN Evaluation

HPSISN Evaluation: Overview

- Describe the goals, research questions, and research methods of the HPSISN evaluation study undertaken in 1996-1998
- Describe major findings of the HPSISN evaluation:
 - Program impacts
 - Program challenges
 - Strategies for success/lessons learned
- Recommendations

HPSISN Evaluation

- Evaluation team based at Portland State University
 - Sherril Gelmon, Barbara Holland, Anu Shinnamon
- Evaluation design based on conceptual framework of multi-constituency approach
- Evaluation methods -- national and local
- Reporting -- local and national

HPSISN Evaluation Questions

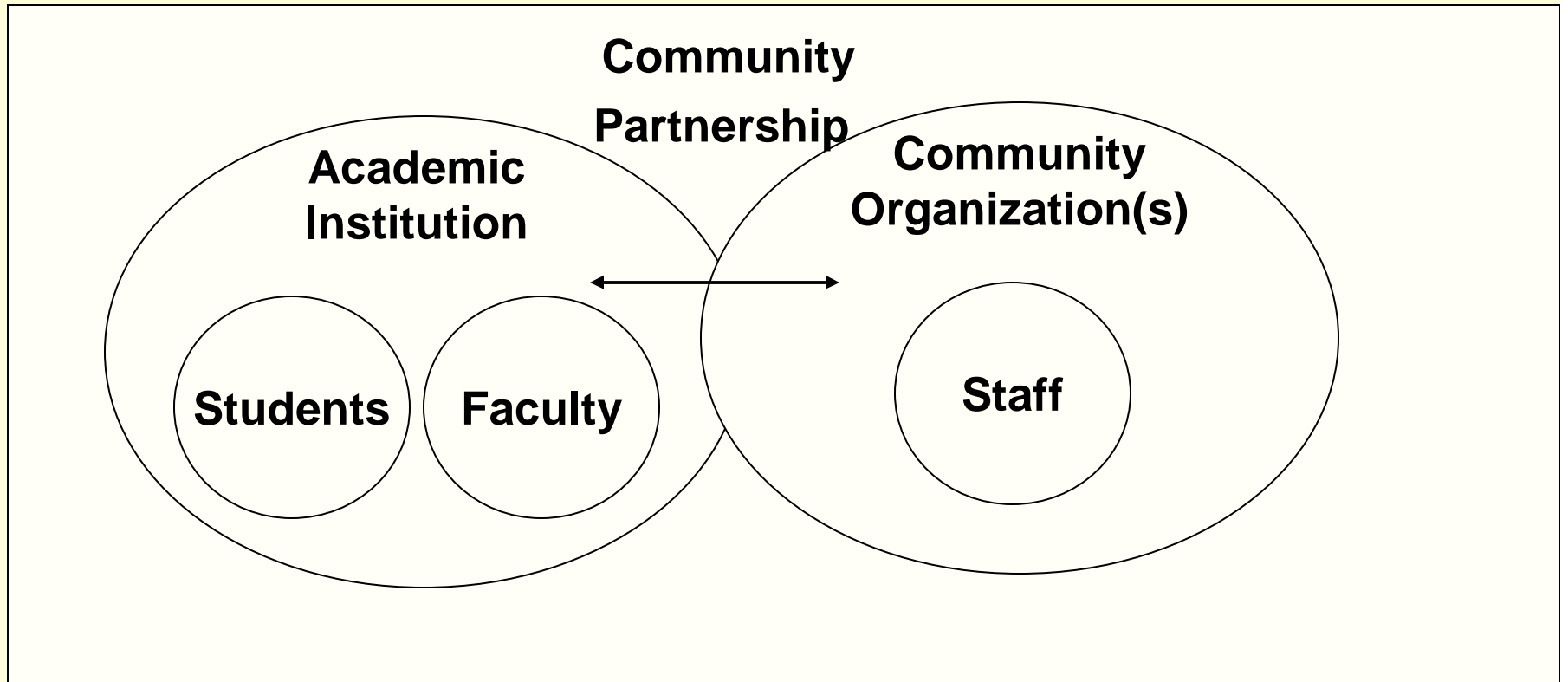
In order to advance health professions education through service-learning:

- How has HPSISN affected university-community partnerships
- How has introduction of SL affected students readiness for health professions
- To what extent have faculty embraced SL
- How has the institution's capacity changed
- What is impact on partners

HPSISN Evaluation: Findings

- Broad set of overall findings at national level, accounting for multi-site program
- Specific site-specific findings, not all consistent
- Areas of emphasis:
 - Students
 - Faculty
 - Community partner organizations
 - Community-university partnerships
 - Institutional capacity

Impact of SL: Locations



Impact on Students

- Transformational learning experiences
 - Clarification of values, greater sense of self
- Take experience more seriously when it is required in curriculum
- Non-clinical benefits
 - Awareness of determinants of health/disease
 - Sensitivity to diversity
 - Knowledge of health policy/issues
 - Leadership development

Impact on Faculty

- Primary motivators: personal values, belief in working in community
- Enhanced relationships with students and community partners
- Linkage of personal/professional lives
- Increased understanding of community issues
- New career and scholarship directions
- New directions in teaching
- Concerns re: time, control of curriculum

Impact on Community Partners

- Service, economic and social benefits
- Increased awareness of university assets and limitations
- High value placed on personal relationship(s) with faculty
- Eager to serve as co-teachers but involvement often limited
- Benefits of SL outweighed the burdens
- Balance of needs-based vs expert approaches
- Concerns re: logistics, communications

Impact on Community Partnerships

- Stronger relationships associated with:
 - Joint planning
 - Defined specific and active roles for partners
 - Genuine sense of reciprocity
 - Sufficient student preparation and orientation
 - Single campus point of contact to minimize confusion and miscommunication
 - Consistent, accessible information and communication

Impact on Institutional Capacity

- Clear definition of SL facilitates experiences
- Linkage to mission and service goals
- Supportive leadership at all levels
- Effective institutional structures and policies
- Investment in faculty development
- Integration of SL into existing courses and core curriculum
- Development of long-term community relationships
- Ongoing process of assessment and improvement

HPSISN Evaluation: Challenges of SL

- Clarification of definition of SL, terminology
- Need for faculty development and buy-in
- Commitment of leadership
- Need clarity of vision, definitions, goals, resources, leadership, outcomes
- Lack of rewards and resources to support
- Town/gown relationships and history
- Culture of needs-based vs expert approaches

HPSISN Evaluation: Curricular Challenges

- Curricula are already overloaded and rigid
- Curriculum change may be slow and difficult
- Disciplinary boundaries and ownership
- Willingness to accept interdisciplinary learning
- Acceptance of community partners as experts and co-teachers
- Sense that “we already do this” when “this” is field-based but not necessarily SL
- New vision of community-based learning

Lessons Learned at the Sites

- Service-learning is a powerful pedagogy
- Committed leadership is essential
- To be valued must be linked to other activities
- Higher priority when integrated into required courses
- Cannot be an option if it is to be valued
- Helps to build community competencies
- Community assets often overlooked
- SL requires everyone to give up control

Lessons Learned: National Evaluations

- Common goals and reporting frameworks essential to draw lessons
- Flexibility necessary to ensure individual stories are told
- Projects vary by institutional/disciplinary context
- Difficult to quantify SL results/impact
- Philosophy of building evidence for improvement is most viable
- Learning together facilitates site-specific accomplishments

Recommendations

- Create clarity of vision -- place in curriculum, value, link to accreditation
- Build faculty capacity and reward work
- Work across disciplines as feasible
- Ensure institutional leadership committed
- Create and nurture strong and ongoing community partnerships
- Value and recognize partners

HPSISN Ten-year Follow-up Study

Outline

1. Share study aims
2. Review definitions of sustainability and the relationship between sustainability and impact of SL
3. Describe the study design
4. Share preliminary findings:
 - Facilitators of sustainability
 - Challenges to sustainability
 - Strategies to address challenges
 - Long-term impacts
5. Future research: your recommendations

Study Aims

1. To determine the extent to which the HPSISN SL programs were *sustained* over the last ten years (1998-2008)
2. To identify the factors that have been major *influences on program sustainability*
 - Facilitators, challenges
3. To assess the ten-year *impacts* of HPSISN SL programs

Dimensions of Sustainability

- Durability
 - Routinization
 - Institutionalization
 - Adaptability
 - Renewal
 - Diffusion
 - Spin-offs
- } Continued Benefits

Sustainability and Impact

Many potential benefits of SL require sustained partnership:

Academic Institution

- Develop an organizational culture of civic engagement*
- Contribute as members of their communities

Community Organizations

- Build capacity to address health and social problems*

Both Partners

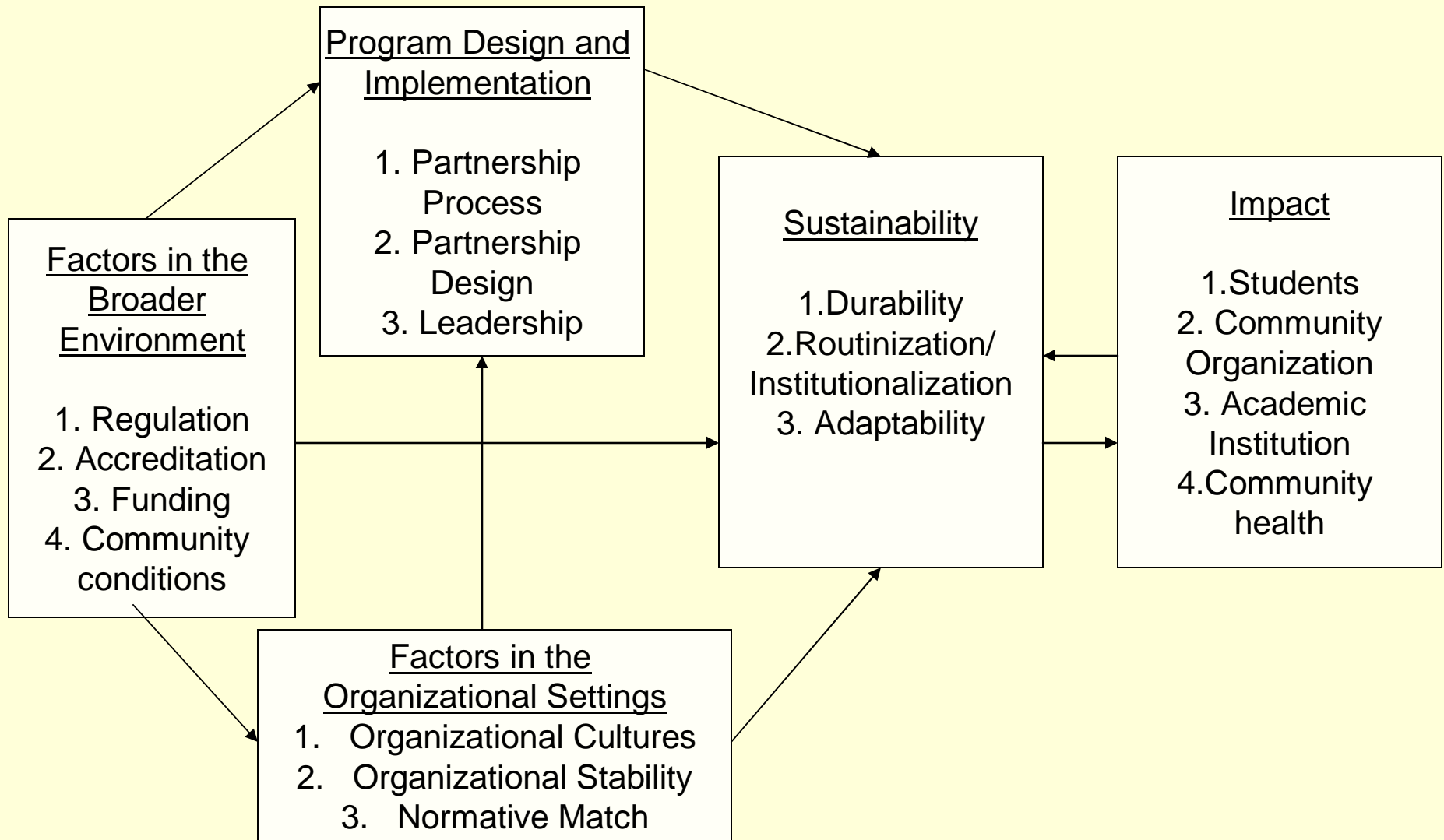
- Build capacity to engage in other community-academic partnerships of mutual benefit: for service, research, training*

Communities

- Receive needed health services
- Achieve better community health*

***Gaps in the empirical literature. Can SL produce these outcomes?**

What Influences Sustainability?

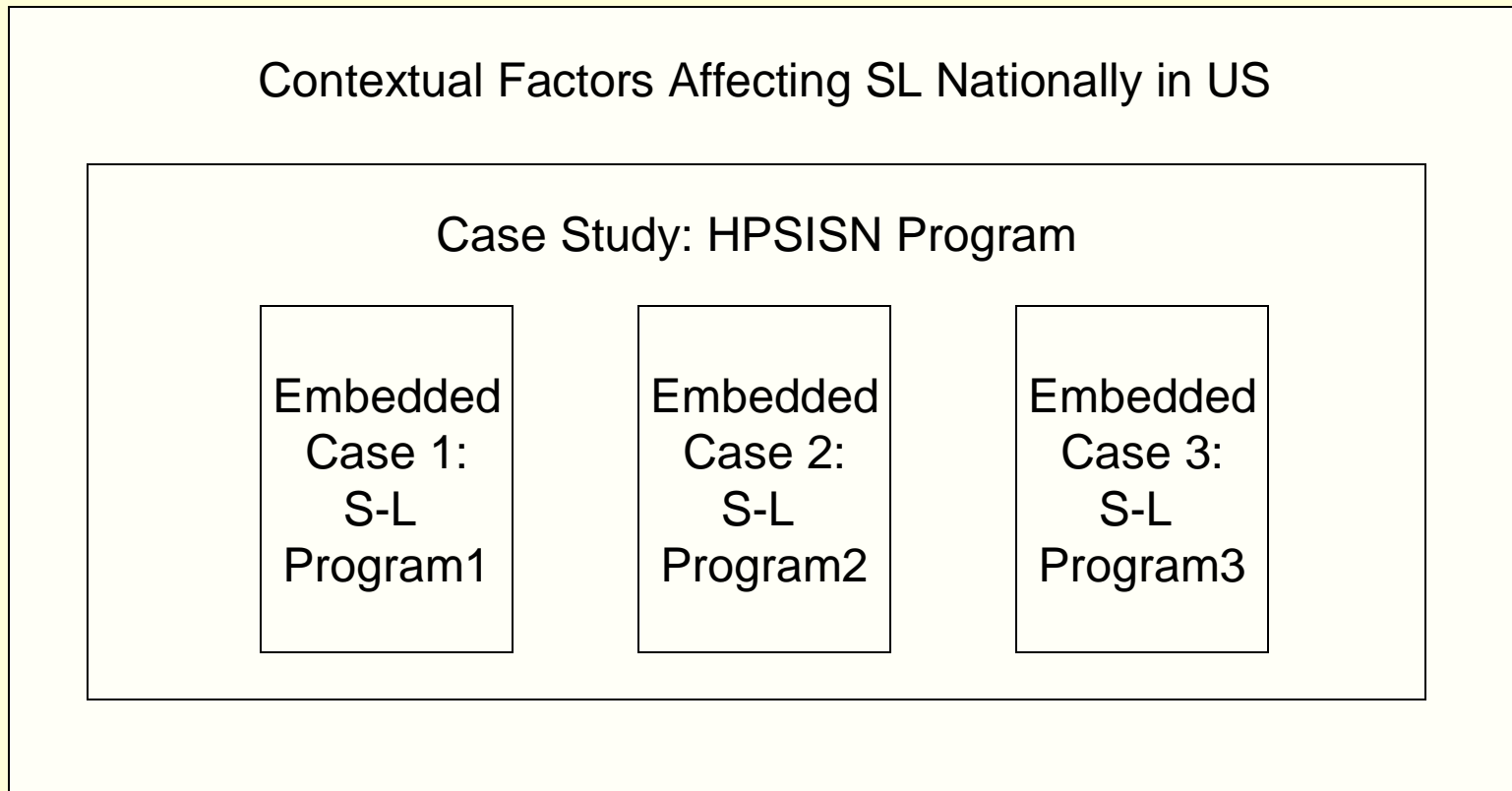


Adapted from Shediac-Rizkallah MC and Bone LR. 1998.

Study Population

- HPSISN Participants
 - Naturally occurring cohort of SL programs with long collective experience with SL (1995-2008)
 - Lessons to share about sustainability, challenges, and strategies
 - Best likelihood to have achieved long-term impacts of SL
 - Early adopters of SL, likely to remain champions

Embedded Comparative Case Study



Adapted From RK Yin. (2003.) Case Study Research: Design and Methods. 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Data Collection

Phase 1: HPSISN Case

Goals: Overview of SL programs' sustainability, influencing factors, impact, 1998-present

- Phone interviews with PIs and successors
- Document review: publications, websites
- Qualitative content analysis

Phase 2: Embedded Cases (forthcoming)

Goals: In-depth exploration of pathways to sustainability and impact (conceptual model); include community voices

- Comparative case studies of 2-3 programs with unique experiences with sustainability and impact
- Site visits, interviews with academic and community partners, document review

Preliminary Findings, Phase 1

Sample:

- PIs: 16/17
- Successors: 3/8 (ongoing)
- Document review: 17/17

Durability:

- 16 of 17 schools continued SL in the curriculum
- 1 school discontinued SL, continues to recommend and recognize extracurricular service

Forms of Sustainability

Range of integration into institutions, with two extremes:

Routinization only: SL maintained because integrated into courses

- SL operates only at course level, faculty maintain partnerships
- No advisory board
- No dedicated funding

Institutionalization: SL supported by the institution and the community

- Coordinating center for SL, hard money, full-time staff
- Center maintains partnerships, provides technical assistance and other resources to faculty, other schools
- True community partnership - - active formal advisory group
- Formal evaluation

What Facilitates Sustainability?

- Organizational culture
- Leadership
- Internal funding
- Infrastructure to support SL
- Stable community partnerships
- Ability to adapt to changing academic and community priorities (renewal)
- Growing support for civic engagement in academia
 - Attitudes
 - Accreditation, classification

What are Common Challenges to Sustainability?

- Faculty and administrator turnover, especially in nursing
 - Lack of critical mass, despite presence of champions
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Compressed academic schedules
- Competing institutional priorities

Strategies to Address Challenges

- Plan for ongoing faculty development
- Provide faculty incentives
- Build SL into core courses
- Create a coordinating entity for SL at the organizational level appropriate to your institution
- Engage in awareness raising that cultivates champions in multiple arenas, creates critical mass
 - Get support from colleagues at other institutions
- Leverage grant funding to get institutional funding
- Appeal to organizational “hooks”
 - Frame SL in terms of core organizational and educational goals

Long-term Impacts of HPSISN

- Contributed to broader trend of increased community engagement
- Created permanent pedagogical innovations
- Shaped faculty career directions
- Attracted students
- Improved town-gown relations
- In a few cases, created capacity in community partners to address health
- Led to diffusion of SL to other schools
 - Through CCPH
 - Organically
- Produced unexpected spin-offs
 - Educational programs
 - Community action

Next Steps: Your Recommendations

- Comparative case studies of 2-3 programs with unique experiences with sustainability and impact
- Goals:
 - In-depth exploration of pathways to sustainability and maximizing benefits (conceptual model)
 - Include community voices
- What would you want to learn from the case studies?
- What do you recommend we investigate that would provide valuable information for how to sustain SL and how to maximize its benefits?

Contact Information

For more information about HPSISN, and to access study publications and presentation slides, enter the search term “HPSISN” on the CCPH website: www.ccph.info

Questions about this symposium:

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Discussion Questions

- What challenges to the sustainability of SL has your institution faced, and how could they be addressed?
- What should future research on sustainability in service-learning explore?
- How could future research on SL sustainability be designed in order to focus on the partnership process?