2

Creating a service-learning class need not be a daunting or protracted task. This chapter provides a simple seven-step model for service-learning success.

A Smart Start to Service-Learning

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Once upon a time, just as winter was beginning to chill the air, a rabbit looked up at the birds in the sky with wonder. Birds, he thought enviously, can fly south for the winter and need not worry about starving or freezing to death. He discussed the situation with a bird who was perched on a nearby branch.

"You are so lucky," the rabbit said. "You don't have to deal with winter. You can just follow the sunshine to a place where you can eat mangoes to your heart's content!"

"That's because I fly," said the bird.

"Cool," said the rabbit. "But how do you fly?"

"I can give you theory," the bird responded. "But implementation is your problem."

Many times higher education seems to bear an unfortunate philosophical resemblance to the rabbit in this opening tale. This chapter has no theory. It rests on the assumption that faculty members have been introduced to the benefits of service-learning for their teaching, student learning and personal growth, and the betterment of communities. It assumes that they, like the rabbit, want to learn the basics of implementation.


The course development model for launching successful service-learning classes has seven steps for faculty members (see Figure 2.1):

1. Define student learning outcomes.
2. Define personal scholarship outcomes.
3. Plan community collaboration.
4. Design the course.
5. Arrange logistics and create forms.
6. Reflect, analyze, and deliver.
7. Perform assessment and evaluation of and among all critical audiences.

These seven steps are presented as linear, but depending on the professor's existing community relations or history with other forms of experiential learning, the steps may not precisely follow the order in which they are presented. For example, Step 4, "design the course," may be done concurrently with or even prior to the previous steps. The important point is that all steps should be completed, although not necessarily in the strict order presented.

The companion piece to the course development model is the assignment and outcomes planner (see Exhibit 2.1), which is used to match classroom activities to desired student outcomes. These two com-

Figure 2.1. Service-Learning Course Development Model
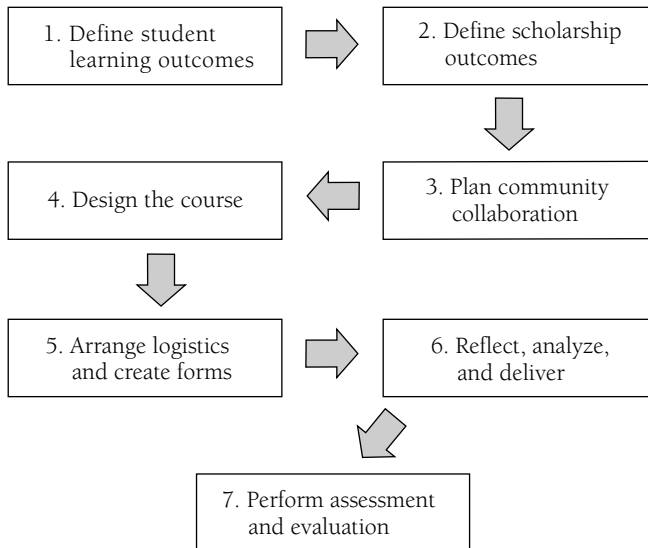
ponents work together to guide professors to match assignments with desired outcomes each week throughout the semester. As professors move through the course development model, they will integrate course assignments with desired outcomes at the end of each of the seven steps by filling out the planner. This planner will help the professor ensure that each selected outcome, indicated by the choices recorded on the top row of the chart (Student Learning, Scholarly Activity, and Service), receives adequate attention throughout the semester, as reflected in the assignments recorded in the vertical columns. When completed, the planner will immediately alert the professor to outcomes that do not have any supporting assignments. For example, if increasing awareness of community is chosen as a desired student learning outcome, the professor will see the need to plan specific assignments that expose students to the community before they perform their service. Lectures and readings could be assigned to help students understand community demographics, as well as key local issues in areas such as health, education, housing, and the economy, even if those areas are not normally associated with courses in the discipline. Not every learning outcome requires something in every assignment box. For example, in the Exam box under "awareness of community," the student learning outcome might well remain empty because that outcome might be better served by a series of reflection assignments. But if the entire vertical column below any outcome box remains vacant throughout the semester's plan, the professor might not be adequately preparing students for that desired learning outcome, and it probably will not be achieved. Let us take a closer look at each step in the course development model.

Exhibit 2.1. Assignment and Outcomes Planner

Week # _____

Assignments	Outcomes						
	Student Learning			Scholarly	Service		
	1.	2.	3.	Activity	1.	2.	3.
Lecture topic							
Reading							
Assignment							
Exam							
Reflection							
Analysis							
Deliverable							

Source: Driscoll, 1988.

Step One: Define Student Learning Outcomes

A service-learning class, like any other class, should begin with a decision about what the professor wants students to learn. Syllabi normally carry this decision under the *Course Objective* heading, which usually reads something like, "To develop a fundamental understanding of the course material, its theory, and its application." One of the main benefits of service-learning is its ability to expand student learning beyond this type of typical objective into a new range of learning outcomes that blend academic study with civic engagement and awareness, as well as practical experience.

Depending on the discipline and individual goals, choices of additional student learning outcomes include improving community awareness, involvement with community, commitment to service, career development, self-awareness, sensitivity to diversity, sense of ownership, communication skills, life skills, morality and character, and critical thinking and analysis (Driscoll and others, 1998). A psychology class, for example, may prioritize enhancing self-awareness and sensitivity to diversity, and a political science class may aim to increase students' awareness of community and their commitment to service.

Professors who are teaching a service-learning class should think broadly about student learning outcomes and consider the opportunity to teach values and commitments that might not typically be included in their discipline. One of the primary purposes of higher education, after all, is to train tomorrow's leaders and to instill in students a lifelong commitment to service, civic responsibility, and making a difference in the societal issues that relate to their communities and future work.

The faculty member should select two to three of these or additional student learning outcomes and record them on the top row of Exhibit 2.1 under the Student Learning heading. As the instructor moves through the model, the vertical boxes in the planner will help ensure that class material, readings, and assignments support the selected student learning outcomes.

Step Two: Define Personal Scholarship Outcomes

Faculty often report that they are reluctant to get involved in service-learning because doing it well requires additional time and effort that might not be recognized during retention, tenure, and promotion (RTP) procedures. Although many universities are rethinking traditional RTP paths, most still adhere to the "publish or perish" school of thought. As a result, a wise novice will integrate scholarship into service-learning courses with an eye toward publication in service-learning, education, or discipline-based journals.

Service-learning research can be done in two main ways. First, traditional discipline-based research can use service-learning classes to advance the knowledge of the field through use of the discipline's own research methodologies. A professor can work with students to gather data or test a theoretical concept in the community. Second, the service-learning class can

be a laboratory for pedagogical research that tests the value of service-learning as a teaching and learning device. Research can also combine both.

Discipline-based research usually measures progress toward the traditional course objective of developing a fundamental understanding of the course material while advancing knowledge in the field. In an example of discipline-based research, Lenk (1997) looks at ways to maximize the professional preparation of future accountants. She describes a multisemester course that involves a partnership between upper-division accounting students and the state's professional accounting association. She also discusses the development and evolution of the strategic alliance that led to students' providing cost-effective consulting services for nonprofit organizations as part of their service-learning experience.

In pedagogical research, a professor can investigate many learning outcomes and related issues. Corbett and Kendall (1999), for example, examined students' service-learning experiences in courses taught in the communications department at the University of Utah. The authors looked at the relationship between student perceptions of their service-learning and better citizenship, a desirable student learning outcome.

In addition, a single service-learning project can lend itself to either pedagogical or discipline-based research. A psychology professor who specializes in gerontology on my campus has begun an interdisciplinary project with computer science students to teach computer skills to a group of senior citizens. Computer science students will teach these citizens to use the Internet, and gerontology students will help them overcome the fear of computers that is common in this age group. The gerontology students will pre- and posttest the senior citizens regarding their anxieties about working with computers and technology and then will conduct support groups and activities to raise their comfort levels. This project could result in a discipline-based article for a gerontology journal, discussing strategies for overcoming fear of technology in seniors, or it could result in a pedagogical publication about interdisciplinary service-learning teaching strategies for working with the elderly on technology projects.

When the scholarly outcomes are determined, the professor updates the assignment and outcomes planner with a desired scholarly activity outcome in the center of the top row. The vertical boxes below are a reminder to plan activities that match the instructor's research needs with class assignments throughout the semester.

Step Three: Plan Community Collaboration

At this point, the professor has created goals for both student learning and professional scholarship. Now it is time to choose a community partner and begin to create a true collaboration. Many professors already have a partner in mind, perhaps from supervising internships or sending students to volunteer with local programs. If the professor needs to identify appropriate sites, several campus resources should be able to help. The service-learning

or volunteer office should have databases of local agencies that work with students. If there is no such resource, the professor should call United Way or a local politician to ask what community groups are working in the desired field. The professor can call a few potential partners, briefly describe ideas for collaboration with the service-learning class, and, if there is interest, make an appointment for a joint curriculum design session. This session should be held at the community site so the professor can understand the environment in which students will be serving. The session should also include a tour, introductions to key personnel involved in the collaboration, and ample time for an initial planning meeting. It is helpful to have a representative from the campus service-learning office along to facilitate the process.

In preparing for the initial session, the professor should realize that community representatives usually do not know what service-learning is or how it differs from volunteerism. Education is part of any successful collaboration. The community agency needs to understand that while it is appropriate for volunteers to file, paint, or pick up trash, such activities are rarely compatible with mastering course content. At the same time, the professor should heed Kellett and Goldstein's (1999) advice that "communities are well-developed, complex entities that must be understood and accepted rather than required to adapt to university culture" (p. 32). All too often, as Fertman (1993) writes, university and community agency staffs exist in parallel but separate worlds. They serve the same population but have different operating styles, priorities, practices, levels of professional training, theoretical bases, and even vocabulary. Each partner must understand and appreciate the perspectives, needs, and, especially, contributions of the other. There is no place for arrogant attitudes on the part of faculty members or students. Instead, everyone must recognize and respect the significant contributions of all partners as coeducators.

Following a simple plan at the initial meeting will lead to collaborative curriculum design. The professor can begin by asking the community partner to provide a few vital statistics—the agency's mission, main interest, population served, organizational structure, and budget—as well as how it addresses the major issues facing its target population. Next, he or she asks the community representative to provide three service outcomes that the agency would like students to accomplish. Then it is the faculty member's turn to describe the course in which service-learning will be used. Professors should explain what they want their students to learn and should be sure to identify their top three learning outcomes to ensure consistency between the partners.

At this point, the service outcomes and the learning outcomes may not match. On one occasion, for example, a professor teaching a course in microbiological hazards in environmental health in the department of health science met with representatives of a local environmental group to plan an appropriate service-learning project. Members of the community

group wanted college students to clean a local dump. The professor explained that that activity was service, not service-learning, and that it was a more appropriate project for volunteers during a community cleanup day. He redirected the discussion by asking the group members to discuss some of their main environmental health concerns. Residents said they worried about septic tank spillage during seasonal rains. Dogs drank the surface water, and children played in it. The professor saw the link between their problem and his desired student learning outcomes. His students could test the water and write a scientific report on their findings. The community group could take it to local government officials to substantiate their concerns.

At the conclusion of the initial collaborative session, all participants should have identified several intersections where the goals of faculty and community partners coalesce. This curriculum design session is then repeated with additional community partners until enough sites are located to accommodate all students. The goal is to keep the number of placements at five or fewer to have time to communicate with and monitor all sites. Now is the time to update Exhibit 2.1 by recording service outcomes on the top row and making sure sufficient assignments are recorded in the boxes below to facilitate meaningful service and relate it to class materials.

Step Four: Design the Course

At this point, all outcomes are clarified. Obviously, there are many ways to design a course to achieve them. While it is useful to review sample syllabi for design ideas, remember that the first rule in designing a service-learning course is that there are no rules. Each professor must design an experience that furthers student learning outcomes, accomplishes the community partners' service outcomes, and complements the professor's scholarship goals. Following are five possible designs and descriptions of the courses in which they were employed (see also Florida International University, 1995).

- *Hypothesis testing.* In an upper-division public policy class, students were to question a fact or theory from the lecture or reading. One student chose to examine the contention that most recipients of assistance from AIDS-related social service agencies were middle- to upper-middle-class individuals rather than AIDS patients living below the poverty level. As the student helped to deliver care at the AIDS service agency, he simultaneously gathered demographic data on clients and found that most were indeed quite well off. He wrote a policy paper for the agency that included suggestions for improving outreach programs to target the city's indigent AIDS population better.
- *Teacher preparation.* Liberal studies or preteaching classes are natural fits for service-learning. Future teachers enrolled in classes such as "Physical Education for Children," "Art for Children," "Children's Literature," or

"Music for Children" have much to gain from testing classroom theories with children. After a period of observation, college students are given the opportunity to teach lessons and reflect on their success with input from peers, schoolteachers, and professors.

• *Multiple-semester projects.* Many times a community need cannot be addressed in a single semester. Professors can create multiple-semester projects that allow students to put a vital piece of the whole picture in place each semester. One health education professor, for example, was asked to plan school-based health fairs to provide basic health services and information (for example, on vaccinations, insurance information, and drug and alcohol abuse referrals). The professor created a three-semester plan. In the first semester, students did a community needs assessment. During the second semester, they surveyed local public and private resources that could address the identified needs. And in the third semester, they planned and implemented two health fairs at local schools.

• *Cross-disciplinary activities.* The health science professor in the multiple-semester project recruited professors and students from other disciplines, such as communicative disorders, kinesiology, and nursing, to create booths for the health fairs. In addition, students in a business class developed a marketing plan to increase campus involvement in the health fair project.

• *Project planning and execution.* Public relations students in their capstone course can design and implement fundraising and outreach projects for local nonprofit organizations. One such project saved the campus's aging orange grove from being bulldozed into a parking lot. Students joined with the local historical society to hold the Feeling Grovey Festival and obtained enough donations to buy new trees and irrigation equipment.

These examples illustrate some of the possibilities for course design. The design will facilitate syllabus construction, as week-by-week expectations are listed on the assignment and outcomes planner. The class syllabus must also totally integrate service-learning assignments. Too often, weekly assignments list lecture topics, readings, quizzes, and exams but relegate the service-learning components to a single paragraph at the end. This conveys an inaccurate picture of the relationship of service-learning to the course. It is not an afterthought. The Joint Educational Project at the University of Southern California recommends that service-learning course syllabi contain six key components (Cone, 2000):

1. A clear explanation of the connection between the academic content and the service component
2. Clearly stated course objectives related to the service
3. A description of the service requirements, including information on logistics that will be determined in Step Five

4. Specific information about placements, including names, addresses, and fairly detailed descriptions of participating community organizations

5. Clear information about requirements for reflection, critical analysis, or deliverable projects that will be determined in Step Six

6. A concise description of the evaluation process, including details on what will be evaluated and how the service experience will be weighed in the final grade

Step Five: Arrange Logistics and Create Forms

Now that the projects are agreed on, there is some nitty-gritty work to be done. Logistics are critical. Simple forms need to be developed to help professors with scheduling, carpooling, matching interests with tasks, time-keeping, and evaluation. Ideally the campus service-learning office will help with these vital tasks.

Before the initial meeting is over, professors and community partners should review a series of questions. Not all of them can be answered then, but tentative agreements should be reached on many, along with plans and timetables for answering the rest. Here are ten basic topics to address together:

• How long will the service component of the class last? What is the start date? End date?

• How many students will serve? How often? For how many hours?

• Are there transportation or parking problems?

• Who will conduct orientation for the college students? Will it be in-class or on-site orientation? Can community partners attend class during the first week to introduce their programs and answer student questions? What icebreakers will be used to break down barriers between students and their new clients?

• Who will be the on-site supervisor? What are the check-in and check-out procedures?

• How will students be evaluated? What outcome measures will be used to evaluate agency satisfaction with the students, and vice versa?

• How will communication among the faculty member, students, and community partners be maintained? Exchange home and work telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

• What is the plan for closure and recognition of participants?

• Is any special training necessary prior to starting service? If so, can the faculty member and agency share the special training? When can it be scheduled?

• Are any additional tests or procedures, such as tuberculosis tests or fingerprinting, necessary prior to starting?

Step Six: Reflect, Analyze, and Deliver

Even if every service outcome the agency desires is achieved, a student's learning outcomes will not be met unless connections are made between the service performed and the course content. There are three primary ways to bring about these linkages: reflection, critical analysis, and deliverables.

Service-learning proponents agree that reflection is the most critical of the seven-step model, for it is the one that ties the service to the learning. There are many ways to help students reflect on their service-learning experiences. One of the most popular is requiring each student to keep a journal and make entries after each service experience. Some professors ask students to divide journal entries into three parts: facts, feelings, and relationship to course content. After each day of service, using different color inks or different computer fonts, students must write something related to each of the three areas. Many professors ask students to make journal entries on-line through a Web-based discussion forum that can be posted asynchronously for all to view and to make contributions. This format also allows professors to print entries and review them at their convenience. It is also possible to hold class sessions or office hours on-line to facilitate discussion groups.

Some professors require more detailed analyses. They ask specific questions that students must answer after each service session and require staggered papers throughout the semester. For example, after the first two sessions, the assignment could be to describe the site, explain what the students did, and describe the people they met. The third assignment could be a mini-analysis paper, to be completed after five hours of service. The paper could ask students to write about their first weeks and relate how they feel about what the agency is doing, what they find exciting, and what worries them. Similar sets of journal entries and papers continue throughout the semester.

The second type of linkage, analysis and critical thinking, ties specific on-site observations to questions and writing assignments related to course content. The questions will vary by discipline, but usually ask students to determine from on-site observations or conversations whether a course theory or concept is being demonstrated in the community's practice. If it is, the student should elaborate on how the theory is being applied. If it is not, the student should be asked to analyze whether the practice would be helped or hindered by application of the theoretical concept.

The last linkage is a deliverable—a product that is left in the community for its future use. Each of the course designs in Step Four lends itself to a deliverable. The AIDS researcher left a policy paper suggesting ways to increase outreach to the poor. Physical education students can prepare a series of age-appropriate lesson plans for use by teachers to increase children's motor development. Students planning health fairs can create directories of local health services. The deliverable often becomes a showcase for

student creativity and academic achievement. Students also seem to try harder when they know the community will use the deliverable.

Professors should record reflection, critical analysis, deliverable assignments, and deadlines in the appropriate boxes on the assignment and outcomes planner and be careful to design assignments that genuinely help students link their learning to their service.

Step Seven: Perform Assessment and Evaluation

The last of the seven steps in the model is assessment and evaluation. Paloma and Banta (1999) explain, "Assessment is the systematic collection, review and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development" (p. 4). It is formative and ongoing and should result in programmatic improvements after each semester. A university-wide assessment form should be developed and given to faculty to help them measure progress toward their own student learning and community service outcomes. In addition, all assessment forms should be returned to the service-learning office for university-wide review.

Assessment is simple to accomplish if it is tied to the student learning outcomes. Students' attitudinal and behavioral changes related to these outcomes can be measured by a variety of pre- and postcourse tests, such as surveys, interviews, or focus groups. It is important to create indicators that demonstrate changes in actual behavior as well as thought, or even wishful thinking. For example, faculty can measure student progress toward the awareness of the community outcome by asking students to mark a Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" regarding a variety of statements. Under this outcome category, attitudinal changes can be measured by comparing pre- and posttest responses to questions such as, "The community in which our university is located is wealthy and has few problems with gangs, teenage pregnancy, and drug and alcohol use and abuse." Behavioral changes can be measured by comparing pre- and posttest responses to statements such as, "I regularly read newspapers to keep up with local issues."

Unlike assessment, evaluation is done by and for each service-learning population: students, faculty, and community sites. For example, students evaluate faculty and the service site through detailed questionnaires, and supervisors at the service site evaluate the students and their faculty partners using a checklist with space for comments. Specific forms are designed to glean vital information from each. For example, community partners can rank students from "unsatisfactory" to "excellent" in such areas as attendance and punctuality, quality of performance, respect for confidentiality, enthusiasm, and benefit of service provided. Students can rank their service experience from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied" in such areas as helpfulness of staff, adequacy of training and supervision, and meaningfulness of the tasks they performed.

All evaluation forms provide vital information to faculty members and the service-learning office that will be useful in improving course design and student placements.

Conclusion

This introduction to service-learning pedagogy, coupled with the other chapters in this book, should give novice practitioners help on what needs to be done to launch a successful and meaningful service-learning class. Service-learning is not an exact science, however. We often learn more from our failures than from our successes.

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