Service-Learning across the Curriculum: Multidisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Service-Learning at Widener University

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Gwynedd-Mercy College

Academic Service-Learning Faculty Development Program

Components of Program

- Course Releases for Faculty
- Weekly Faculty Seminars

  Guest Speakers, Readings
- Working with Community Partners
- Assessing What We Do

Widener University Service-Learning Courses

- BIOL 172 Service-Learning in Biology
- CSCI 152 Introduction to Computer Science II
- MGT 352 Operations Management
- PSY/SOC/WS 288 Issues in the Family
- SW 410 Senior Integrative Seminar II

Service-Learning Community Partners

- Bernardine Center
- Chester/Upland School District - Smedley Middle
- Chester Education Foundation
- Chester State Correctional Institution
- City Team Ministries
- County Offices for Services to the Aging
- Jewish Holocaust Survivors Program
- On a Roll Painting Company
- Second Time around Grandparents

Service-Learning across the Curriculum

How has service-learning impacted your teaching?

How has service-learning impacted your students' learning of course content?

Has service-learning impacted your students in other ways?

What changes will you make in future service-learning courses that you will teach?

Service-Learning in Biology Service-Learning Freshman Seminar

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Service-Learning Component in Introduction to Computer Science II

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Course Description

- Course combines a thorough introduction to the C language with a survey of advanced computer science (CS) and information systems (IS) topics.

- One of the goals is to make students familiar with the CS and IS technical elective courses that are offered by our department.

- Supervised lab includes a sequence of exercises in C.

- Three hours lecture; three hours laboratory. 4 credit hours.

The Idea of Project Component

- Spring 05: project component was integrated into the course with an optional service-learning form of participation.

- Idea: is to give students an opportunity to learn about an advanced computer science and information systems topic independently and present the results of the self-learning

- Main goal: is to engage students in active learning and knowledge exchange activities.

Service-Learning Optional Component – Spring 05

- SL: 9 students; NSL: 7 students; 15% of the Final Grade
- SL teams: learn and present the topic to children in the After-School Program for Middle School Students in Chester, PA
- Spring 05: Each SL team visits the school 5 times: initial visit, 3 visits to present the topic, final visit
- Topics
  - Computer - what is inside?
  - Learning About Networking, Internet, HTML
  - Artificial Intelligence in Games
- The teams visited the school during the last hour of the three - hour lab period.

Service-Learning Component Goals and Objectives – Spring 05

- Developing oral and written communication skills
- Covering social and ethical implications of computing to give students an understanding of a broad range of issues in this area.
- Developing professional attributes, including leadership, collaboration and communication skills.
- Enhancing learning of the course material

Spring 05: Students Post Survey Analysis

Goal	Average Rates from 1 to 5, 1-not accomplished, 5- accomplished completely
Developing oral and written communication skills	**4**
Covering social and ethical implications of computing to give students an understanding of a broad range of issues in this area	**4**
Developing professional attributes, including leadership, collaboration and communication skills:	**3.85**
Enhancing learning of the course material	**2.71**

Service-Learning Impact on Teaching

- Unpredictable situations
- Changes in lab structure
- Unusual topics and discussions for the computer science course
- Reflection challenges
- Challenge to combine service-learning and non service-learning teams
- Core computer science course

Current and Future Plans

- Spring 07: 9 SL students and 7 NSL students; 25% of FG
- All SL students visit school every week during last lab hour
- Topics – Spring 07:
  - Learning to Program with Alice
  - Learning About Robotics
- Goals and Objectives:
  - Developing oral and written communication skills
  - Developing collaboration and communication skills.
  - Engaging students in active learning and knowledge exchange activities.
  - Improving the effectiveness of teaching and student learning.

Operations Management : Service-Learning Component

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Operations Management - Core Course : Service-Learning Mode

I. • Introduction

II. • OM Service-Learning Projects

III. • Comments and Remarks

IV. • A Concluding Note

I. Introduction

- How things started and Evolved?

II. OM : Service-Learning

- ## Course Description
  - MGT 352 is an Introductory core course in **operations management**. It focuses on the main OM issues, decisions and trade-offs involved at the firm level. This includes both manufacturing and service organizations.
  - "Learning by Doing" is emphasized through out the course, through in-class and out of class applications and projects that tie theory to practice.
  - Topics covered comprise strategic decisions, such as: Facility Location, Forecasting, Management of Technology, and SC Strategy; Tactical Decisions, as aggregate planning and inventory control; and Operational Decisions as detailed scheduling.

II. OM Service-Learning Projects

Course S-L Projects – Fall 2006 Semester

Group #	S-L Project Title
I	"Using Operations Management Concepts to Improve City Team Services: An Empirical Study"
II	"Assuming Operations Stability and growth at Bernardine Center in Chester"
III	"Improving Operations Efficiency and Effectiveness at a Small Business: On-A-Roll Painting"
IV	"Improving Efficiency and Effectiveness of Widener University Student Union: A Comparative Study"

III. Comments and Remarks

- S-L impact on My Teaching
  - *   Challenges and
  - *   Opportunities

- S-L impact on Students' Learning of Course Contents
  - *   Challenges
  - *   Unique Learning Experience
  - *   Effective Learning Outcomes

- S-L impact on Students' Development in Other Ways

IV. Concluding Note

Tips & Insights on Improving S-L Effectiveness

1. Early Planning for the Course
   - Specify & establish contact with your community partner (CP).
   - Specify the issues that **match** CP's needs with course contents.

2. Early Engagement of All Parties in the Learning Process
   - The CP's
   - The Student Teams
   - Coordinator's Report

3. Continuous Follow-Up
   - Outline
   - Progress Report
   - First Draft
   - Project Completion – Oral and Written Parts

IV. Concluding Note (cont'd)

4. Acknowledge All Contributions From:

- Students
- Community Partners

5. Effective Assessment

- Self Assessment
- Peer Assessment
- CP Assessment
- Instructor's Assessment

Issues in the Family An InsideOut Program Course

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The Use of Narrative Research and Service Learning to Infuse Gerontology into Social Work Research Courses

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The Big Questions!!

How can we keep students interested in aging while at the same time teach methods of research that would benefit the students but not turn them away from the course material?

ANSWER

- Narrative Research

- Civic Engagement
  - Service Learning

SW410: Senior Integrative Seminar in Social Work

A social work integrative seminar providing students an opportunity to apply narrative research design, life story interview methods and related qualitative approaches to understanding human behavior, aging throughout the life cycle and social work practice
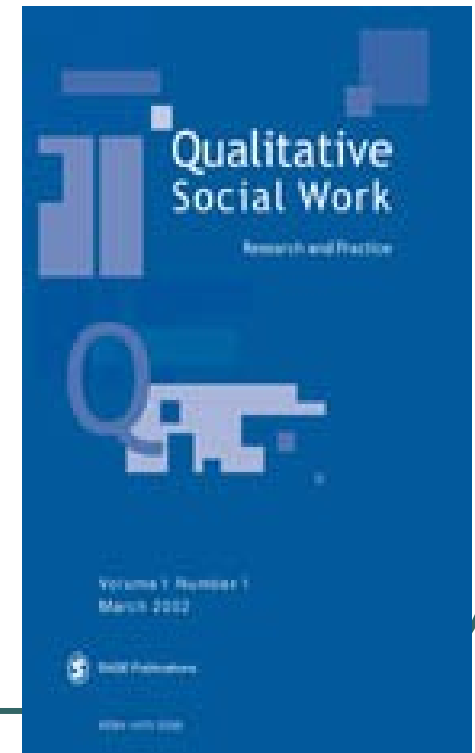
Service Learning Goals

- *Increase student interest in gerontological social work careers*

- *Increase opportunities for students to work across generations and value the importance of the relationship of one generation to the next.*

- *Develop opportunities for appreciating service learning research in the field of gerontology and intergenerational relations.*

- *Better prepare students to understand the importance of civic engagement in relation to growing macro-societal problems.*

- *Assist older adults in sharing their legacy with younger generations including MSW & BSW students, their families and the larger community.*

- *Help preserve the ethnic history and culture of older adults using narrative/life story/oral history/interpretive autobiography research methods.*

- *Empower older adults to share their wisdom, life accomplishments, strengths and talents to strengthen social work students' understanding of human behavior throughout the life cycle.*

Recruitment
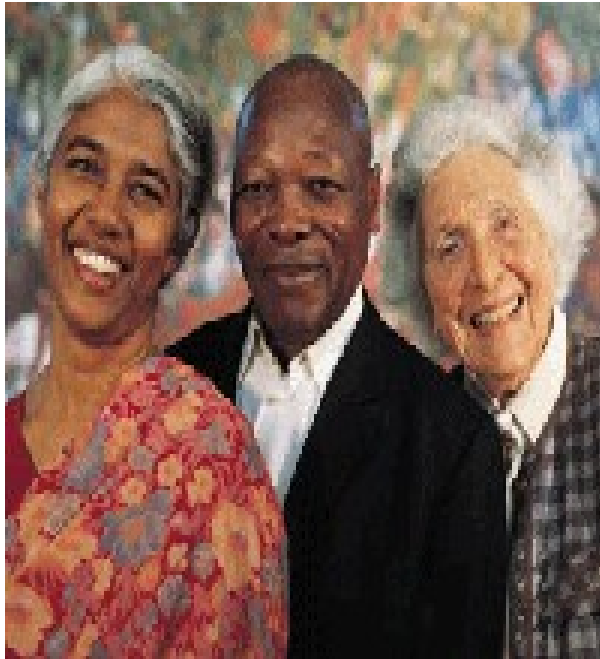
- Jewish Children & Family Services (Holocaust Survivors Project)
- Second Time Around Parents (Grandparent Caregivers).
- Delaware County Office for Services to the Aged (COSA-AAA).
- Fair Acres-Life Care Community.
- Senior Community Services of Delaware County (Senior Centers)

Method
Obtaining the Story

- **Flexible Open-Ended Interview**
  - **Stream of Consciousness**
- **One on One**
- **3-10 Visits**
- **1-2 Hours/Visit at location of respondents choice.**
- **Audio and digitally-taped (Magnavox)**
- **Photographed**
- **Video-taped**

Narrative Meaning Making

- Most interesting-students final reflection.

- For the students, the job was to assist the storyteller to be reflective & share the meaning of the story.

- For the instructor, the job was to assist the students to be reflective & make meaning of the experience/research for themselves personally and professionally.

Narrative Meaning Making (cont.)

- Interpretive emphasis found to be similar to clinical work but felt less strained because they were not in a clinical situation or having to use the DSMIV to determine service or intervention.

- Students discovered resilience in face of trauma and therefore did not want their meetings to be clinical in nature.

- Became interested in successful aging.

Student Insights

- Wisdom of respondents breathtaking.
- Surprised by respondents abilities to overcome trauma, view life positively and reach stage of integrity.
- Students felt restorying allowed respondents to restory and reflect how they turned trauma into resilience.
- Students were surprised that they enjoyed learning about the aging process and the heterogeneity of experiences.

Final Commentary

- Students surprised by closeness & connection developed with respondents.

- Expressed positive feelings about being mentored by their respondents.

- Likened the relationships to grand-generativity as explained by Erickson.

- The storyteller's mentoring became an important component of the student's educational experience.

- Providing the respondent with the transcribed story became an important aspect of service and civic engagement.

Would this instructor do this again?

-Narrative research and service allowed students to hear the voices of older adults & helped them make connections between class content with a first hand experience of aging through the eyes of those who have lived to older adulthood.

-Families have written the instructor & students thanking them for the life stories and legacies left for grandchildren.

-Students have maintained their relationships with several of the respondents.

-Presidents Harris provided service learning recognition certificates to the students and respondents alike and provided a course release time to continue advancing this project which has now been embedded into three social work courses taught by this instructor.

Final Student Comments

"I LEARNED SO MUCH FROM DOING THIS PROJECT. It was an awesome experience. It has made me more interested in completing life stories for older people that I know. After starting this project, I asked several of my family and friends (African American) if they had written documentation about family history and life events of their grandparents and parents. No one had anything recorded past what is written in the family Bible. I do not believe that a lot of African Americans think about the importance of documenting this information until after their loved ones have passed on."

The End

"This has taught me the importance of writing down experiences and special events. If for no other reason but to make sure the generations to come, know where they came from, because as … says:

"You can't go no where, if you don't know where you've been."

Questions and Answers

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