



The Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
Enhancing Higher Education Environments



CBL

User Guide

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Introduction

The community based learning pedagogy focuses on engaging learners with the surrounding community. The benefit is mutual to both sides. The learners get to know the target community (potential future employer) up-close. They learn to negotiate with partners, to determine and meet their needs, and to present solutions to real and complicated problems. In turn, the target community benefits by having their projects, which need much time, effort and work force, done for them by students and their teachers. Examples on such projects are media campaign designs, English supplementary materials for grades 1-4, parking space planning in Nablus city, website design for NGOs, etc.

In August 2013, The Center for Excellence, as part of its effort to both improve the learning opportunity for ANU students and to serve the surrounding community, launched a community based learning program. The program included the planning, design and implementation for 10 CBL courses from the faculties of Education, Engineering, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Humanities, and Economics and Social Sciences. The implementation of the 10 courses was completed in May, 2014.

The experience was very much learner-centered. Students learned skills they would learn only in a course of this nature.

The Center for Excellence management team thinks the CBL experience is one that is worth spreading. CELT team is pleased to make available this nine-page user guide for university teachers who wish to integrate community-based learning in teaching. The manual explains the process of re-designing university courses to include experiential learning components in them. It also gives examples on community-based learning courses, ILOs and assessment methods.

We hope it will serve as a useful guide during the planning, redesign and implementation stages for new CBL university courses.

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Definition of CBL Good Practice

Community Based Learning

Community Based Learning (CBL) is a learning approach in which academic institutions and community organizations work together in order to meet their common needs. The CBL courses consist of a collection of academic activities in community settings beyond university campus. Practically speaking, the CBL course allows students to complete a research project for a partner community organization while simultaneously fulfilling their academic requirements.

CBL Courses

The community issues are considered the basis for the learning process and they become classrooms materials; while the community environment (worksites) and the community members are considered resources for learning and they are often invited to lead lectures and class-based activities.

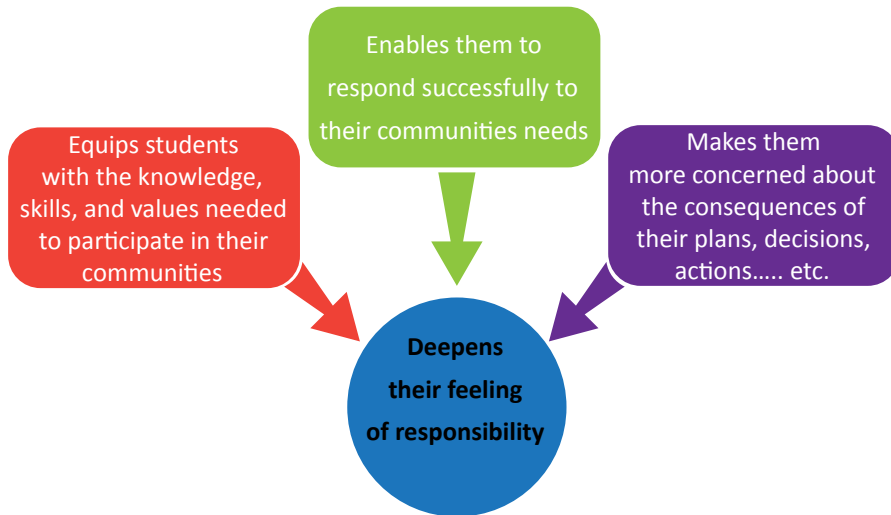


WHY CBL?

Educators usually decide on integrating community projects for one of these reasons:

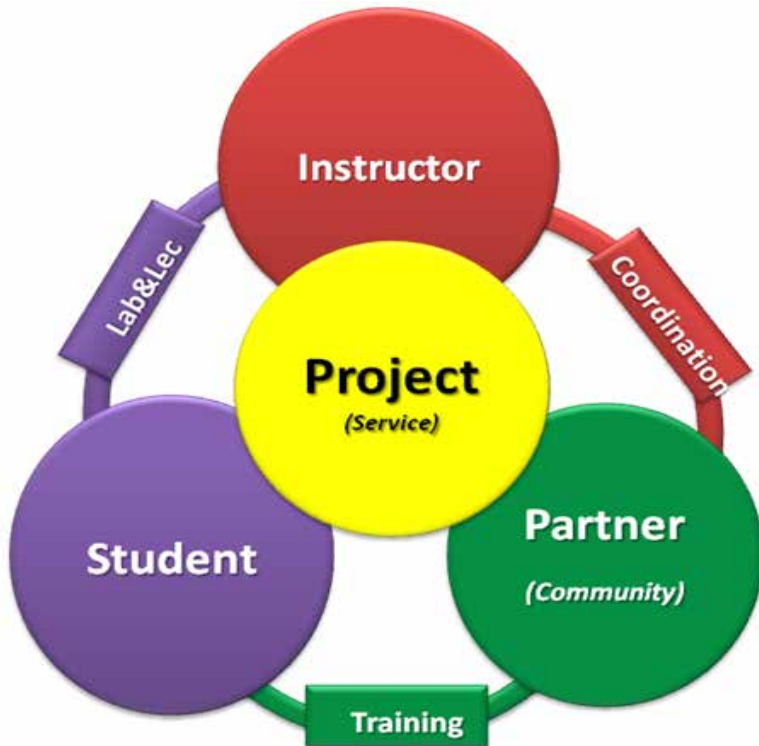
- While traditional teaching approaches separate the classroom from the worksite; the CBL class engages community and worksite as extensions of the classroom.
- Students can most effectively and efficiently acquire knowledge, build skills, and develop useful attitudes.
- The CBL class makes learning relevant to real life.
- The CBL class helps students make the crucial transition from knowing to doing (knowledge to action).
- The CBL pedagogy develops both students and the community capacities.
- The students demonstrate flexible and innovative approaches to real world problems
- Students have the opportunity to focus on their fields of interests

- The CBL experience increases students' and teachers' civic engagement as shown in figure 1 :



Interaction among CBL Actors

Figure 2 explains the nature of interaction between students, teachers and community partners.



Defining Community Needs

The CBL classes employ theoretical models to address and resolve community needs. Course instructors need to define the community needs while planning for the course, preferably before the semester starts. They can do this in a number of ways as shown in figure 3 below.



Elements of High Quality CBL Classes

To guarantee satisfactory course projects, the instructor should make sure that

- Student are learning according to a well-structured plan;
- Their field work is always documented and assessed.
- Students are receiving ongoing support and counseling.
- Students are responding to the particular needs of the communities they are intending to serve.
- Both students and teachers do in fact involve the community partner in all stages

The CBL Framework

Designing CBL classes comes in four main steps:

1. The exploration & Initiation is intended to define community needs and translate those into course projects.
2. During the planning phase the project tasks and activities are integrated into the course calendar.
3. The implementation phase ensures that all tasks and activities are accomplished according to set timeframes and according to set criteria.
4. The final evaluation step is often done by all stakeholders, students, teachers and community partners.

Intended Learning Outcomes for CBL courses

How to write CBL ILOs

Learning is giving learners the power of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The learning process should specify the main methods used for teaching, learning, and assessment.

Until fairly recently, published descriptions of university courses tended to refer mainly to content, i.e. what it was that the teacher would cover. The more recent models of higher education, however, place the learner at the centre of the teaching and learning process and require that modules be described in terms of what it is that: “the students should be able to do when they have completed that module”. The statements, which describe what it is that the students should be able to do after completing the course, are called intended learning outcomes or learning objectives. They describe the achievements of learners in terms of the knowledge, understanding and skills attained upon completion of a piece of learning.

The community engagement component appears as intended learning outcomes which describe the experiential learning components aimed at accomplishing tasks which meet genuine human needs in various local communities. The outcomes focus on the execution of tasks that serve as educational and learning tools for students to acquire a number of important life skills.

When writing your CBL ILOs, make sure that they:

- are written in the future tense (students will be able to)
- identify important learning requirements.
- are achievable.
- are measurable.
- use simple language which students can understand.
- give explicit statements about student achievement in community setting.
- include ILOs which target learner skills and performance.



Example from the Research Methods Course

Learning objectives:

Upon completing this course, the students will be able to:

1. Perform curriculum analysis for one component in the English for Palestine second semester book.
2. Use available research to develop criteria for good practice in English supplementary material design.
3. Design supplementary materials for one language skill for one semester and justify each activity based on available criteria from literature.
4. Write a short rationale that defines the audience, explain the activities, and give instructions for teachers and/or parents on how to use the material.
5. Compare student work with successful models used for same grade and provide necessary documentation.
6. Share findings and designs with teachers and other stakeholder.

Assessment

When a student's work is assessed, the mark allocation is based on what the student has learned and on the extent to which the course learning outcomes have been achieved.

Thus, a student's grade is awarded specifically for the quality of learning exhibited, and for the quality of the service provided to the community partners.



Authentic assessment

Before you decide on your assessment scheme, try to answer these questions:

1. What should students know and be able to do?
This list of knowledge and skills is derived from your **ILOs**.
2. What are the indicators that students have met these **ILOs**?
To determine if students have met these **ILOs**, you will design or select relevant assessment tools.
3. What does good performance on your tasks look like?
To determine if students have performed well on one particular task, you will identify and look for characteristics of good performance called **CRITERIA**
4. How well did the students perform?
To distinguish one student performance from another across criteria, you will create a **RUBRIC**.
5. How well should most students perform?
The minimum level at which you would want most students to perform is your **CUT SCORE or BENCHMARK**

1. The criteria for CBL classes usually includes: determining needs in collaboration with the community, communication and negotiation skills, team dynamics, data collection from community site, and consultation on product with community partner.



Descriptors

Decide how many descriptors you need as in the example:

Criteria		Poor (1)	Good (2)	Excellent (3)
Number of Sources	x1			
Historical Accuracy	X5			
Organization	X3			
Bibliography	x1			

Where x1 means criterion weight from total grade

Example Research Methods CBL Course

Grade Breakdown:

1	Curriculum analysis report 15% (Team grade)
2	Criteria for good practice 10 % (individual work)
3	Presentation 15% (individual work)
4	Supplementary material product 30% (team grade)
5	Final exam (30%)



Assessment Criteria

The final product will be assessed based on:

	Criteria	Weight/30
1	Compliance with criteria for good practice which we will define and agree on in-class.	$3*6=18$
2	Using clear instructions in accurate English.	$8*1=8$
3	Designing user friendly materials.	$4*1=4$

The curriculum analysis report assessment criteria are:

	Criteria	Weight/15
1	The gaps are related to stated criteria and compared to good models.	$8*1=8$
2	Curriculum gaps are identified and properly explained.	$4*1=4$
3	Minimal number of spelling, grammatical, punctuation mistakes.	$3*1=3$

Challenges

When implementing CBL classes, teachers often encounter certain challenges. Among the challenges that may compromise the success of community projects' completion are:

1. Lack of commitment to serving the community. If the teacher and/or the learners lack such commitment, they will neither enjoy nor appreciate their work.
2. Lack of experience in managing projects may lead to unhelpful delays when it comes to completion of project tasks within set timeframes.
3. Logistical and financial support. This is especially relevant when students start making field visits. The teacher should help facilitate access by students to community sites.
4. Clarity, support and orientation for learners. Lack or absence of clarity, orientations and support for learners may lead to confusion among learners as to expectations and quality standards for project major activities. This is usually more serious early on in the class when the teacher and students are working on defining their target community needs.