

Making It Count Beyond the Classroom



PURPOSEFUL COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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Community-Based Learning
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It takes a village...



- Creating a Culture of Service

- ✦ First Serve
- ✦ First Year Fusion
- ✦ First Come, First Serve



- Service? Learning? or Both?

Overview



- I. **Theory** → What the research tells us
- II. **Practice** → How research can be used
 - I. How **CBL** can be used to help students **thrive**

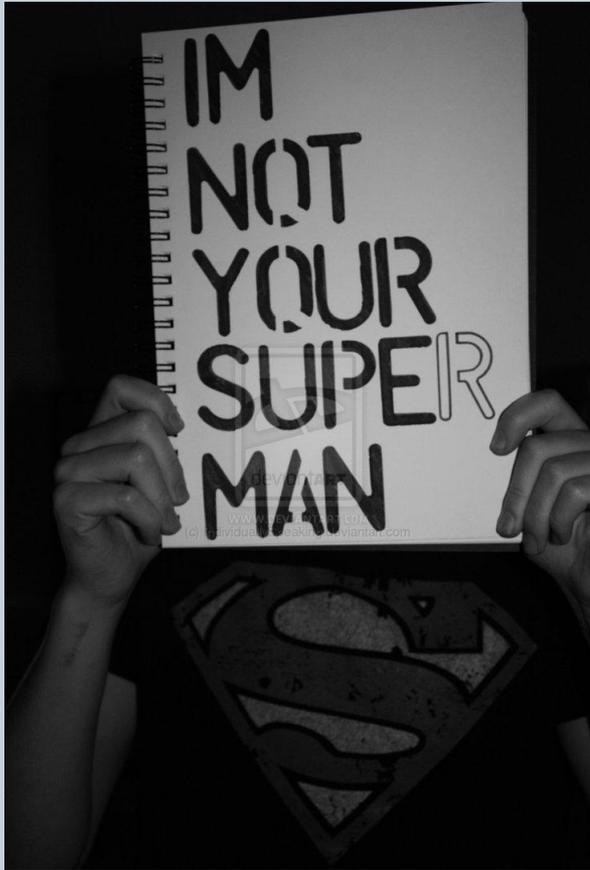
What is Community Service Learning?



“cultural, economic, environmental, scientific, social and other activities and programs, both academic and non-academic that involve interaction with individuals, groups and organizations both internal and external to the university and contribute to the progress and development of both individuals and groups involved.”

– adapted from Monash University, Australia (2012)

Service Learners ARE NOT Super heroes!



- Good CBL happens when **both parties benefit**.
- Wrong: Students “sweeping in” to save the day and “swoop out” when they’ve completed their service hours.
- Right: Students enter service opportunities seeking knowledge, understanding and growth.
- Focus is on **building relationships**.

So, why do students participate?



- Males are more apt to engage in service learning to prepare for careers or learn skills while females focus more on building community and civic responsibility.
- Students with a history of service learning (outside of school) are more likely to enroll in service learning classes within an academic context.
- Students are likely to participate in additional service if they have a sense of accomplishment as a “service-learner.”

(Pederson, Meyer and Hargrave, 2013)

How do students become service-learners?



1. Encourage Reflections
2. Let Students Choose
3. Help Students See the Bigger Picture
4. Differentiate Learning Experiences

Reflections – Three Easy Questions



Easy to use for both instructors and upper-level students who might lead service projects.

What?

So What?

Now What?



Student Choice



- Students need some level of choice in participating in service-learning.

Choice → Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation → Autonomy,
Competency & Relatedness

- **DO** Inform students which classes are service-learning.
- **DON'T** Require service-learning
- **DO** Build a culture of civic engagement

The Bigger Picture



- Scaffolding

- Just like with other aspects of learning, instructors might have to help students make CBL relevant by linking to:
 - career aspirations,
 - academic interests, or
 - community-building.
- This is particularly important because of reported gender differences regarding community based learning.

The Bigger Picture



- Differentiate Learning

- Like other aspects of learning, students don't enter CBL with the same skills and experiences. So,

Meet students where they are

- Effective courses and programs are interdisciplinary and programmatic (similar to STEM education)
- Courses should surround student interests and may be:
 - Curricular
 - Co-curricular
 - Extra-curricular

CBL in Action: CIVICUS (University of Maryland)



- **Model: Living and Learning Program**

- Students live together during their first two years in a common residence hall.
- Students take university requirement classes together such as freshman writing and sociology, but with a community-based learning focus.
- Students also complete community service learning classes with a required research project or internship.



CBL in Action: CIVICUS-PB&J Night

(University of Maryland)



- Example: Once a semester, Civicus students meet in the ground floor of their residence hall for a PB&J night to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for delivery to a local food kitchen, Martha's Table, which provides services to the homeless.
- **End result** → students and faculty members create a **culture of service** from a series of simple service projects that become traditions.

CBL in Action: Community-Based Research Scholars (American University, Washington D.C.)



- **Model: Academic coursework**
 - Academic courses include community-based learning through research, projects or internships.
- **End result** → “students critically process and reflect on their experiences to heighten their engagement with central academic themes, **bridge theory and practice**, and contribute to clarification of their own personal values, career goals, and sense of social responsibility.”



Community-Based Research Scholars (American University, Washington D.C.)



- Example: **AMST 240 CB: Poverty and Culture**
Students explore and debate rival theories about the causes and consequences of poverty. Why poverty occurs, why certain people are poor, how poverty influences family and community life, and how the poor respond to their situation and sometimes try to change it.
- **Noteworthy because of linkages between social issues and American's urban community**
“Volunteering has provided me with a new perspective of the homeless population. I gained field research for my research paper. I could not have gained this information by examining reports or journals. The first-hand experience gave me insight into the real problems of the homeless.” – Student reflection

Community-Based Learning Initiative

(Princeton University, Princeton, NJ)



- **Model: Coursework Informed Internship**

Students participate in internships with local non-profit organizations in the areas of community development, social justice, health and the environment. Within the organization, students work on research-based community projects.

- **End result** → students are:

1. able to make clear linkages between their academic coursework and community organizations and service.
2. introduced to how their degree may be used to better their community setting them on the track to positive change.

Community-Based Learning Initiative

(Princeton University, Princeton, NJ)



- Example: **Centurion Ministries Internship.**

Students work on opening old cases of those wrongly incarcerated using scientific and technological developments to introduce new evidence. Those wrongly accused are often from disadvantaged communities and cannot afford the best legal representation.

- **Noteworthy because of the clear linkages between academic knowledge, research, career skills and giving back to the community.**

Students are able to make a big impact in only a semester. Ongoing partnerships with the department and the nonprofits promote positive university-community relationships.

CBL in Action: Engaged Scholarship Initiative

(Amherst College, Amherst, MA)



- **Model: Grant Program**

Supports community-based research projects, creates opportunities for faculty-supervised student research, advances creative work, and strengthens the connection between faculty research and course development.

- The Initiative supports projects that accomplish one or more of the following objectives:
 - Result in development of a new course with a community-based component,
 - Produce community-based scholarship,
 - Involve students in faculty-supervised community-based research, and/or
 - Demonstrate a benefit to the community.

Connecticut River Watershed Project

(Amherst College, Amherst, MA)

- **Example:** Students conduct research to investigate “the deposition of inorganic mercury” from a coal-fired power plant upriver. Mercury in high levels is poisonous so students and faculty teams have paired with community and environmental organizations to research potential impacts.
- **Noteworthy because of the integration of science and community activism in a ongoing project.**



Thriving Students: Beyond Learning Outcomes



Students from traditional learning environments, often find CBL:

“unfamiliar, and as a consequence, experience dissonance, discomfort, and uncertainty.”

(Clayton & Ash, 2004)

CBL challenges students to examine:

1. Personal values and belief students (*intrapersonal*)
2. Relationships with the external world (*interpersonal*)
3. Using effective but unfamiliar pedagogies (*cognitive*)

And helps them develop increased SELF-AUTHORSHIP
(Baxter-Magolda, 2008)

Interpersonal Thriving



- Diverse Citizenship

- Openness to diversity (*intercultural maturity*)
- Citizenship

“The more students interact with others who are different from themselves, the more they grow cognitively and interpersonally.”
-Dr. Laurie Schreiner

- How do we help students achieve this?

- Encourage students to engage in specific activities that will enhance their diverse citizenship
 - ✦ Sustained contact
 - ✦ Adequate & safe environment for conflict resolution
 - ✦ Common goal that requires collaboration across differences

Interpersonal Thriving



- How do we help students achieve this? (continued)
 - Create classrooms that value and celebrate diversity
 - ✦ Expose students to a variety of viewpoints in a safe setting
 - ✦ Challenge and stretch students on their sense of self along with intellectual engagement
 - Structure campus events to promote interactional diversity
 - ✦ Increased interactions students have with others who are different tends to lead to more interactions that are positive

The Power of Community Based Learning



“Altruism can best be appreciated as an experience rather than an abstraction.”

-Ernest Boyer

“Close working relationships with other students not only provide emotional support but also powerfully strengthen educational gains from formal curriculum.” -A. Chickering

Remember: A contextual approach empowers people

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The Power of Community Based Learning



Thank you for your time and attention.

- Questions?