

ACADEMIC SERVICE LEARNING FACULTY TOOL KIT



*The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself
in the service of others.*
Mahatma Gandhi

**Presented by Academic Service Learning in conjunction with
the Community Service Center**

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WHAT?

AN OVERVIEW OF ACADEMIC SERVICE LEARNING

One of the goals of higher education is to prepare students to serve as active citizens in a diverse, democratic society.

Academic service learning is a response to this goal. Academic service learning is where community service meets classroom work to provide students with an integrated learning opportunity. Through the intentional connection between the classroom and community, students will be well-equipped to confidently engage with their community and become active contributors to society.

Academic Service Learning is composed of three necessary criteria:

- **Community service is a methodology that is used to clarify class content.**
- **Students must participate in service that the community feels is necessary and beneficial.**
- **Through reflection and conversation, students will gain an interest in and understanding of civic and social responsibility.**

(Howard, 2001)

WHY?

AN OVERVIEW OF ACADEMIC SERVICE LEARNING

Research for academic service learning has shown positive results of these experiential learning opportunities on students. Studies show that service learning leads to the following results:

- **Motivation to work harder**
- **Enhanced tolerance for diversity**
- **Strengthening of leadership skills**
- **Development of personal and social responsibility**
- **Stronger relationships with faculty and fellow classmates**
- **Improved ability to apply theoretical knowledge to real problems**
- **A deeper understanding of the complexity of social issues**
- **A higher GPA and improved academic performance**
- **Increased sense of connection to the community**
- **Increased knowledge of course content**
- **Enhanced moral development**
- **Greater self-knowledge**
- **Increased self-esteem**

(Eyler & Giles, 1999)



HOW?

ACADEMIC SERVICE LEARNING IN FOUR EASY STEPS

- 1. When constructing a course curriculum, consider service options that correspond to the course content and facilitate the learning of the class. Students must be aware of the connection between the service and class work.**
- 2. Select a service project that is relevant and meaningful to the community with which you are collaborating. Selection can be facilitated through Diane Bell, of the Community Service Center.**

(Campus Compact, 2006)



(Four Academic Service Learning Principles, continued)

3. Ensure that the academic service learning experience incorporates the following four principles (as recommended by *Campus Compact*):

Engagement

The community and students must collaborate in the decision about what the community's needs are. The service component must meet a public good. The campus-community boundaries must be discussed and negotiated to ensure successful cooperation in the service-learning experience.

Reflection

Academic service learning requires a structured method that encourages students to link their service experience to course content and to reflect upon why the service is important. Students may view a service component as simply an extension to their course work. When structured in-class reflection takes place, the student and instructor relate the importance of the community work with course goals. Reflection is the place where the community and academic classrooms meet to enhance and integrate the student's learning experience.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity suggests that every individual, organization, and entity involved in the service learning functions as both a teacher and a learner. Participants are perceived as colleagues, not as servers and clients.

(Campus Compact, 2006)

(Four Academic Service Learning Principles, continued)

Public Dissemination

The service experience must be presented to the public and there should be an opportunity for the community to enter into a public dialogue with the students and faculty. Keeping an open communication and respectful relationship with the public is vital in the continuation of the academic service learning initiative.

(Campus Compact, 2006)



4. Assess the academic service learning experience.

Evaluation of the quality of the service learning component is necessary in order to make future improvements of the program. Each student, community partner, and professor must have the opportunity to provide their assessment of the experience.

(University of Southern Mississippi, 2006)

EXAMPLES OF ACADEMIC SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS

**Course: Social Psychology
Bridgewater State College**

Course objectives

At the close of this course, you should be able to *recognize* and *discuss* the kinds of questions that social psychologists like to ask; the kinds of research methods they use to get their questions answered; the major findings of such research; under the basic headings in our textbook (groups, social influence, social thinking, etc.) a framework for pulling all these findings together. The evolutionary perspective on social psychology have some basic connections between social psychology and other major areas of psychology (e.g., child psychology, personality theory). We will discover the implications of social psychology for your relationships with others and for your concept of yourself as a social being.

Course requirements

Presentation/paper or Volunteer work

Your presentation, due in November, will center on a research study or experiment in social psychology. You will find a report of that research in a scholarly journal, and you will read and summarize it for your listeners. (You will be shown how to locate such reports in our library and online). NOTE: In place of this requirement, you may complete 15 hours of community service at the Brockton VA Medical Center and submit a short essay on your experience. To take this alternative option, you need to have your arrangements made no later than September 28. (A speaker from the VA, Rick Leeman, will visit our class on September 14 to describe what is involved.) Hours should be completed, and the essay submitted, by the last day of class, Dec. 12.

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**Course: Introduction to Social Welfare
Bridgewater State College**

Course Description: The course provides the student with an introduction to social work, an important helping profession, and to the U.S. social welfare system’s policies, programs, and services. In this course we will examine the values, the social justice mandate, and issues of diversity that shape and inform the practice of social work. Students will be introduced to the profession of social work and key foundational concepts that underlie social work practice, including policy practice and advocacy. Students will also be provided with an overview of the U.S. social welfare system. This knowledge will help students understand the ways in which social needs are addressed in the U.S. as well as the role that social workers perform within the social welfare system.

Course Expectations: Students will be evaluated based on the following:

Four Quizzes, Write-to-Learn Assignments, Article Summary, Service Learning and Report, Mid-term paper, Class Participation

Field Experience and Report

Each student is expected to expand their knowledge of what social workers do by visiting at least one social service agency, interviewing a social worker and successfully completing a thirty-hour service learning experience in a human service agency. The thirty hours of volunteer field experience must be completed at one agency. Students are asked to volunteer for three hours a week for a period of ten weeks. (This service learning assignment cannot be used as credit for other courses.)

Students will report on their experience in a 2-3 page mid-term paper, a 6-8 page final paper, due at the end of the semester, and in a brief class presentation.

EXAMPLES OF ACADEMIC SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS (cont.)

Course: Special Education and Communication Disorders
Bridgewater State College

Course Description:

This course will introduce the major goals, principles, and concepts of multicultural education with an emphasis on the impact on school and society. It will explore the cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic factors influencing our schools. A review of indigenous cultural groups will be an important part of this course. It will offer concepts to assist participants to improve the learning environment and interaction among school, parents, and community.

Assignments: Academic Service Learning Project

- You must visit a minority community of people outside of your own culture. This may be any setting within the community (school, place of worship, department store, outdoor festival, etc.). The minority community may be different in terms of any of the 7 areas of ableness.
- It may be best to do this with a partner or small group as that may reduce your feelings of discomfort. Once a site has been identified, document your “game plan” and submit it to me for approval.
- Once in the community you must find people to speak with that can help you to understand the needs of the community. You must list 5 needs of the community so it may be necessary to speak to more than one person. In addition, you will need to list 5 aspects of the community that are unique or vary from qualities in the majority population.
- You must now figure out a way to address one of the needs of the community. For instance, if one of the needs of the community is to have affordable daycare so that mothers are able to go out to work, you may choose to create a list of daycare providers in a 5 mile radius of the community and to list their fees. In addition, you may choose to call each center and ask if they have an OFC license and special programs for families who cannot afford expensive day care.
- After your project is complete, you must post it where it can be seen and used, implement it (if it is a more hands-on activity), or present it to a leader in the community.
- The completion of each project will be due two weeks prior to the last day of classes. A presentation will be required including a handout for the class, a brief oral description of the project, and an active learning experience for the class.

EXAMPLES OF ACADEMIC SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS (cont.)

Course: Accounting
California Polytechnic State University

I. OVERVIEW

The IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA) has been in existence for many years as a means of assisting lower income taxpayers with answers to their tax questions and assistance in preparing their income tax returns. This is the fifth year that CAL POLY has participated in the program.

The program is expected to provide the following benefits to participating students:

- Provides a review of the basic tax rules learned in Accounting 304, as well as supplementing that learning with various technical aspects of tax preparation and compliance.
- Provides instruction and practice in the preparation of California income tax returns
- Increases your communication skills through experience of interviewing clients and keeping a journal of your experiences.
- Provides exposure to a broad cross-section of the population. Students will gain knowledge about the general population's understanding of the tax laws and the problems they face in complying with its provisions.

The program is also a service to the community. This may be our client's first one-on-one encounter with CAL POLY students - try to represent your university well!

II. CLASS REQUIREMENTS

- Students must receive a passing grade on a federal tax returns test to be completed (individually!) by **beginning of class on Wednesday, January 24th**. Also, receive a passing grade on a California tax returns test **due by class on Wednesday, January 31th**.
- Students must perform 8 hrs. of publicity activities.
- Help with bringing in clients by preparing the returns for at least 6 people you have personally contacted about VITA. Two of these 6 people (or their information) must be brought in during the first two weeks of the program.
- Work at least 28 hours in the VITA centers during the quarter (i.e. 4 hours per week).
- Maintain an activity time log that confirms your activities and 6 taxpayers.
- Keep a folder with your time log, a record of your coordinating or publicity activities and a daily journal of your experiences at the VITA sites.

Based on the journal, you will submit a typewritten reflection paper on your experiences (2-4 typewritten pages) no later than Friday, March 8th (outside room 03--403). This log and reflection paper are meant to be not just a summary of the number of people you assisted (we have to keep separate records on that) but comments and thoughts on new things learned, problems encountered, things you would do differently in retrospect, mistakes you realized you may have made, insights about people's knowledge of, respect for the tax laws & the IRS, etc.

The program is also a service to the community. This may be our client's first one-on-one encounter with CAL POLY students - try to represent your university well!

EXAMPLES OF ACADEMIC SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS (cont.)

**Course: Philosophy 206
Niagara University**

Course Description

This course is designed to develop the student's ability to think critically about contemporary ethical issues, both personal and social, and to develop a normative value system as a basis for distinguishing the good and bad in human conduct.

Service Learning Assignment: Each student is required to engage in a 18-20 hour Service-learning project to experience the praxis of justice and social responsibility and to promote sensitivity to diversity and multiculturalism. The service-learning project will enable students to critically reflect on the philosophical and ethical principles inherent in the praxis of justice. In the first class, students will be introduced to the various opportunities available through *Learn and Serve Niagara/NUCAP*. However, you may select any other program which offers you a first hand experience in direct community service with the permission of your instructor. You are required to fill out the "**Service-learning Project Registration Forms**" and return them to the NUCAP office by the deadline. Once your project has been approved, you may proceed to complete the 15-20 hours of service. After completing your service, you are required to write a 5-page evaluation of your experience and submit it on 3 May 2001.

Instructions for the 5 Page Evaluation You are required to submit a 5 page, typewritten evaluation of your service-learning project. Please describe what you have learned personally from your experience of service. How did this experience change some of your assumptions or ideas? Please describe the components and ideas which you have learned from the course material and your research paper, which helped you, reflect more critically on Justice and ethics.

THE SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT JOURNAL

Each student must keep a journal to record reflections on the service-learning project experience. Students are required to make one journal entry after each contact session in the service project experience. Some classes will include time for students to reflect with the class on their service-learning project experience and the journal entries will provide the material for this.

Please use the following method for journal entries:

Sit down at least once a week and choose one or two "critical incidents" that have taken place during the week and explore them in detail in your journal. Remember, "critical" means having strong impact on you in terms of your objectives.

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For more examples of academic service-learning syllabi, visit:

<http://www.compact.org/syllabi>

ON-LINE RESOURCES

Campus Compact

<http://www.compact.org>

National Service Learning Clearinghouse

<http://www.servicelearning.org>



ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES

Diane Bell, Director

Community Service Center

Campus Center, room 109

Bridgewater State College

<http://www.bridgew.edu/communityservice>

Academic Service Learning

Campus Center, room 109

Bridgewater State College

<http://www.bridgew.edu/servicelearning>

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