Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

I. Introduction
   a. We are glad you are interested in the Service-Learning Program! This presentation is the third in our Service-Learning series, designed to give you a solid foundation in service-learning methods and best practices.
   b. Each module contains references to additional resources to learn more about service-learning theory, best practices and methodology. Feel free to click on any of these links as you move through the module- the links will open in a new window and you can resume the presentation at any time.
   c. This presentation will guide you through the basics of building Community Partnerships in Service-Learning: The types of community partnerships, how to develop quality partnerships, how to maintain quality partnerships, and how to address issues of risk and safety.
   d. Each circle contains a "Stop & Write" section. Please take a moment to respond to the prompts by clicking on the link located below the first prompt. A new window will open with one form where you will enter all of your answers. Once you have completed all of the "Stop & Write" activities, click "submit" on the form. Your responses will be reviewed and saved by Service-Learning staff and used as you continue to plan your course.

II. Laying the Foundation: "A healthy service-learning curriculum requires strong community partnerships that are committed to both community impact and student learning." Integrating Service-Learning into Higher Education (pg 281)
   a. What is a Community Partner?
      i. Local groups or organizations (usually a non-profit) with whom you work on a regular basis
      ii. Agencies and people in the community who directly touch the lives of citizens
      iii. The bridge between service and the classroom
      iv. Community Partners play a vital role in the Service-Learning experience by:
         1. Providing service experiences for your students.
Creating Successful Community Partnerships

Outline

2. Helping students make meaning of their experiences,
3. Offering community based knowledge and expertise.

b. Transactional or Transformative? Community Partnerships generally fall on the continuum between "transactional" and "transformative" seen below. As you plan your service-learning course, consider what type of partnership you would like to create.

i. Characteristics of a Transactional Partnership
1. Generally require more set-up, logistics, discussion, etc. than Transformational partnerships.
2. Designed to complete one task, with no "big picture" or long-term goals.
3. Commitments are limited and generally project-based.
4. Often have higher potential for miscommunication.
5. Students may not be as invested as with Transformative partnerships (Veach, 2008).
6. Examples: A grant writing class developing a proposal for a local community organization, students serving food at a homeless shelter once.

ii. Characteristics of a Transformative Partnerships
1. Transformational Partnerships go beyond a business type relationship (transactional) and become more like co-educator relationships.
2. Are more open to unanticipated developments.
3. Require a deeper, more sustained commitment from participants.
4. Require individuals to reflect on long-term and "big picture" ideas (examine how they do business, how they define and understand problems, etc.)
5. Involve higher risk, but often demonstrate higher gains as well (Veach, 2008).
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

6. Example: Students act as tutors for a school that has a high drop-out rate

c. A Continuum of Community Partnerships (Veach, 2008)
   i. Limited Awareness:
      1. Partner is viewed as a one of many potential "clients",
      2. No strong personal relationships
      3. Little or no expectations
      4. Communication limited to updating listings

   ii. Limited Expectations:
      1. A few people/projects each year
      2. Predictable conversations (a few emails, calls per year)
      3. Agreements and expectations may or may not be written

   iii. Structured Involvement:
      1. Clear lines of communication
      2. Some co-planning & some evaluation
      3. Some written documents

   iv. Joint Project Development:
      1. Co-design of initiatives that meet common concerns
      2. Fundraising, marketing, evaluation done jointly
      3. Power and future collaborations discussed and shared openly

   v. Co-Educators:
      1. Own success is bound to other’s
      2. Funding & staff intertwined
      3. Governance of new group does not favor any partner or interest
      4. All partners can articulate self-interests and mutual benefits
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

d. Key Attributes of Successful Partnerships
   i. Communication: Establish a system of consistent communication to ensure that projects progress as planned and goals are accomplished (Abravanel, 2003).
   ii. Cooperation: Share information that is useful-- new opportunities will often develop as a result (Abravanel, 2003).
   v. Equality: Each individual is regarded as a partner with a right to know and participate in the decision making process and differences are recognized, shared, and used to strengthen the relationship (Fertman, 1993).
   vi. Trust: Candid discussions about risks and mutual benefits of working together help reduce anxiety (Fertman, 1993).

Stop & Write #1
Where do you see yourself, your project, or your course on the "Transactional to Transformational" continuum? Why?

III. Making a Match
   a. Evaluate your Needs: When considering potential community partners, it is helpful to ask yourself a few questions to get started:
      i. What course learning objective do you want the service-learning experience to help achieve? For example:
         1. Video “Learning Objectives” Roger Munger, ENGL 512 Technical Writing (transcript): “Another and important learning objective is not only are they learning the tech-comm skills, but they're seeing how not only could they use these skills as a career, but they can use them in a volunteer position and help organizations in the
Creating Successful Community Partnerships

Outline

1. Creating Successful Community Partnerships

   Community. And so that's a very important learning objective that service-learning helps me to achieve.

   Another one is one I mentioned earlier, is that few of my students will go out in the workplace and work as a lone rider, working by themselves in a cubicle for most of their day. Most of our students will be part of larger teams, and often these teams are separated by different time zones, different countries, and so having students get an opportunity to work in teams on a service-learning project and practice some of those collaboration, team work skills, negotiating skills, dealing with conflict, those sorts of learning objectives, service-learning's great for that. So that's really the primary learning objectives that service-learning helps me with, is to help them learn the concept of audience, it’s to help them learn teamwork and collaboration, negotiation skills, and then also to show them how they might use writing in a context outside of work.”

   ii. How can your students support the individuals, organizations, schools, or other entities in the community?

   iii. What kind of organization would best fit your curriculum?

   iv. How does the service relate to the subject matter of the course?

   v. What must students do to fulfill their commitment to the community partner or service project?

   vi. How much time can you devote to developing a community partnership?

b. Define the Service: Decide which service-learning model best fits your course needs.

   i. Discipline Based: Students are expected to have a presence in the community throughout the semester and reflect on their experiences on a regular basis, using course content as a basis for their analysis and understanding.
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

ii. Problem or Project Based: Students (or teams of students) serve a community agency as “consultants” working for a “client”. Students work with community members to understand a particular problem or need.

iii. Capstone Service-Learning: Students draw upon the knowledge they have obtained throughout their academic career and combine it with relevant service work in the community.

iv. Community Based Action Research: Students, faculty, and community members work together to design and implement a research project that addresses a community need. Focus is on community members finding solutions using information from the research (Heffernan, 2001).

c. Explore Your Options: Once you have evaluated and determined your needs, learning objectives, and service-learning model, you can begin to investigate possible partnerships.

   i. Look for community partners that have
      1. Similar interests and goals,
      2. Mission statement that coincides with your learning objectives,
      3. A real need that your class can address
      4. Project ideas that fit your requirement for a service project.
      5. Don’t hesitate to contact the community partner if you have questions.

d. Still Stumped? Here are a few ideas to get you started:

   i. Non-profit organizations
   ii. Service organizations such as Rotary and Scouts
   iii. Local elementary schools or high schools
   iv. Government agencies
   v. Health clinics

e. Still need help? Service-Learning staff can help to identify potential partners based on the course and community needs. Visit our website:

   http://servicelearning.boisestate.edu/contact.asp
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

f. Additional Reading: Building Community Partnerships: Tips for Out-of-School Time Programs

Stop & Write #2
Consider how your class can address a community need. Brainstorm organizations that might be a good match for your curriculum.

IV. The First Date

a. A Foundation of Respect: As you begin to establish a community partnership, it is important to remember these perspectives on time, equal partnership, and flexibility (Adapted from CSU Service-Learning Faculty Manual, Fourth Edition; courtesy, The Institute for Learning and Teaching at Colorado State University).
   i. Time: Non-profit and community organizations want to be good partners and want the experience to be a positive one for students.
   ii. Community partners also have other jobs to do, limited staff, and busy schedules. Respect and value the time they invest in your students.
   iii. Investigate the agency history, mission, and related social issues before making contact.
   iv. If possible, meet agency representatives at their offices or at a location convenient to each of you (local coffee house, restaurant, etc.)
   v. Remember that community partners do not work on a semester clock.

b. Equal Partners: Take care to "do no harm."
   i. The dangers of the "Ivory Tower" are especially true in service-learning. We want to make sure that we approach the community not as a "laboratory", but with an asset-based approach that recognizes and utilizes the knowledge and skills of the community. For these goals to be realized, faculty and community must be equal, collaborative partners. With that in mind:
      1. Develop ground rules as a team. Example: How might you handle an underperforming student?
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

2. Invite community partners to be part of reflection, presentations, and related classroom activities
3. Avoid academic jargon

c. Flexibility: Service-Learning and community partnerships involve many factors, and no two projects or partners are exactly alike. Successful partnerships allow for individuality and flexibility.
   i. Be open to indirect service projects (Service that provides support to community vs. direct contact with people) such as newsletter articles, web design, etc.
   ii. Discuss what you have to offer and how it might be of use to the community partner. It is a significant role reversal to put yourself in the position of learner, with the community partner as the expert and teacher.
   iii. Learn about the assets of the agency and the clientele.
      1. Explore their capacities and abilities, and share these with your students.
      2. As faculty and students shift their perception of community members from deficient and needy to acknowledging that the community members have valuable and desirable strengths and insights, they will be able to realize the real reciprocity integral to the discipline of service-learning.

d. Developing the Partnership- Relationship Building: After you have selected one (or several) possible partnership opportunities, make an appointment to visit the community partner on site and discuss the following:
   i. Course Factors:
      1. Syllabus- Bring a copy to the meeting to help your Community Partner become familiar with your course
      2. Learning outcomes- What do you want your students to learn from the service?
      3. Course deadlines- How might these impact the service project?
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

4. Students’ capacities- What skills & knowledge can they contribute to a project?
5. Classroom visits- Would you like the Community Partner to visit or present to your class?
6. Logistics- What is the scope of the project or number of expected service hours? How many students will participate in the project?
7. Clearances needed to conduct the project i.e. agency approvals, consent forms, permits for use of public spaces
8. Communication- Methods and frequency of feedback between you and your Community Partner
9. Costs entailed in the project, and who is responsible for these costs (e.g. costs included in course fees, paid for by agency, etc.)

ii. Community Partner Factors:
1. Goals, mission, and needs of the community partner and their clientele
2. Training and orientation requirements
3. The assets, abilities and capacities of the agency and the clientele
4. Supervision needs- will the students be relatively independent, or work closely with a supervisor?
5. Specific tasks to be performed by students (e.g. tutoring, web design, administrative work, etc.)
6. Parameters for the service project
7. Managing students who fail to fulfill their responsibility to the project (withdraw from class, fail to complete project, or fail to produce quality required)
   a. How will this affect the community partner?
   b. How will this affect the student? (Impact on grade, letters of reference, etc.)
Creating Successful Community Partnerships

Outline

1. c. What steps should be taken to try and resolve the situation?  
   (Adapted from Boise State University Service-Learning "Connecting with Agencies")

   iii. Additional Reading: The Engaged Community: Maximizing Community Impact

V. Making it Last- Cultivating Partnerships: Making it Last: Once you have established your partnerships, it is helpful to take steps to further develop and improve the relationship

   a. Discuss Project Details: The projects you and your students work on may change over time. Continue discussing the details of any potential changes with your community partner, including:

      i. What is working well? What could be improved? Is the project still useful to all partners? What could be improved? Is the project still useful to all partners?

      ii. Have there been any changes in population that the students will be working with?

      iii. Number of students needed: Too many? Too few?

      iv. Timelines-Review important dates, evaluate if the timeline is still appropriate.

      v. Student tasks and job descriptions: Do these need to be clarified/changed?

      vi. Training and supervision: Is more needed?

      vii. Evaluation strategies: How might you continue to measure the success of the project? The performance of the students?

      viii. Any changes in resources needed from each partner.

   b. Practice Consistent Communication (Hurd, 2007)

      i. Establish check-in times throughout the semester to discuss student progress and evaluate the success of the project.

      ii. Ask for your community partners' feedback on the service-learners' performance.

      iii. Invite your community partner to be involved with classroom activities (Reflections, presentations, etc).
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

iv. Be willing to make visits to the community partner site, to gain a sense of what the students might experience

c. Secrets to Cultivating Healthy Relationships (Clark, 2008)
   i. Build your partnership with big aims in mind and out of a sense of what is possible, not out of a sense of what is lacking.
   ii. Never pass up an opportunity to help one of your partners—make them look good.
   iii. Play to your partners’ strengths and encourage them to play to yours.
   iv. Don’t be afraid of failure—fail often, learn from your mistakes and move on.
   v. Leave your ego at the door.
   vi. Treat local partners like permanent neighbors, not visitors from out of town.
   vii. Maintain a sense of humor and have fun.
   viii. Celebrate and spread the success around. Offer thanks, thanks, thanks.
   ix. Be patient.

d. Additional Reading: Building Strong Community Partnerships

VI. Risk & Safety: "Risk management refers to a systematic approach to establishing a safe, minimal risk environment for all involved participants involved in service-learning: students, faculty, supervisors, transporters, community agency representatives, and others." -National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

   a. Plan for Safety: As you begin to plan your service projects with your community partner, consider some of these safety questions and tips. They may seem like common sense, but discussing these issues ahead of time can help to alleviate many roadblocks and risks along the way. Collaborate with your community partner to make sure students understand both risk and safety.

      i. Communicate: Ask your community partner for specific recommendations on safety

         1. Recommend that students notify someone about their schedule,
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

2. How should students handle safety concerns? Who should they speak with regarding safety concerns?
3. Give students the option to request an alternate service site if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe with their current site.

ii. Plan Ahead:
   1. Advise students to plan for “what if’s”- car trouble, directions, etc.
   2. Advise students regarding appropriate dress: modest, easy-to-move in attire, consistent with agency policy, sturdy shoes, etc.
   3. Clearly define student's role during the service project: advise students not to engage in activities beyond the scope of your class or service project agreement
   4. Advise students to go in pairs if they are visiting people in private homes

iii. Transportation
   1. How will students get to and from the service site?
   2. Drive carefully; the university is not liable for risks involved in students getting to and from their service sites.
   3. Do not give a client a ride in a personal vehicle
   4. If you would like to take your children with you, make sure you get prior permission from the agency.

iv. Boundaries
   1. Establish clear guidelines for personal boundaries, and communicate these clearly to the students.
   2. Don't give or loan clients money or other personal belongings.
   3. Don't share too much personal information (phone number, address, etc).
   4. Don't tolerate talk or behavior of a sexual nature. If you feel harassed, tell your supervisor or instructor.
   5. Don't engage in any type of business with clients during the term of your service.
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

6. Don't enter into a personal relationship with a client during the term of your service.

v. Home Visits: If students will be going to client homes, establish guidelines for their visits. For example:
   1. Get information about the client, cultural norms, and their situation prior to the home visit.
   2. Try not to be alone with clients without adequate supervision.
   3. Consider meeting at a neutral place (at the agency or at a public building) or going with another student.
   4. Keep your agency informed of your plans and itinerary and check in by phone on a prearranged schedule.
   5. When you arrive, think about where to sit (keep an unobstructed path to the door).
   6. Trust your intuition; if something does not feel right, leave. Talk to your agency supervisor about your concerns and ask to switch clients.

vi. Injuries: Discuss possible risks for injuries, and how to minimize these risks (proper safety gear, equipment training, etc.).
   1. Discuss possible risks for injuries, and how to minimize these risks (proper safety gear, equipment training, etc.).
   2. Discuss liability insurance with your community partner, and verify if the students need to complete agency volunteer forms to be covered under their liability insurance.
   3. Establish a plan for student injuries- who to contact, any forms that need to be completed. General guidelines for students could include:
      a. Contact your agency supervisor and your instructor to discuss what actions the agency and school should take to insure your physical and emotional well-being. Fill out an incident report form within 48 hours.
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

b. Stay calm. Your instructor, the agency, and the SL staff will help you.

4. Questions? Contact the Service-Learning office for assistance—staff may have liability forms or agreement templates you can use.

5. Additional Reading: Risk Management and Liability in Higher Education Service-Learning

b. Vulnerable Populations: Many service-learning projects involve working with vulnerable populations. These populations may require special considerations when planning service projects.

i. Generally speaking, vulnerable populations include:
   1. children and youth under age 17
   2. Persons 60 years or older
   3. Individuals with disabilities
   4. Refugees

ii. These populations tend to be more likely to be vulnerable to coercion or undue influence to participate in the project activities.

iii. These vulnerabilities may be subtle but may limit the ability of certain groups to refuse to participate or to continue to participate in the project activities.

iv. Additional safeguards may be needed to protect the rights and welfare of these groups. If your project includes a vulnerable population, be sure to ask your community partner for recommendations on how to prepare and what to consider.

c. Make a Plan: The following are important factors to discuss with community partners who work with vulnerable populations:

i. Privacy expectations-- what is appropriate for students to discuss or post outside of the agency (e.g. class blogs, Facebook/Twitter, discussions with friends & family, etc)?

ii. Procedures for photographing or filming individuals-- are there any required waiver or consent forms, or policies regarding multimedia?
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

iii. Background checks-- who will pay? How long will they take to process? Are there alternative projects/assignments available for students who do not pass a background check?

Stop & Write #5
What are some of the risks that might be associated with your service project idea? How might you work with your community partner to address these risks?

VII. Review & References
a. Community Partners
   i. What is a Community Partner?
      1. Local groups or organizations (usually non-profits) with whom you work on a regular basis.
   ii. Agencies and people in the community who directly touch the lives of citizens.

b. Community Partner Roles
   i. Provide service experiences for your students
   ii. Help students make meaning of their experiences
   iii. Offer community based knowledge and expertise.

c. Key Attributes of Successful Partnerships
   i. Communication
   ii. Cooperation
   iii. Collaboration
   iv. Equality
   v. Trust
   vi. Coordination

d. Partnerships
   i. Transactional Partnerships:
      1. Generally require more logistics
      2. Designed to complete one task.
      3. Commitments are generally project-based
Creating Successful Community Partnerships

Outline

4. Have higher potential for miscommunication

ii. Transformative Partnerships
   1. Are more open to unanticipated developments
   2. Require a more sustained commitment from participants
   3. Requires individuals to reflect on long term ideas
   4. Involve higher risk but often demonstrates higher gains

iii. Continuum of Community Partnerships
   1. Limited Awareness
   2. Limited Activities & Expectations
   3. Structured Involvement
   4. Joint Project Development
   5. Co-educator

e. Making a Match
   i. Evaluate Your Needs
      1. Learning objectives
      2. Time commitment
      3. Type of organization

   ii. Define Your Service
       1. Discipline-based
       2. Problem/project-based
       3. Capstone
       4. Community-based Action Research

   iii. Explore Your Options- Look for community partners that have:
       1. Similar goals and interests
       2. Missions statement supports learning objectives
       3. Real need
       4. Project ideas that fit your course

f. Foundation of Respect
   i. Time
      1. Respect and value time invested by community partner
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

2. Investigate agency history, mission, and social issues
3. Meet at partner's office whenever possible

ii. Equal Partners
   1. Develop ground rules as a team
   2. Invite partners to participate in classroom activities
   3. Avoid academic jargon

iii. Flexibility
   1. Be open to a variety of service projects
   2. Put yourself in the position of the learner
   3. Learn about the assets and clientele of the community partner

iv. Developing the Partnership- After you have selected one (or several) possible partnership opportunities, make an appointment to meet to discuss the following:

   a. Course Factors
      i. Learning outcomes
      ii. Students' capacities
      iii. Number of students
      iv. Scope of project
      v. Course deadlines
      vi. Communication needs
      vii. Agency visits
      viii. Clearances
      ix. Costs

   b. Community Partner Factors
      i. Training requirements
      ii. Supervision
      iii. Parameters for the service project
      iv. Goals and Mission
      v. Specific tasks for students

   g. Continuing the Partnership
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

i. Discuss Project Details: Projects and partnerships change over time, so continue to discuss:
   1. Goals,
   2. Results,
   3. Timelines,
   4. Training,
   5. Evaluation,
   6. Resources, etc.

ii. Tips for a Healthy Partnership
   1. Build from what is possible, not what is lacking
   2. Make partners look good
   3. Play to one another's strengths
   4. Don't be afraid to fail
   5. Leave your ego at the door
   6. Treat partners like neighbors
   7. Have fun
   8. Celebrate and offer thanks
   9. Be patient

iii. Practice Consistent Communication
   1. Establish check-in times throughout semester
   2. Ask for feedback
   3. Invite your community partner to be involved in class activities
   4. Visit community partner site

h. Plan for Safety

   i. Communicate: Talk to your community partner(s) for specific recommendations on safety and discuss how and who to talk to about safety concerns.

   ii. Plan Ahead: Advise students regarding appropriate dress, clearly define student's role during the service project, and advise students to go in pairs if visiting people in private homes.
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline

iii. Transportation: Consider student transportation needs, client transportation needs, and reasonable liability waivers needed for your circumstances.

iv. Boundaries: Establish clear guidelines for personal boundaries and communicate these clearly to your students.

v. Home Visits: If students will be going to client homes, establish guidelines for their visits.

vi. Injuries: Discuss possible risks for injuries and how to minimize these risks. Discuss liability insurance with your community partner and verify if the students need to complete agency volunteer forms to be covered. Establish a plan for student injuries.

vii. Risk Management and Liability in Higher Education Service-Learning

i. Vulnerable Populations: Generally speaking, vulnerable populations include:
   i. Children and youth under age 17
   ii. Persons 60 years or older
   iii. Individuals with disabilities
   iv. Refugees

j. References

   http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/44/03/4403.pdf


   National Park Services.
Creating Successful Community Partnerships
Outline


If you have more questions, contact:

Kara Brascia, Director of Service-Learning

208-426-2380

karabrascia@boisestate.edu

This ends "Reflection: Theory & Practical Application"

Please take a few moments to provide your feedback on this presentation by clicking the link below:

https://boisestate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_5AW6uJvzc08iyMY