FUNDAMENTALS OF SERVICE-LEARNING at HU

“Service-learning combines service to the community with student learning in a way that improves both the student and the community.”

What is service-learning?

- A method whereby students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of communities;
- Coordinated with an elementary or secondary school, institution of higher education or community service program and the community;
- Helps foster civic responsibility;
- Is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the education components of the community service program in which the participants are enrolled;
- Provide structured time for students or participants to reflect on the service experience.

Additional Resources:
• Introduction to Service-Learning Toolkit, Section 1: Definitions and Principles, Campus Compact, 2000
• http://www.servicelearning.org/article/archive/35
What is service-learning at HU?

A method of teaching and learning that integrates community service activities into academic curricula and expands the learning of students from the classroom to the community.
Why is Service-Learning Important?

- A national study of the Learn and Serve America program suggests that effective service-learning programs improve academic grades, increases attendance in school, and develops personal and social responsibility in students.

- Students also learn critical thinking, communication, teamwork, civic responsibility, mathematical reasoning, problem solving, public speaking, vocational skills, computer skills, scientific method, research and analytical skills.

Additional Resources:
Course where service-learning is optional: Students in a course choose from 2 or more options for achieving course goals, including service-learning, case studies, research papers, or other projects. Reflection may be different for students engaged in the service option and those who are not.
Service-learning/fourth-credit option: Students can negotiate a learning contract with a faculty member in any course in which the faculty member is willing to work with the student to design a service-learning component to supplement the basic course. The service-learning component includes intentional reflection; the credit is awarded for demonstration of learning, not for the service alone.
Models of Service Learning

- **Service-learning course**: All students in the course are involved in service-learning. Reflection is integrated throughout the course and linked to learning outcomes. This can occur in a general education or a discipline-based course.
Models of Service Learning

- **First-year experience**: Service-learning is often integrated into first-year seminars or courses to introduce students to the concept of service-learning, to the community in which the university is located, and to how students can build skills in writing, critical thinking and/or a content area through active learning.
Service-learning internship or independent study: Can allow students in any major to work in the community for more substantial amounts of time, attend class (often a minimum of hours), and engage in on-going reflection and intentional application of academic learning.
Models of Service Learning

- **Field work service-learning**: Students in professional programs, such as teacher education, nursing, or human services work in the community, often several times throughout their coursework generally for increasingly lengthy periods of time. For field education to be considered service-learning, reciprocal partnerships, reflection, and intentional integration with academic content are critical.
Models of Service Learning

- **Community-based research**: Under the supervision of a faculty member, students engage in research *with* the community, designed to benefit all partners. Community members are involved in every stage of the research process.
Models of Service Learning

- **Service-learning capstone**: A service-learning capstone course is a culminating experience that enables students to integrates their learning from throughout their college experience, to make meaning of it, and to think about how they will use it in the future. They often involve a research project or substantial service experience with critical analysis and a final written paper and/or presentation.
Essential Elements of Academic Service-Learning

Academic Courses

Traditional Civic Courses

Internships
Co-ops
Practicums

Experiential Learning

Civic Learning

Student Volunteerism
**Key Components of Service Learning**

- **Preparation** - What course objectives can be achieved through a service-learning project? Include the project in your syllabus (i.e. readings, discussion, journal writings, classroom visits)

- **Action** - What service is being performed by students?

- **Reflection** - Are the students reflecting critically on attitudes and experiences? With community, faculty, and other classmates? Tie to civic themes and academic course content

- **Assessment** - Have the course objectives been achieved?

*Source: www.fhsu.edu/ccl/service-learning*
PREPARATION

- Students need some background before their main interaction with the selected community agency.

- Preparation also involves including service-learning in your course syllabus
  - Discuss the expectations of the project in your syllabus
  - Describe service-learning
  - Discuss point values for assignments tied to service-learning
  - Discuss service-learning in the classroom before the service begins

- Preparation can take many forms—readings, discussion, journal writing, classroom visits, etc.
  - Make sure that you discuss both the definition and rationale behind service-learning, as well as the project itself with students.
Action is the actual interaction/service performed by the students.

The action can be brief (e.g. one or two hours editing a high schooler’s scholarship application or cleaning gutters for a community member is a wheelchair) or ongoing (e.g. six to twenty hours tutoring over the course of a semester.)

The time spent on the project is typically out-of-class time, treated like a homework assignment.

Teachers can set up the community activity ahead of time and select the project. Other teachers contact a variety of agencies and let the students choose the project. Still other teachers leave it up to students to locate agencies and make their own arrangements for the service project.
Reflection is primarily what separates service-learning from volunteerism or community service.

**Reflection is the key to relating the service project to the academic course content.**

For service-learning to be effective, students must reflect critically on their attitudes and experiences.

The reflection can be written (journals, essays, letters to teachers or classmates, portfolios) or oral (in pairs, in small groups, in class discussion). A combination of both oral and written reflection can be used.

Additional Resources:

- Using Structured Reflection to Enhance Learning from Service
- A Practitioner's Guide to Reflection in Service-Learning: Student Voices and Reflections,
  http://www.servicelearning.org/wg_php/pub_form/
To prompt reflection, use S.O.W.

Self- What are you feeling? What questions do you have? How do you see yourself differently?

Other – Whom did you serve? What new impressions do you have—any new insights or perceptions? How could that apply to others in similar circumstances?

World – What new questions do you have of your world? Describe your preferred world. How should the world be different? What is one small practical step you could take to get closer to that ideal vision?
Other points on reflection.....

- By choosing carefully the kinds of reflection your students do, you can direct them toward the type of critical thinking you want to foster and the course goals you want them to meet.
- Reflection should be continuous throughout the course.
- Reflection should be contextualized.
- Reflection should be connected.
- Reflection should be challenging.
Assessment is “the process of gathering information in order to make an evaluation. An evaluation is a decision or judgment about whether an effort is successful and to what extent that effort has or has not met a goal” (Campus Compact).

In service-learning, assessment falls into two broad categories

1. (1) assessment done before you complete a service-learning project (“assessment of assets and needs of community and students”)
2. (2) assessment done after you complete a service-learning project (“assessment of impact on community and students”).
Internet Resources

- Campus Compact
  - Awards Programs, Campus-Community Partnerships, Civic Engagement, Community Colleges, Community Service Directors, Grants and Fellowships, Legislation & Policy, Membership, News, Presidential Leadership, Program Models, Publications, Resources, Service-Learning & Faculty, Students
  - [www.compact.org](http://www.compact.org)

- Kansas Campus Compact
  - Charter Members, News, Events, Kansas Service Programs, Awards, Resources, Listserv, Glossary, Funding Opportunities
  - [www.ksu.edu/kscc](http://www.ksu.edu/kscc)

- National Service-Learning Clearinghouse
  - National Listservs, Library Catalog, Online Documents, Fact Sheets, Bibliographies, Journals/Periodicals, Toolkits, Syllabi & Curricula, Funding Sources, Effective Practices, Links, Publications, Conferences & Events, Job Opportunities
  - [www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org)
Additional Resources

- AACC Service Learning Clearinghouse, http://www.aacc.nche.edu/spcproj/service.htm
- Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) http://www.cool2serve.org/homeofc/home.html
- National Service-Learning Cooperative Clearinghouse http://www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu
- The Service Learning Files, http://csf.colorado.edu/sl
- Service-Learning at FHSU, www.fhsu.edu/ccl/service-learning
“If we just teach students how to make money or become rich and famous, we are not fulfilling our responsibility as educational institutions.....colleges are responsible for educating the ‘whole student’.”

Alexander W. Astin, Director of Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA