FCAS Service Learning Pilot Program
Beyond the Classroom with Three Approaches to Incorporating Service Learning in Undergraduate Courses

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Abstract

“Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.”

The researchers developed SL training and assessment tools in addition to maintaining all regular course assignments.

BIOL 1500
- Pre and Post-test on student attitudes toward science education and the SL process
- Curricular unit for elementary school students to learn science
- Reflection Essay

BIOL 2600
- Geriatric terminology quiz
- Pre and Post-test on student attitudes toward the elderly
- HPD expert led workshop on Ageism
- 5-hour interactions with participants by volunteering at the HPD health fair
- Reflection Essay

EXSC 3800 Exercise Prescription
- Accumulate 5 hours of practice to develop proficiency in administering and interpreting sphygmomanometry
- Reflection essay to highlight the experience of practicing on the community

Definition

In addition to maintaining all stated regular course objectives, each researcher developed new specific SL objectives.

BIOL 1500 Biology I/Lab
- Summarize information relating to one of the topics being studied in BIOL 1500 to produce science curricular units for K-12 students.
- Demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate complex scientific concepts.

BIOL 2600 Medical Terminology
- Define geriatric terminology and explore attitudes regarding the elderly
- Apply geriatric terminology and observe ageism among the different participants through volunteering at HPD’s Boomers and Beyond Health Fair

EXSC 3800 Exercise Prescription
- Administer and interpret sphygmomanometry (blood pressure) in accordance with the American College of Sports Medicine.

Assessment

The researchers developed SL training and assessment tools in addition to maintaining all regular course assignments.

BIOL 1500
- Pre and Post-test on student attitudes toward science education and the SL process
- Curricular unit for elementary school students to learn science
- Reflection Essay

BIOL 2600
- Geriatric terminology quiz
- Pre and Post-test on student attitudes toward the elderly
- HPD expert led workshop on Ageism
- 5-hour interactions with participants by volunteering at the HPD health fair
- Reflection Essay
- Student Survey

EXSC 3800 Exercise Prescription
- Accumulate 5 hours of practice to develop proficiency in administering and interpreting sphygmomanometry
- Reflection essay to highlight the experience of practicing on the community

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Approaches

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Conclusions

Challenges

Conclusions:

The outcomes of each of the three service learning projects was a highly successful engagement of the students. Service learning can provide tangible benefits to all stakeholders. The students benefited by obtaining real-life experience performing tasks in the community. The community benefited from the energy and passion that the students brought to the activities. NSU benefited from enhanced public relations and the professor benefited from having more engaged students in the class.

Recommendations:

Although Service Learning can be incorporated into most classes, the experience of the researchers suggests that it would be a better fit in classes with 16 or fewer students. It is vital to enlist the community partner early in the process. Limit the project workload so that it does not place too great a burden on the student and faculty member. Limit the grade impact to between 5-15% so that students take service learning seriously, but not at the expense of the course content.

References

3. Michelle-Gagnon-Blodgett, Psy. D. Coordinator, Geriatric Clinical Services, HPO of NSU

Figures

Figures 1, 2, 3A and 3B above. Exercise Science students performing blood pressure readings on participants under Dr. Silver’s supervision at the LLI on February 10th. 2012.