Advanced Topics in Service-Learning: Assessment

Philadelphia Service-Learning Institute

Cathy Burack, Senior Fellow for Higher Education, Brandeis University

Drexel University, August 14, 2007
PA Campus Compact, NY Campus Compact, PHENND

Defining Civic Engagement and Service-Learning

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management

Civic Engagement

"Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference."

Thomas Ehrlich, et. al., *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education* (2000)

Civic Engagement

"By engagement, we refer to institutions that have redesigned their teaching, research, and extension and service functions to become even more sympathetically and productively involved with their communities… Close partnerships with the surrounding community help demonstrate that higher education is about important values such as informed citizenship and a sense of responsibility. The newer forms of **public scholarship** and **community-based learning** help produce civic-minded graduates who are as well prepared to take up the complex problems of our society as they are to succeed in their careers."

American Association of State Colleges and Universities. 1999. *Stewards of Place*.

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management

Civic Engagement

One Institution's Definition of Civic Engagement –

Civic engagement is

(a) active collaboration

(b) that builds on the resources, skills, expertise, and knowledge of the campus and community

(c) to improve the quality of life in communities

(d) in a manner that is consistent with the campus mission

(IUPUI, 2002)

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management

Service-Learning

In the case of civic engagement, service learning constitutes a necessary component of achievement because, when service learning is institutionalized on a campus (i.e., integral, enduring, and meaningful to all stakeholders), it produces transformations of the work of colleges and universities on the broader spectrum of civic engagement.
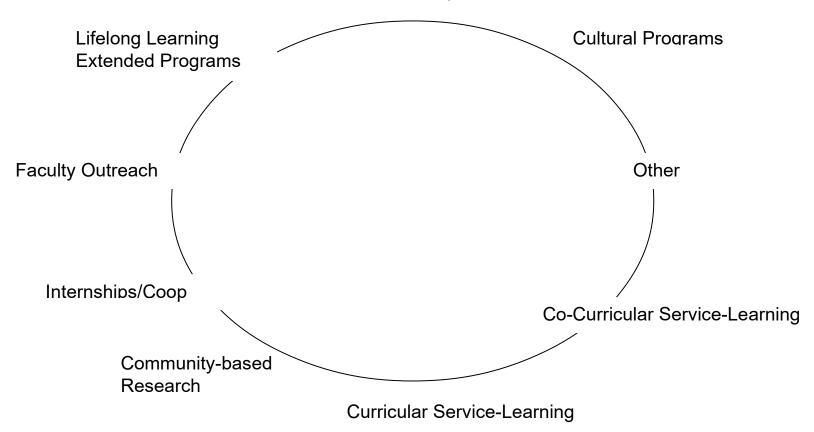
Bringle, Hatcher, Hamilton, and Young (2001). Planning and Assessing campus/community engagement, *Metropolitan Universities*.

CIRCLE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Economic Development

Lifelong Learning
Extended Programs

Cultural Programs

Faculty Outreach

Other

Internships/Coop

Co-Curricular Service-Learning

Community-based
Research

Curricular Service-Learning

Service-Learning 101

■ *Service Learning Characteristics*

☐ Meets academic learning objectives
☐ Involves experience with community-based organization or group
☐ Involves structured reflection or analysis
☐ Is based upon principles of academy-community partnership and reciprocity

Service-Learning 101

- **Basic Definitions**
  - ☐ *Volunteerism*
  - ☐ *Community Service*
  - ☐ *Community Based Learning*
  - ☐ *Service-Learning*

Service-Learning 101

- **Service-Learning Defined**
  - SL relies on an innovative method of teaching and learning that integrates community service activities into the academic curricula.
  - Classroom studies complement service within the community and enable students to reflect upon their learning
  - SL transforms students from passive learners of information into active learners and community members whose actions and efforts renew and change the landscape of their communities.
  - Service-learning is a philosophy of education and service to the community.
  - The Corporation for National and Community Service, as a policy, uses "service-learning". This emphasizes the connection and reciprocity between the two activities. Service-learning includes not only service and learning, but partnerships among educational institutions and community organizations; the intention to develop civic responsibility; and the inclusion of structured reflection related to academic or leadership content.

6 Models for Service-Learning

- Discipline-Based Service-Learning
- Problem Based Service-Learning
- Capstone Courses
- Service Internships
- Undergraduate Community-Based Action Research
- Directed Study Additional/Extra Credit

Heffernan, Kerrissa, 2001

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management

Service-Learning 101

- **The Five Critical Elements**

  ☐ *Community Voice/Student Voice*

  ☐ *Thoughtful Action*

  ☐ *Orientation and Training*

  ☐ *Reflection*

  ☐ *Evaluation/Continuous Improvement*

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management

Highlights from Wingspread Principles of Good Practice

- Academic credit is for learning, not service
- Do not compromise academic rigor
- Establish learning objectives
- Establish criteria for selection of service placements
- Provide educationally sound learning strategies to harvest community learning and realize course learning objectives
- Prepare students for learning from the community
- Minimize distinction between student's community learning role and classroom learning role
- Rethink the faculty instructional role
- Be prepared for variation in and some loss of control with, student learning outcomes
- Maximize the community orientation and community responsibility component of course

Academic Benefits of Service-learning

- Connects theory and practice
- Integrates disciplinary approaches
- Strengthens interpersonal and communication skills
- Promotes value of diversity
- Promotes active learning

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management

Overview of Research

Thanks to Barbara Holland, ETR and Elaine Ikeda, CA Campus Compact

Role of Research

- Building intellectual foundations
- Integrating theory and practice
- Reporting to funders and partners
- Building organizational support
- Persuading others to adopt service-learning
- Documenting practices/strategies
- Program improvement

Research Limitations

- Lack of common definition for service-learning and related research

- Variation in programmatic practices and purposes

- Studies conducted as self-studies by advocates of service-learning

- Studies mostly commissioned by funders with narrow, specific questions

More Research Limitations

- Few experimental studies

- Limited number of longitudinal studies

- Small sample sizes

- Many studies based on participant self-report

- Data collection often dictated by reporting requirements and expectations

Implications

- Limited generalizability or predictive value of most studies
- Weak causal connections
- Predisposing factors unknown
- Results subject to alternate explanations
- Skeptical reaction from scholars and policymakers
- Limited evidence for building support

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management

Convincing Research

- Guided by theory
- Clear constructs
- Control for differences among groups
- Multiple indicators
- Multiple methods
- Converging results across different methods
- Confidence in conclusions
- Implications for teaching and learning In general

State of Service-Learning Research

▶ **IMPACT RESEARCH**

- Students (most of research): 6 outcome domains
  - *academic, civic, personal, social, ethical, career*

- Faculty(growing)
  - *faculty motivation, changing attitudes toward teaching*

- Colleges and Universities (growing-Carnegie)
  - *mission, institutionalization*

- Community (minimal-growing)
  - *partnerships*

Student Academic Outcomes

▶ **Increased Retention:**

- First-year students participating in service-learning were more likely than non-service-learning peers to indicate they planned to re-enroll and eventually graduate from their current institution *(Muthiah, Bringle, and Hatcher, 2002);*

- Service-learning enhances mediating variables for student retention, including students' interpersonal, community, and academic engagement and peer and faculty relationships *(Gallini & Moely, 2003)*

Student Academic Outcomes

▶ **Increased content knowledge and skills**

- ■ Service-learning college students developed a more profound understanding of political science than control group. *(Markus, Howard, & King, 1993)*

- ■ Freshman composition students participating in service-learning showed higher gains than comparison group in writing abilities, based on Biber's computer-mediated writing assessment. *(Wurr, 2002)*

Student Academic Outcomes

▶ **Improved higher order thinking skills:**

- Demonstrated complexities of understanding *(Eyler & Giles, 1999)*

- Increased ability to analyze increasingly complex problems *(Eyler & Giles, 1999, Batchelder & Root, 1994)*

- Increased critical thinking. *(Eyler & Giles, 1999; Osborne et al., 1998)*

Civic Outcomes

▶ ## Civic Responsibility

Service-learning has a positive effect on students' sense of social responsibility and citizenship skills.

(Moely, 2002; Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyler and Giles, 1999; Gray et. al, 1998)

▶ ## Commitment to Service

Service-learning enhances students' commitment to community service (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000; Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Marcus, Howard, & King, 1993)

Career Outcomes

▶ ## Career Awareness

Service-learning enhances students' sense of career options and

possibilities.

(Fenzel & Leary, 1997; Tartter, 1996)

▶ ## Career Skills

Service-learning enhances students' sense of technical competence
(Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000; Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999; Sledge et al., 1993)

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management

Personal and Social Outcomes

▶ ## Self-esteem

Service-learning increases students' self-esteem (McMahon, 1998; Shaffer, 1993; Switzer et. al. 1995)

▶ ## Empowerment and self-efficacy

Service-learning enhances students' sense of self-efficacy and empowerment (Shaffer, 1993; McMahon, 1998; Morgan and Streb, 1999; Furco 2003)

▶ ## Prosocial behaviors

Service-learning increases students' likelihood to engage in prosocial behaviors and decreases students' likelihood to engage in at-risk behavior (Batchelder & Root, 1994; Stephens, 1995; Yates and Youniss, 1996; Berkas, 1997; Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Melchior, 1999; O'Donnell et al., 1999)

Course-based Assessment

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management

Logic Models

- Focus is on being outcome-driven not activity-driven
- Clarify goals
- Show how you are going to get there
- Make evaluations make sense
- Give you a way to communicate with multiple stakeholders

Outcomes versus Activities

ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES
Train and empower community volunteers	Communities will have increased human capacity to deal with local issues
Teach financial management skills to low income families	Low-income families will be better able to manage their resources resulting in less dependence on community services
Engage youth in leadership development opportunities	Youth participants will learn new leadership and communication skills

Steps for building a logic model (and an evaluation plan that makes sense)

- Start with the outcomes
- Work backwards
- Ask "If we're successful, how will we know it?"

Big Lesson

- It doesn't make sense to evaluate what you aren't doing

e.g. You say – we want to evaluate how service-learning increases student retention.

I say – show me the activities that are designed to increase retention

Assessing Civic Engagement on an Institutional Level

What is the Compelling Interest for Civic Engagement?

■ The Civic Purpose of Higher Education

  (*the mission pathway*)

■ Improved Teaching and Learning

  (*the pedagogical pathway*)

■ Connecting to the community for the benefit of the campus and the community

  (*the partnership pathway*)

John Saltmarsh, New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE)

The Civic Purpose of Higher Education (*the mission pathway*)

"Unless education has some frame of reference it is bound to be aimless, lacking a unified objective. The necessity for a frame of reference must be admitted. There exists in this country such a unified frame. It is called democracy."

John Dewey (1937)

Improved Teaching and Learning
(*the pedagogical pathway*)

■ "People worldwide need a whole series of new competencies...But I doubt that such abilities can be taught solely in the classroom, or be developed solely by teachers. Higher order thinking and problem solving skills grow out of direct experience, not simply teaching; they require more than a classroom activity. They develop through active involvement and real life experiences in workplaces and the community."

  John Abbott, Director of Britain's Education 2000 Trust, Interview with Ted Marchese, AAHE Bulletin, 1996

Connecting to the community for the benefit of the campus and the community (*the partnership pathway*)

- American colleges and universities are "one of the greatest hopes for intellectual and civic progress in this country. I am convinced that for this hope to be fulfilled, the academy must become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems, and must reaffirm its historic commitment to what I call the scholarship of engagement."

Ernest Boyer, The Scholarship of Engagement. 1996.

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management

What We Know About Institutional Change

- Change requires a fundamental shift of perspective
- Change must be systemic
- Change requires people to relearn their own roles.
- Change require constant and consistent leadership
- Change requires systematic ways to measure progress and guide improvement.
- Change require a visible "triggering" opportunity.

Peter Ewell, Organizing for Learning, AAHE Bulletin, Dec. 1997.

What it means to create "institutionalization"

Institutionalization

AN INSTITUTIONALIZED PRACTICE IS:	A MARGINALIZED PRACTICE IS:
Routine	Occasional
Widespread	Isolated
Legitimized	Unaccepted
Expected	Uncertain
Supported	Weak
Permanent	Temporary
Resilient	At-Risk

Models for Assessing Civic Engagement at the Institutional Level

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management

Models for Assessing Civic Engagement: *Frameworks*

- Kellogg Forum
- Committee on Institutional Collaboration and NASULGC
- Furco Rubric for Institutionalizing Service-Learning
- Gelmon Rubric Capacity for Community Engagement
- Holland Matrix on Relevance to Mission
- Campus Compact
    - Wingspread Statements
    - Indicators of Engagement
    - MN Campus Compact Civic Engagement Indicators
- NCA – Higher Learning Commission
- **Carnegie Elective Classification – Community Engagement**

Models for Assessing Civic Engagement: *Tools/ Instruments*

- Michigan State University OEM

- IUPUI

- Other campus based efforts – see the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse for examples (servicelearning.org)

New Elective Carnegie Classification – **Community Engagement**

Community Engagement describes the collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

The first stage – meeting these "Foundational Indicators"

1. Institutional Identity and Culture

2. Institutional commitment

These indicators *must* be demonstrated by both required and optional documentation.

Carnegie Endowment for the Advancement of Teaching

The second stage – selecting a category of Community Engagement

1. **Curricular Engagement** (5 institutions)

2. **Outreach and Partnerships** (9 institutions)

3. **Both** (62 institutions)

The documentation process is extensive and substantive, focused on significant qualities, activities, and institutional provisions that insure an *institutionalized* approach to community engagement.

Carnegie Endowment for the Advancement of Teaching

Curricular Engagement

- …teaching, learning, and scholarship engage faculty, students, and community in mutually beneficial and respectful collaboration. Their interactions address community-identified needs, deepen students' civic and academic learning, enhance community well-being, and enrich the scholarship of the institution.

  Carnegie Endowment for the Advancement of Teaching

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management

Outreach and Partnership

- *Outreach* focuses on the application and provision of institutional resources for community use with benefits to both campus and community.

- *Partnership* focuses on collaborative interactions with community and related scholarship for the mutually beneficial exchange, exploration, and application of knowledge, information, and resources (research, economic development, capacity building, etc.).

Carnegie Endowment for the Advancement of Teaching

Advantages of Using Carnegie

- Legitimacy
- Accountability
- Catalyst for change
- Institutional identity and market niche
- Institutional assessment and self study

Lessons Learned from Assessing Institutionalization of Civic Engagement

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management

Lessons Learned

- Assumptions about how change happens
- Understanding what drives change
- Clear definitions commonly understood
- Adapting tools for unique campus culture
- Amount of time it take for a change effort to take place, minimum 3-5 year time period
- Not linear (new president, loss of funding)

Institutionalization

Institutionalization requires the kind of approach to institutional transformation suggested by Peter Ewell, which he describes as requiring "working on multiple components of an institution simultaneously...change is more likely to succeed if it is implemented systematically."

"Achieving High Performance: The Policy Dimension," in Teirney, ed., The Responsive University, 1998)

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management

What Drives Institutionalization?

- ■ Mission
- ■ Campus leadership
- ■ Deep, active, relevant learning
- ■ Expanding view of scholarship
- ■ Public accountability
- ■ Accreditation standards   (IUPUI)
- ■ Campus change agents - VISTAs

Civic Engagement?

Engagement has become "shorthand for describing a new era of two-way partnership between America's colleges and universities and the publics they serve…while that breadth fosters great diversity of activity, it also presents the risk that the term can say everything and nothing at the same time…the lack of clear definition can leave some campuses and their leaders with the impression that they are 'doing engagement,' when in fact they are not."

AASCU 2002

Points to Remember

- **know institution**
- **understand barriers**
- **find support**
- **be strategic**
- **power of collaboration**
- **Campus Compact can help**

Contact information:
Cathy Burack

781-736-3762

burack@brandeis.edu

Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University

Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy & Management