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Promise and Practice of Service-Learning

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The Promise and Practice of Service-Learning

Linda Havir, Elizabeth Scheel, and Margaret Pryately

Introduction

Service-learning can help to address the tension between liberal arts curricula and an increasing demand for a university education to be “relevant,” career oriented, and to serve the community. By integrating service-learning into our courses we have demonstrated the practical relevance of our disciplines to students and the community and have also enhanced student learning while maintaining our commitment to a liberal arts education.

This paper records how three faculty members integrated service-learning into courses in sociology and speech communication. We briefly describe our work in integrating service-learning into our courses, focusing on the learning potentials for our students. We also discuss the benefits to the community and to our own teaching. The considerations and challenges we encountered as we developed these new components for our courses are outlined. We hope that this record of our experiences will be helpful for others as they consider integrating service-learning into their courses.

Service learning is defined as learning that combines public service with planned, related educational outcomes through corresponding academic work (Cohen and Kinsey, 1994). Service-learning as a pedagogical method evolved from its beginnings in the 1960s to a force in education which is increasingly found in high schools, community colleges and universities. It has been documented that service-learning may enhance the following outcomes: social growth, character development, civic responsibility, psychological development, moral development, ego involvement, and academic performance (Shastri, 1998). Lena (1995) emphasizes that the
integration of service and academic content must include a reflective component in order to achieve these goals.

Our efforts were supported by a grant from the Minnesota Campus Compact which is a coalition of 45 Minnesota college and university presidents that seeks to encourage student and institutional involvement in the community and public service. Our work was also supported by SCSU campus resources including the Volunteer Link, College of Social Sciences, and the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence. Minnesota Campus Compact is affiliated with the national Campus Compact coalition which has more than 600 member colleges and universities committed to supporting community service that extends students’ academic programs and supports campus-community collaboration in addressing social, economic and environmental challenges (Harward and Albert, 1994).

The distinction between volunteer work and service-learning had to be made clear to us as we planned our courses. Service-learning means that we have integrated community experience into a course curriculum and into student learning goals as well as carefully planned the student experience in collaboration with our community partners. As we describe our projects it will become clear that service-learning involves more than asking students to volunteer in the community, although this may be a valuable experience as well.

Sociology of Age and Aging

The goals of the Sociology of Age and Aging course are to familiarize students with the social aspects of aging including family relationships and long-term care issues. As students learn about social theories and concepts they begin to see the implications of an aging society for public policy, their communities, families and their own lives. Some of the students in the class had plans to work with or had experience working with older people. On the other hand, most of
the students have little or no experience beyond their own family relationships. Havir had added an experiential component to her course several years earlier. Those students with prior experience could attend professional meetings, etc., while those with little experience could volunteer. The students not only reported this experience as very rewarding but also requested that the volunteer work be integrated more into the course. These responses and requests from students led Havir to the project reported here.

The Project

A total of 27 students from the Sociology of Age and Aging course taught by Linda Havir during fall semester 1998 completed their service-learning activities with the Good Shepherd Community, a local long-term care community. Students each served 20 hours of volunteer time in nursing home, assisted living or senior apartment settings. Most students worked with residents in activity, therapeutic recreation, the closed care unit, special care unit, and apartment settings. Other students, however, worked less directly with residents and more directly with staff members in community relations, human resources, staff development and in the volunteer services office. Students experienced a wide range of responsibilities such as providing one-to-one companionship, directing activities, conducting public relations projects, scheduling volunteers, and assisting administrators.

Impact on Student Learning

Havir worked closely with the volunteer coordinator from the Good Shepherd Community to provide students with intergenerational experiences that would meet the following objectives:

a. facilitate academic learning, specifically knowledge about aging issues and long-term care
b. promote understanding and increased sensitivity to older adults and their concerns
c. support personal growth and career exploration

d. enhance the student's sense of social and civic responsibility, commitment to the larger community and public service

The impact of this learning experience on students and the community was documented by pre/post tests, student journals and papers, staff evaluations and debriefing sessions with staff.

Almost half of the students said that service learning had helped them “a great deal” to better understand the course content on aging and long-term care. The data also show that students became more sensitive to issues of long-term care and family relationships. There is evidence that students also increased their knowledge about these issues as they held fewer stereotypes about nursing homes and families by the end of the course. Only about 10% said that service-learning was of “relatively little “ value in understanding the course content and long-term care issues. Supervisors’ evaluations support the students’ assessment that they had significantly increased their knowledge about aging and their understanding of older people.

Student evaluations include the following statements.

*This experience has also helped me understand broader issues about aging, in that it reinforced what I have learned in class, especially in thinking about continuity and activity theory. Also, now I feel that I am more concerned about social issues relating to aging.*

*One thing I realize through this experience is that I have to give a lot of credit to the people who work within a nursing home, especially the nursing assistants. The job is so physically and emotionally challenging that I know I couldn’t do it. The pay is another issue. These people get paid very minimal for the work they do. I think it is one of the most stressful jobs in the world and people still do it for very little money. That is amazing!*

*In conclusion, as I stated previously, this was a very beneficial experience for me. I learned a lot about nursing homes, most importantly I learned that they are not as bad as most people tend to think.*

This experience helped increase student sensitivity to older people and their concerns. For example, there was a 30% increase in the percentage of students who said they wanted to get to know older people. The supervisors’ evaluations confirm that students have increased their understanding and are interested in getting to know older people.
I have worked and volunteered in many different nursing homes in the past, but this was the first time that I actually saw the residents as people. I was able to talk to them in a more social situation, not so much of a formal relationship. I went into this project thinking I was not going to experience anything I did not already know and could not have been more wrong. This service learning was the first time in my experience with the elderly that I actually looked at the people. I had wonderful conversations with them and really had a lot of fun spending time with all the different people I did meet... I think this happened because I took the time to get to know them on a personal level, not just to look at them as residents in the nursing home. This experience has also taught me that elderly people were not born old. They had childhoods. They were teenagers. They did similar things to what still happens now, just in a different time... They can teach me things about myself and my life that I had no idea they could. They taught me all these things because I realize, someday that will be me.

I have found that joking around with residents makes it easier to break the ice, when meeting new people. This experience has changed my view about nursing homes. I found that there are many people that just need someone to talk to. It makes a big difference in their day... This does make a big difference in my career goals as well. Ever since I started to work with the elderly I have noticed how many of them are part of the population. Even at work I have found that a huge part of our sales are from the elderly population... I may not be able to volunteer at this point in time but would like to in the future.

Over 50% of the students said that they became more aware of their own values through their service-learning project. In addition, there was a significant increase in the number of students interested in working with older people in the future.

All in all I found my experience to be very rewarding. I was even asked to continue my volunteering because I helped quite a bit. I am seriously considering it, if my schedule will allow. I learned that I really enjoy the administrative side of things and would like to pursue this line of work someday.

This experience was a lot less painful than I thought, and most of the time I had a lot of fun.

Personally, this experience has had an impact on me by making me realize that I have to make more time for my grandparents.

Interest in volunteering increased for these students. A total of 96% (compared to 63% in the pre test) thought they would volunteer sometime within the next two years. All of the students thought they had made a positive impact on older people. There was also an increase in the number of students who thought they could make a difference in the community. They were also more likely to think that adults could give more time for the good of their communities.

In fact, had this not been my final term at SCSU... I know that I would have continued well beyond just these twenty hours a service. I truly enjoyed my time and was genuinely sad to turn in my nametag.

I have a couple more hours to complete to finish my service learning but I hope to continue volunteering one or two days a week after I'm done doing it for class. I'm starting to realize that I should have been volunteering all throughout my college years because I really find it rewarding.
The service-learning project for this class did meet the student learning goals as well as helped to meet vital community needs. About one-third of the students already had extensive contact and knowledge of older people because of other coursework and career goals relating to working with older people. So we might expect that the service-learning would have less impact on their learning. These students, however, also responded that this was a valuable experience and provided new insights and experiences for them.

**Juvenile Delinquency**

This course, taught by Elizabeth Scheel, explores the role of youth in society and in particular, addresses the participation of youth in deviant and/or criminal behaviors. The course examines the social patterns of delinquency, what social factors contribute to the choices youth make about involvement in various activities, and the social responses to youth deviance. It also raises questions about the current focus of lawmakers and media on youth crime and violence, the reality of youth crime, the comparison of youth activities to adult behaviors, and how the current focus on youth supports a particular social order. Traditional juvenile delinquency texts and consequently most courses give only cursory attention to the prevention, intervention, and treatment of youth-at-risk, focusing instead on causation and control issues. Developing the curriculum around service-learning emphasized appropriate places, people, and programs for prevention and intervention of juvenile delinquency, linking these directly to theories of causation.

**The Project**

The first goal for the partner agency, The St. Cloud Area Violence Prevention Council, was to expand the knowledge of restorative justice principles and practices and to identify the supports and barriers to implementing restorative justice programs in schools. A secondary goal was to identify key people in local schools and in the community to participate in increasing St.
Cloud's use of restorative justice. In keeping with these goals, students worked on a needs assessment research project to identify attitudes and beliefs consistent or contrary to restorative justice principles and current practices, existing resources and barriers to using restorative justice programs and practices in schools. The students interviewed all local principals and surveyed teachers in K-12 public and private schools. Students worked in pairs to conduct the interviews and surveys and were assigned 2-3 schools to work with throughout the project. They then worked in larger groups to analyze the data and write their portion of the final report.

The final report, entitled "Restorative Principles in Educational Settings: A Report on the Promise and Practice of Conflict Resolution, Problem Solving, and Violence Prevention within St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, and Sartell School Districts," was distributed to all schools and administrators. The report included sections on the results of the local interviews and surveys restorative justice principles, the theory behind restorative justice, the programs and practices of restorative justice in educational settings, and how to get started developing a program. The report also included a list of state and national resources and an exhaustive list of references educators could access. Students also presented their work in a community forum for educators. Finally, the students presented the report orally to interested educators, social workers, and district personnel, the community partner and Scheel presented it in a community wide forum for "Peace Week," and it has been used as a training tool in some local schools. Because it was so comprehensive and is an outstanding example of student work, the report was assigned as required reading for this year's juvenile delinquency course.

This type of project was chosen for three main reasons. First, a social action research project eliminates the need to train students to work directly with youth. Secondly, restorative justice is a set of principles that are contrary to current trends in criminal justice and educational
settings. Restorative justice seeks to restore the victim, the community, and the offender back to "health". The report disseminated the principles of restorative justice throughout the community and gave the community agency direction in extending restorative justice in local schools.

**Impact on Student Learning**

The students were remarkably self-disciplined, enthusiastic, and willing to cooperate. They met each of the student learning goals and exceeded expectations. The main goals, with a reaction from Scheel, and a sampling of quotes from students' course evaluations are presented next.

**Goal #1:** To increase the students' understanding of restorative justice, violence prevention and their multiple uses throughout the community. It was also expected students would have a better understanding of the challenges of community organizing and coordination and would provide suggestions for the future.

**Outcome #1:** All students attained a thorough knowledge of restorative justice. They also demonstrated a grasp of the social factors that influence youth behavior and the appropriateness of restorative justice for addressing many of the issues that youth face today. Scheel was pleased with the students' ability to explain what they had learned to the principals and community members and to apply their knowledge beyond the project. Every student made positive comments about the amount and utility of their learning.

*I learned that every community is in need of restorative justice and as I look at this community, I think that there are many sites in which restorative justice programs could be of use. Although the service-learning project focused on our area schools I realize that restorative justice can be applied to adult areas, including those who are incarcerated.*

**Goal #2:** To facilitate the learning and practice of skills in conducting research, assessing community needs, interviewing, community organizing, program coordinating, and project implementation. This includes increasing their knowledge of the St. Cloud area, understanding
the needs of the local community, and locating possible sites for these skills or restorative justice
principles within their own future careers and communities.

**Outcome #2:** Almost all students reported learning practical skills that they believed would be
important to them in the future. Some reported that the opportunities for presentation and
interviewing improved their oral communication skills. Others reported that they gained a deeper
understanding of the research process and some mentioned the value of group projects and the
learning that took place in them.

*I learned skills that will be useful in the future like interviewing, analyzing surveys, and working with people to put
together a report. This part of the course made me think, “so this is where the research class comes into meaning
something in the real world”.*

*The other skills I improved on were my group skills. A large amount of work we did in the project was group
related. It helped with my communication skills with others. It made me a better listener, because in our groups
everyone had good ideas and we always took time to listen. The group work also helped with my compromising
skills. Even though I did not agree with all of the decisions we always compromised.*

*Overall, I felt that this whole class and project was a learning experience. I learned how to run a research project
from start to finish and learned the obstacles that must be overcome in order to make the project a successful one.*

Students also reported that the project taught them how to organize a community project,
the possibilities for programs, and the importance of these skills for their future.

*This project has given me skills needed for assessment, community organizing and program coordination.*

*I know now that when I go into the work force I will have more knowledge about the programs that are being used.
I will have a background for starting some programs in whatever field I decide to work in.*

*As a social work major, it is important for me to know needs assessments and program coordination. I must be able
to know where to get resources from the community; programs such as the service-learning project we completed
are great resources to social workers, even those workers outside of the school setting.*

**Goal #3:** Increase student understanding and desire to participate actively in the development of
services for youth in the community.

**Outcome #3:** Not every student indicated that they personally were inspired to get involved.
However, every student recognized the need for community involvement and several students
reported that this was an important lesson for them. Many also realized that they could make a
difference.
I will be taking away from this class the responsibility of my actions toward children's' issues to educate others of restorative justice and the knowledge that I have acquired in the juvenile delinquency class.

I went back to pick up the surveys, and I was surprised to be questioned about when the conference was going to be held. I guess I took it for granted that they had most likely dismissed our project due to the hectic schedules they are following at this time of the year.

Using our theoretical knowledge for practical application is an obligation for those of us who study patterns of people and society. It is not enough to sit at our desks with information that is vital to a population who may never be on a college campus to hear it. When we recognize inequality, it is our responsibility to act in a way what raises awareness and motivates change.

**Goal #4:** Understand the complexity of juvenile delinquency and youth in society today, including a better understanding of social factors (school, economic, family, criminal justice, and mental health systems) rather than just psychological or biological forces. Students are often not convinced that schools or the community could contribute to delinquency nor that they could do something about it—most believe that the family has a primary impact.

**Outcome #4:** The project was successful in demonstrating the connection between the various parts of society and youth issues.

I learned a lot about value, vision, listening, and influence that parents, teachers, faculty, administration and community have on our children today.

At first sight my thought on the service-learning project on restorative justice was limited and skeptical at best. I had a hard and fast belief in the way in which our youth were treated. To my dismay this was another one of my middle class values perpetuated through my socialization.

Overall, the project was very successful for the students. Students were surprised that they were able to accomplish as much as they did and hoped their hard work would be valuable to the community. This project helped to counter a popular adage that “nothing works” to rehabilitate youth, to reduce myths about juvenile delinquents, and to help students understand the potential for change. They learned that there is an alternative to “get tough” policies and that the alternative is not just another fad, but a theoretically grounded, well-researched alternative. They also learned that the alternative is not a “quick fix”, but takes the active participation of the community that included them. The hard work, enthusiasm, and the product students produced was impressive. Students learned about the material, about the community and about themselves.
Several students in the course went on to do additional restorative justice work (senior thesis, senior project, independent study, presentations at a national conference, application in their work, etc.).

**Intercultural Communication**

Intercultural communication is the study of how messages created in one culture are given meaning (decoded) in another. In the classroom, students gain knowledge about how interaction patterns evolve into cultural expectations and assumptions. However, the affective objective, "Students will increase empathy toward intercultural individuals and sensitivity toward their circumstances," is much harder to cultivate and measure. Thus, Pryately saw service-learning as a way to increase exposure to non-similar others, structure these experiences so they would have a greater chance of being positive, and attempt to measure the impact of the experience, particularly the affective component.

**The Project**

Students enrolled in the two sections of Speech Communication 332 fall semester 1998 and spring 1999 voluntarily signed up to work in one of three organizations. In the fall students could select from the Multicultural Children’s Art Connection, and Adult English as Second Language Program and the Multicultural Task Force both sponsored by the St. Cloud School District Continuing Education. During spring semester, the Multicultural Task Force option was replaced with the SCSU Intensive English Center to give students without transportation an option. Pryately recruited these organizations because of their ability to provide intercultural opportunities as well as their willingness to provide on-site supervision.

Representatives from the agencies visited each class on the first day of class to explain their objectives and expectations. A total of 49 students (24 in fall semester and 25 in spring) or
about half of each class chose the service-learning option that involved signing an agreement with the agency, attending an orientation, and participating in five on-site sessions during the semester. Students who did not chose the service-learning option were paired with an international person, often a student, and required to interview the student three times and write a paper.

Supervisors monitored student attendance and participation and evaluated students at the end of the semester. Students kept a journal and wrote a five page paper discussing what they had learned about themselves, intercultural communication, the agency, and about community-based projects. Students also completed pre/post-tests

Student Learning

The main objective was for students to have more empathy and sensitivity toward non-similar others. This was partly measured through student comments. Pryately looked for comments that reflected emotional connection to individuals.

I laughed with each individual and I also cried when they told me how hard their life is here. I wanted to take them home with me.

I now feel more comfortable asking questions about other cultures.

I learned that the stereotypes that I have had in the past of multicultural events and projects and the people who put them on really aren't accurate. I had fun. I liked them and I think they liked me.

Mr. June spoke four languages! I am in awe of this man.

The eagerness to learn among the class was something I wish everyone could see. They participated like mad-in a second language.

I honestly respect and look up to these people who have moved far away from all that is familiar to them. I don't think I could do it.

The second objective expected that students would learn about intercultural communication.

This project reinforced the importance of primary research. I can learn much more from speaking to someone from another culture than any textbook can teach me.
As we discussed, I had to talk slower and listen extra hard and it was OK to ask them to repeat. I learned how hard it is to make yourself understood in another language.

Young children have not learned stereotypes yet and are open with everyone.

Storytelling is a wonderful way to learn about a culture. They can be used to educate or entertain.

I learned that most people like to share who they are; we have to be willing to listen.

A third objective was to have students reflect on what they had learned about themselves. As Lena (1994) states, integration of the experience through reflection is the backbone of service-learning.

I had some prejudices which I did not know existed like immigrants are lazy and stupid and have low paying jobs because they are uneducated. I learned that many had very good jobs in their own countries but can’t get them here because they can’t speak English. I feel ashamed of myself.

I learned that I need to stop and enjoy the moment and my family more like Latinos value in their culture.

I found I have more patience with children than I do with adults. This is a positive trait I never knew I had.

I did not think other cultures would interest me but when I started to learn different things, I became very curious about learning more. I am starting Spanish classes next year. I now think every student should learn another language.

I didn’t realize what I have been missing by not growing up around a diverse group of people.

One way to measure the impact of the experience is how many students want to continue doing it. Two students who worked with Adult ESL in the spring chose to take ESL certification training. Two students also decided to continue working with the Multicultural Children’s Art Connection. The pre/post test of 20 students in the spring semester shows there was a noticeable increase in better appreciation of co-cultural people and an increased interest in volunteering with community groups in the future.

Community Outcomes

In addition to enhancing student learning, each of the service-learning courses benefited the community. A total of 115 students served the community through five community organizations. We estimate that over 300 individuals in the St. Cloud community benefited from
our students' work. The three projects demonstrate how different models can be used in collaborating with community organizations.

The students in the Sociology of Age and Aging class served approximately 100 older people who were either residents of a nursing home, assisted-living facility or senior apartments. They are, for the most part, frail and in need of some assistance with daily living tasks. A total of 81% of the staff members "strongly agreed" that these students had made important contributions to their organization and older people. In addition, ten staff members learned about service-learning and were engaged in teaching students. Several staff members came to campus to provide orientation to the project and the options available to them at this site.

The Intercultural Communication course benefited the community partners by providing opportunities for them to become teachers as well as program administrators. The projects demonstrated how the university can be a resource providing eager workers and expertise. This cooperation counters the image of the university as a cost center producing noise, vandalism, overcrowding and other town-gown friction. The students provided help through planning meetings, orienting newcomers to St. Cloud, aiding in preparing children for a performance, and helping international students and recent immigrants learn English.

The primary benefit to the community from the efforts of juvenile delinquency students was the dissemination of information about the potential and practices of restorative justice in educational settings. Over 400 copies of the report were disseminated last year. The report was also used in community presentations, community social service fairs, and in outreach efforts to initiate and extend restorative justice practices in St. Cloud. As of February 2000, it has been used in at least one educational setting to train teachers and in another to obtain funding and reinstate a conflict resolution program.
Teaching Outcomes

Each of us believes that integrating service learning into our courses strengthens the scholarship of teaching (Boyer, 1990). We also assert that service-learning extends the Boyer model to include the integration of scholarship, teaching, and service. Havir found that she developed more meaningful assignments making the text materials “come alive.” This is particularly important in discussions of aging which is a process that is often far removed and remote from the experiences of most students. The students were able to identify and apply many of the theories and concepts discussed in the classroom.

Pryately believes that her teaching was improved by further developing methods for monitoring student learning activities. She took an administrative role that generated empathy for administrators on her part, while the community administrators took on a teaching role. Adding service-learning broadened the possibilities of “community as classroom” into another speech communication course and led to involvement with another local company. This new project became a semester-long collaboration that was much larger in scope and more highly integrated into this course. Adding service-learning revived Pryately’s interest in doing outcome-based research to find if the result was worth the effort. Her experience so far shows that the effort does pay off.

Scheel reports that experimenting with service-learning enhanced her teaching by improving her research facilitation skills and encouraged review of all her courses to include more meaningful assignments. Service-learning has helped her bridge the gap between her efforts to excel in teaching, her community service and activist activities, and her efforts to participate in scholarly activities. The project also stretched her methodological skills and improved her lectures by giving her examples students all understood. As a non-Minnesotan, the
project gave her a better understanding of local resources, local attitudes, and local practices towards youth-at-risk or youth-in-need-of-services. Finally, it helped her recognize that the students can meet high standards when they see value in the project for their own learning and future plans.

**Challenges and Considerations**

Although there is a range of promising outcomes for these three projects, there are several considerations that faculty should weigh before implementing service-learning. Some challenges were found across the projects, yet each method of implementation presented a unique set of challenges as well. We have considered these challenges in our plans for future implementation. Finally, we end with some student quotes on the overall value of service-learning.

Faculty members may be reluctant to integrate service-learning into their courses as this new component increases and complicates an already very heavy teaching load. To be sure, it does take extensive planning, monitoring and reflection in order to add this component to our classes. We would argue that student response and learning are an excellent return on this investment. Developing and supervising an action research project or matching the students with appropriate settings and jobs requires a huge commitment of time and effort. Time at the beginning of the course must be committed to providing *substantial* orientation to the community project, learning goals and procedures. Students need to have a clear set of expectations and guidance and must expect to meet deadlines and schedules. Furthermore, community organizations must also be involved in the orientation process for students as well as for their own staff. There must be a clear understanding on the part of the partner organizations as to what they can expect from students and what benefits the organizations can expect.
Other costs beyond the initial planning and time commitment include travel and photocopying costs as well as additional time for meeting with student groups and community supervisors. Other practical considerations involve decisions on the number of hours to require, the percentage of the course devoted to service-learning and grading. Finally, there were some challenges specific to the method or model of service-learning used.

Havir used a model where students worked in a particular community setting providing direct service to clients. Within this setting it was important to make sure that there was a range of job types for the students. Not all students were prepared or ready to work directly with older people. Some students had other talents, interests or ways to contribute to the organization. Havir also found that in the future it will be beneficial to conduct the initial orientation on-site at the long-term care facility. This will help students to overcome their concerns and fears about nursing homes and older people faster so they will not delay initiating their volunteer work. She found that some students needed more training on-site on how to best respond to residents with dementia. Flexibility in assignments can also help some students who may want to rotate across several departments. Many of the students who deliberately requested administrative jobs later expressed a desire to work more directly with older people. She also found that a few students such as commuters may need options at sites in their own communities. Students can be given alternative assignments if necessary and must be given immediate feedback if they are not performing. Some of this can be accomplished by building time into the course for reflection with students as well as with community supervisors. Havir's students initially thought that 20 hours was too much time but the majority eventually found that it was not difficult or burdensome to put this time into their service-learning.
Pryately placed her students into several pre-existing structured programs. There were people at each site who maintained contact and monitored student work. Pryately did not want to overload the organization with too many hours and too much supervision so required only five hours on-site. She thinks the hours should be increased to 15 or one hour per week but the organizations might not approve of that much time for as many as ten students in one setting. Students can be assisted in finding other options by providing lists of organizations that have been contacted and pre-approved. She also thinks that regular, oral discussions throughout the semester in addition to the paper, will help students to better integrate knowledge and feelings. This change is in response to the pre/post measures that showed that students more strongly believed that society was doing enough to help newcomers after their service-learning than before. This attitude shows incomplete understanding of the situation of non-white immigrants and students in this country. Oral discussions could lead to a more accurate picture of the situation.

Scheel suggests that most of the challenges she anticipated were solved by setting aside class time to work on the project. She gave 10-15 minutes at the beginning of each class period for students to check in with their groups, ask questions, and set up a plan of action. This helped reassure students and it helped to coordinate the project. It also worked to teach students how to problem solve when they ran into barriers or difficulties. Her students reported that lack of preparation in conducting research prior to the class made the first weeks of the course anxious for them and many were disappointed with low survey responses. This can be countered by accounts of the success of the first group and by providing more preparation for low survey responses prior to survey implementation. Some students wanted follow-up information after the semester on the impact of the service-learning project in the community.
web site can provide follow up information and continued use of the project after the semester. She also suggests that all students in the class need multiple opportunities to present their findings and further recommends that community members attend.

Scheel also reports that her project posed a challenge with its success. There were many requests for presentations, additional copies of the report, requests to sit on committees, phone calls to discuss the project, etc. While these demands reinforced the need for this project, it was difficult to manage all of the requests. Fortunately, there were several students who were extremely interested in pursuing additional work with restorative justice and they were enthusiastic about being given the responsibility to handle some of these requests. Six students represented the class at a District 742-sponsored discussion on Restorative Justice, one student presented the principles of Restorative Justice for two Cathedral High School Sociology classes, and one student completed the 25-hour training on Peacemaking Circles.

Students raised a number of other concerns about the incorporation of service learning within a normal course, but most concluded the project was worth the inconveniences or difficulties they faced. The most common concern was related to workload. Other issues raised were: commuting, group work, difficulty in selecting which “job” to do, lack of knowledge in the course material prior to working in the field, scheduling issues, and the desire for more time with the community partner, Finally, several students reported wishing they could have accomplished more.

_I wish that we could take our information and expand our project further— wish that we had more time to work on helping the community to raise money and the people power so that this can be accomplished._

_Overall, the service learning as a whole I think can be very useful. I think that we can really offer some great things to the schools. The only problem with it is all we can do is give them the information and let them make the decision to do implement it or not. It's like a gift, all you can do is leave it on their door and hope that they take it. If they do, then it means we have gained a larger step in the restructuring of the current position of justice in this society._
Service-learning is probably not feasible in many larger classes. Flooding the community with students for short-term projects may at times be more disruptive than helpful. However, large groups of students can organize community events, do widespread educational programs (such as presentations in local schools or door-to-door canvassing efforts), assist in fundraising efforts, or small groups of students within the larger class can do one of a series of smaller projects.

Our positive results and the enhanced student learning are due to the careful integration of extensively planned and monitored community experiences into our liberal arts curricula. We all plan to continue our work in refining and extending the promise and practice of service-learning.

To end our discussion, we want to leave you with some students' final thoughts:

*I really wish service-learning projects were used more in this school. Whether it be by conducting a study, working in some part of the... field, or just seeing the subject in real life action would help students learn and remember the material.*

*This is the most intense and hardest class I have taken so far and has probably taught me not only a lot about society and restorative justice but a lot about myself.*

*Funny, when I started I had no idea how I was going to get through 20 hours, now I can't believe they are up. What began as a completely fearful and dreaded experience, turned into a fun, rewarding and greatly anticipated part of my day.*

References


