

COURSE DESIGN

Guiding Principles for SL Course Construction

1. **Engagement** – Does the service component meet a public good? How do you know this? Has the community been consulted? How? How have the campus community boundaries been negotiated and how will they be crossed?
2. **Reflection** – Is there a mechanism that encourages students to link their service experience to course content and to reflect upon why the service is important?
3. **Reciprocity** – Is reciprocity evident in the service component? How? (all entities involved function as both teachers and learners, partners are colleagues, not servers and clients)
4. **Public Dissemination** – Is service work presented to the public or made an opportunity for the community to enter into a public dialogue?

Identifying and Working with your Community Partner

Prior to the Start of the Course

- Establish Course goals and determine appropriate partners to contact
- Meet with prospective partners to assess needs and assets – link to course goals
- Take the time to understand the culture of your partner and help students to develop an understanding of this culture
- Discuss the following with your community partner:
 - Their needs
 - Goals & Objectives of the course
 - What the partner wishes to get out of the experience
 - Competencies students will need to be able to meet the partners needs
 - Possible projects and how they link to the course

- Roles and responsibilities of each member of the partnership
- How students will be supervised
- The criteria by which students will be evaluated
- The timeframe and location of service
- (For PBSL) who will develop the problem solving plan.
- How you and the community partner will know if the need has been met (what data will you collect and how)
- A plan for continuous communication (to leaders at the university and in your partner's organization)
- Provide the community partner with an information sheet or sample contract that outlines for everyone the expectations for all participants, time frame, important dates, etc.
- Plan for subsequent meetings to work out other details and to continuously evaluate progress
- Provide support for the community partner's staff if necessary.

During the Course

- Review with students the particulars of the SL aspect of the course that you have worked out with your partner
- Provide a venue for the community partner to discuss his/her needs with the students
- Provide instructions to the students on how to work with the community partner
 - Help students to connect course goals and community partner needs
 - Help students develop ownership for the project
- Help students establish a structure to collaborate with each other and the community partner
- Schedule regular times when students, faculty member, and community partner can reflect on the work they are doing
- Communicate with partner regularly to see how students are doing
- Develop formative and summative assessment strategies with students and partner
- Use assessment info to revise plans if needed

After the Course

- Develop with partners a way to celebrate the efforts of individuals involved in the project. When possible identify a strategy for informing local media of your work
- Collect data to ensure that the community need is being met. Share this data with your partner
- If appropriate, discuss with students ways project can be sustained.
- Meet with community partner to discuss the impact of the students' work and determine next steps

Rick Gordon, Ed., *Problem Based Service Learning: A Fieldguide for Making a Difference in Higher Education*, Education by Design, **2000**, pp. 26-28.

Managing the SL Project

Prior to the Course

- Discuss ahead of time with the partner any potential problems that could arise – expect the unexpected.
- Establish checkpoints and milestones. Include these in the syllabus

Early in the Course

- Build student ownership of the problem/project
- Help students create a checklist or timeline of tasks, with a description of what each task involves, and date due. “Chunk” the project so students are not overwhelmed.

Along the Way

- Allow time for students to process what is happening
- Have opportunities to present drafts of work for feedback from a real audience or client
- Be aware of the energy in the class. Design in procedures for calling “time out” to stop the project temporarily and fill in gaps, teach new material, learn new skills etc.
- Be consistent, pay attention, communicate. Make sure there is concrete evidence of progress
- Check in with partner. Honor the partner, even if they make a mistake
- Keep to the schedule – enforce the timeline while being flexible & adaptable. Use established checkpoints to do housekeeping & reflection
- Engage students in project management as much as possible.
- Continue to keep students mindful of the quality standards and targeted outcomes.

Project Completion

- Organize a forum for students to present their work to the client
- Use assessment tools to measure students' learning, skill attainment, and personal and professional development
- Celebrate! – include your partner in the reflection and celebration

Rick Gordon, Ed., *Problem Based Service Learning: A Fieldguide for Making a Difference in Higher Education*, Education by Design, **2000**, pp. 84-85.

Assessment

Assessment should:

- Clarify objectives and expectations & makes these explicit
- Help students develop skills to recognize & then independently set quality criteria for the content, format, process, and impact of their work
- Provide incremental measures or milestones of progress
- Offer useful and specific feedback to all parties while the project is in progress, allowing for modifications and adjustments as needed to enhance learner development and success
- Excite students about how far they've come and motivate them to persevere to meet the challenges posed
- Assure accountability for course outcome for both individuals and groups.
- Allow faculty to adapt projects to student needs and evaluate the effectiveness of the course and methods used to meet learning outcomes.

Principles of Assessment

- Should be based on and contribute to the desired course outcomes for content, skill, and dispositions
- Should be multidimensional, using various tools for collecting evidence of student work and providing feedback on learning
 - Writing projects
 - Interviews
 - Portfolios
 - Journal entries
 - Group reflections
 - Oral reports
 - Story boards
 - Visual maps
 - Artistic presentations
- Might also access a variety of perspectives – teacher, partners, student peers, or student him/herself

Principles of Assessment cont.

- **Assessment is a process not an event**
- Should be incremental and ongoing
- Begins with development of standards,
- continues with formative feedback on direction and progress of project as students generate evidence through work process,
- continues as a summative experience that can inform the next cycle of teaching and learning
 - KWL tool (What do you know?, What do you want to know?, What have you learned?) – can provide baseline data and document growth towards goals
- Feedback should be genuine, fair, honest, and safe
- Feedback should involve students, partners, teachers, and, if appropriate, the community.
- Assessment should be timely, supported by concrete evidence, directly related to targeted learning outcomes, balanced between critique & celebration, and provided on both group & individual basis

Guidelines for Assessment

Prior to the course:

- Review course content. Identify desired learning outcomes.
- Design assessment processes tied to learning outcomes and standards
- Plan for a variety of modes of assessment

Early in the course:

- Make learning outcomes explicit for students
- Work with students to develop criteria for quality work
- Create opportunities for students to assess their own and their peers work at various points in the project
- Take time in class to discuss assessment as a critical part of the feedback process that will help them succeed. Discuss who gives feedback and how.

- When possible, take time to develop and use assessment checklists, rubrics, and scoring guides with students or use similar tools based on the quality criteria developed with the students

Along the Way

- Create a class climate that encourages a “culture of revision” in which there is ample opportunity to discuss and improve work
- Provide students with models of quality work
- Collect evidence in the process of student work, not just for the end products
- Give on-going and specific feedback on student work. Look for opportunities to praise positive results

At the Completion of the Project

- Use rubrics developed to assess evidence that demonstrates achievement of outcomes
- When appropriate, include the client in the assessment process and ask for feedback
- Try to give clear and specific feedback on the strengths and shortcomings of student work. Seek to offer steps for future growth. Avoid making final assessment and endpoint. Instead, make this another step in the student's learning process.
- Include celebration and exhibition as forms of final feedback for student effort and achievement.

Rick Gordon, Ed., *Problem Based Service Learning: A Fieldguide for Making a Difference in Higher Education*, Education by Design, **2000**, pp. 92-93.

Tools and Strategies

- Criteria Setting
 - Looks like... Sounds like...Feels like
 - Letters from partner detailing problem statement and describing the purpose of the product or project. (You and your students may have to help your client craft this)
 - Make expectations clear up-front – put them in the syllabus & discuss in class
 - Set quality criteria with students. Distinguish form, content, impact, and process. When distinctions not made tendency is to overemphasize form over content and effort over impact
 - Provide an inventory of critical skills and competencies to be developed from the course

- Feedback
 - 1-10 line up
 - Frequent check-in with students (verbal or written)
 - Sweep/whip
 - Observation checklist
 - Peer (or mentor) observer, evaluation & editing
 - Post it notes
 - Huddle Debrief
 - Narrative Responses to student work
 - Scoring rubrics

- Evidence Gathering

(Note: If you want students to exhibit “higher order thinking” you should direct your questioning and assignments towards this type of thinking. Students respond to what you ask for)

- Reflective journals or Reaction Papers (to specific questions or prompts)
- Interviews
- Portfolios
- In-Class Discussions
- Tests and Quizzes
- KWL
- Research papers and other writing

- **Evaluating, Grading, Reporting**

(NOTE: important to have multiple pieces of evidence from varying perspectives – “triangulation”. Imperative to measure what we say we value. Assess ALL targeted outcomes – application, understanding, skills and attitudes – not just content.)

- Rubrics

- Give final exam at beginning and end of the course

- Checklists, scoring guides

- Summative Reflective Exercises

- Portfolios

- **Examples of Assessment Activities**

Individual – journals, final project results, debriefing interview, exit interview, video, learning contract, portfolio

Group – portfolio, pre- and post- testing, oral presentation or demonstration, completed group project, group agreed upon allocation of fixed point value

Partner - questionnaire on practical use of product, letter from partner to students regarding observations, completion of student or teacher designed assessment form

Peer – student feedback to each other, classroom discussions (debriefing activities), peer mentoring, interactive journal observations, listserv dialog

Teacher – Narratives, exit interview, checklists, holistic rubric, class discussions, observation, verbal feedback

Rick Gordon, Ed., *Problem Based Service Learning: A Fieldguide for Making a Difference in Higher Education*, Education by Design, **2000**, pp. 93-96.

Reflection

How To

- Make reflection part of the course expectations – part of class culture
- Create time for reflection in class and ask for specific reflective assignments. Encourage students to consider:
 - To what degree are goals being met? How well are we succeeding?
 - What are we learning from this experience?
 - What is going well and why? What could have gone better and why? How should we do it differently next time?
 - What role do each of us play in the project? What can we learn from looking at our roles and our individual efforts?
 - How can we help ourselves and others in the class learn to do better next time?
- Forms reflection can take: discussions, journal writing, reports, interviews, group brainstorms, oral presentations, poetry, photography, story telling, role plays, or questionnaires.

Tools and Strategies for Reflection

- Sweep
- Carousel brainstorming
- Debrief – What? So what? Now what? or OK- Next Time
- Provide a **reflection guide**: a list of questions to be answered during and after the experience
- Provide a list of **focus questions** for students to answer regularly in a **journal**
- One on one interviews
- Have students form **peer support groups**
- Give students a theme or content topic to reflect on orally in class
- Do a 5 minute **free writing** assignment in class with structured question to reflect on
- Small group discussions – must have guidelines for discussion

- **Reflection questions**
 - What was your most or least favorite part and why?
 - What would you do differently next time?
 - What skills did you acquire or improve?
 - How did you demonstrate your learning to others?
 - What skills or projects would you want to work on next time to continue your development?
 - What did you learn in this experience that you could use somewhere else?
 - How could you teach others what you just learned?
- Ask students to make a **checklist of expectations** before the project begins. Check at the end of the project to see if expectations were met
- Ask students to make two lists, prioritizing the positive and negative aspects of the experience, and to justify their prioritizations
- **Fear in a hat/Snowball**

- **Continuum meters:** Use Lickert type scales for survey of student responses
- **1-10 Line-up**
- **Stop/Don't Stop/Start/Don't Start** (can combine with a snowball)
- For each item in their **portfolio** have students write a short explanation of why they chose it and what it demonstrates.

Rick Gordon, Ed., *Problem Based Service Learning: A Fieldguide for Making a Difference in Higher Education*, Education by Design, **2000**, pp. 115-116.