Service-Learning Pedagogy to Engage Students on Hunger

Norma-May Isakow
Pat Lord
“Students come to college to learn, but they also should find a sense of purpose in life — a calling. [Service-Learning] is one way to inspire students and instill in them the skills they need to effectively pursue their passion and effect real change in the world. . . . In short, [Service-Learning] moves people from having ideas to having the skills to do something about it.”

David Siemers,
What is Service-Learning?

A pedagogical model that intentionally integrates community service, academic learning, and civic learning.
ENAGEMENT in service activities with a selected community partner in a mutually beneficial relationship based on a spirit of collaboration.

REFLECTION upon larger issues that affect communities through readings and submission of weekly structured reflections.

INTEGRATION of community engagement and academic learning through in class discussions and experiential activities, critical thinking papers, and a final presentation.
## Service-Learning Course Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUALITY INDICATOR</th>
<th>STRONG</th>
<th>EMERGING</th>
<th>MINIMAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced Academic Learning</td>
<td>*Course intentionally relates to student academic learning *Partners, specific service activities, and duration of service enhance academic learning *Credit is awarded for student demonstration of academic learning</td>
<td>*Service experience incidentally relates to academic learning *Partners, service activities and duration of service do little to contribute to academic learning *Some credit is awarded for academic learning but mainly credit is awarded for service</td>
<td>*Service is not related to student academic learning in course *Credit is awarded solely for doing service or for quality of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposeful Civic Learning</td>
<td>*Course intentionally helps students understand community needs, the context of their service, and how they can impact their community *Credit is awarded for demonstration of the above</td>
<td>*Course incidentally helps students understand community needs, the context of their service, and how they can impact their community *Credit is not awarded for demonstration of the above</td>
<td>Course does not help students understand community needs, context of their actions, and how they can impact their community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant and Meaningful service with/for the community</td>
<td>Student service: *Is well organized *Correlates with course academic and civic learning goals *Responds to a community need as identified by the community</td>
<td>Student service: *Is fairly well organized *Correlates somewhat with academic and civic learning goals *Somewhat responds to a need identified by the community</td>
<td>Student service: *Is not well organized *Does not correlate with academic and civic learning goals *Does not necessarily respond to a need identified by the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFLECTION - integration strategies support learning from service experiences and enable its use towards meeting course objectives (i.e. learning activities that encourage integration of experiential and academic learning)</td>
<td>Ongoing integration activities promote critical reflection and analysis include *classroom discussions *individual structured reflections (journals) *presentations *paper assignments</td>
<td>Integration activities exist but not on an ongoing basis e.g. include only a final paper or presentation</td>
<td>Students may be required to record their service activities but there are no activities for integration experiential and academic learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Quality Indicators

- **Strong**
  - Element is in place and operating at effective level
  - Strong academic and civic learning goals are met
- **Emerging**
  - Element is present but needs improvement for effective practice
  - Academic and civic learning goals are partially met
- **Minimal**
  - Element is missing
  - Academic and civic learning goals are not met
Sample Weekly Journal
Name of Student
___________________________________________________________
___
Date ___________ Community Partner/Service Learning Site
___________________________________________________________
Brief description of service activities:

Reflection of personal experience - feelings, thoughts, reactions to experience at service learning site:

Issues and questions pertaining to service learning site experience, skills people:

Reflection of experience as related to course content (be specific if you would like student to relate service experience to particular course content):
Benefits of Service Learning

Students:

Enriches student learning of course material and "brings books to life and life to books"

Faculty:

Enriches and enlivens teaching and learning

Community:

Allows the energy and enthusiasm of college students to contribute to meeting needs of local communities.
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

FOOD SECURITY means ACCESS by ALL PEOPLE at ALL TIMES to ENOUGH FOOD for an ACTIVE and HEALTHY LIFE.
• To engage students regarding:
  • Food Deserts
  • Food policy
  • Winston-Salem

At Wake Forest, there is a long tradition of incoming students engaging as a class in a summer academic project. Along with raising awareness of vital political, cultural, or social issues, we also introduce students to the type of intellectual dialogue we value and expect. The Summer Academic Project requires you to read, reflect, and act on selected materials prior to your arrival on campus in August.
Steps for Completing the Summer Academic Project:

**Step 1: Complete the Following Readings**

1. An excerpt (the Executive Summary and Introduction) from Forsyth Futures’ January 2013 report “Forsyth County’s Community Food System: A Foundation to Grow”

   The full report can be found [online](#). For more information on Forsyth Futures, please visit their [website](#).

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention article, “Why do we need to eat healthy?”


**Step 2: Research Food Deserts and Answer a Few Questions**

Download and Complete the [Student Activity](#)
This research activity, building upon the readings you have already completed, will help you to start to conceptualize food availability and options in your local area while also preparing you to have discussions with your advisers and fellow classmates about access to healthy nutritious food and some of the barriers to access.

Pick the closest location from which you can purchase groceries (convenience store, grocery store, drug store, etc.) and one other location of your choice in an area where you can purchase groceries.

How far away are these places and how do you get to them?

Fill out the following table with the information you gather about the items from each location (if the item is unavailable write N/A and if there are multiple options—frozen, canned, etc.—list them along with their prices.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ITEM</strong></th>
<th><strong>CLOSEST LOCATION:</strong></th>
<th><strong>FAVORITE LOCATION:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **ONE BUNCH/UNIT OF SPINACH**  
  Fresh, frozen or canned?  
  Price(s)                    |                       |                        |
Student Responses

- I think this topic was really interesting for all students, no matter where they are from…I especially enjoyed it compare to the project from my freshman year
- They didn’t know about the food scarcity in Forsyth county
- We talked a bit about food deserts and what we could do to get involve in the Wake community.
- They didn’t really know Winston-Salem has a hunger issue
My advisees generally liked the summer academic project. They clearly had engaged issues of sustainability in high school and several had experience with community gardens. It was no problem at all getting them to engage the topic. In fact, we reconvened after dinner to extend our conversation -- all at their initiative.

This year my advisees had a really rich discussion and I was very impressed. They had clearly read the materials; they were not too daunting. They were very engaged with the discussion about Winston-Salem. They asked a lot of questions about how they could be involved while they are at Wake.

They also were interested in the topic and we had a good discussion for about 45 minutes. Also definitely educated them to some degree about the food realities of W-S, which they had no idea about. They were also left at a loss for discovering practical steps to combat food deserts and incentivize major food providers to open up shop in poor areas and then stay there for many years.
Academic Learning:
Examines food availability, access and use; food security as a complex issue of sustainable human development

Civic Learning
Helps students understand local, national and global issues relating to hunger and the context of their service

Meaningful Service to the Community:
Students work with community leaders with power to initiate systemic change as well as with local nonprofits including community garden, homeless shelter, food pantry, and women’s shelter

Reflection/Integration strategies
Initial Structured Reflection – relating expectations, initial impressions, data
Midpoint Structured Reflection – expectations challenged, insights, integration of data with experience
Final Structured Reflection – perceptions of issues food security integrating data, classroom learning and service experience
Class Presentation – sharing key points of final reflection paper with class
"Service learning has completely revolutionized my educational experience. I have been given the opportunity to gain knowledge and experience that directly relates to my future career goals while interacting with amazing faculty and community members whose wisdom and guidance have greatly advanced my academic and personal development."

- Jonathan Woolley
Academic Learning:
Examines what power is, what the state is, and how they affect society

Civic Learning:
Helps students put their knowledge into action regarding food policy and inequality

Meaningful Service to the Community:
Student groups create resource relating to food policy/inequality and presented at Wake Food Justice Summit

Reflection/Integration Strategies:
Blog posts
Class discussions
Creating and presenting PPT presentation/bulletin board addressing aspect of food policy/inequality
Individual reflection paper connecting resource project to course materials
Food Access Outside of the Wake Bubble

Food Desert: Geographic areas where residents’ access to affordable, healthy food options (especially fresh fruits and vegetables) is restricted or nonexistent due to the absence of grocery stores within convenient travelling distance.

- 2.3 million (2.2%) of all U.S. households live more than a mile from a supermarket and do not have access to a vehicle
  - US Department of Agriculture
- A 2001 survey found that nearly 6% of U.S. households did not always have food due to access related problems.
  - US Department of Agriculture
- Studies have found that wealthy districts have three times as many supermarkets as poor ones do
  - Food Empowerment Project
- White neighborhoods contain an average of four times as many supermarkets as predominantly black ones do
  - Food Empowerment Project
- Grocery stores in African-American communities are usually smaller with less selection.
  - Food Empowerment Project
- Studies have found that urban residents who purchase groceries at small neighborhood stores pay between 3 and 37 percent more than suburbanites buying the same products at supermarkets
  - Food Empowerment Project
- Healthier foods are generally more expensive than unhealthful foods, particularly in food deserts.
  - Food Empowerment Project
- While the overall price of fruits and vegetables in the US increased by nearly 75% between 1989 and 2005; the price of fatty foods dropped by more than 26% during the same period.
  - Food Empowerment Project
Impacting Community Through Service-Learning

Academic Learning:
Understanding concepts of healthy relationships, developing awareness, knowledge and skills for working with different populations

Civic Learning:
Help students put their knowledge into action by working with a community partner to address needs of the particular population served

Meaningful Service to the Community:
Students support nonprofit organizations addressing food insecurity including food bank, homeless shelter, food pantry, Latino Community Services, Campus Kitchen, community garden

Reflection/Integration Strategies:
Weekly Structured Reflections online
Mid-term Critical Thinking Paper thoughtfully integrating classroom and service experiences
Class discussions
Final Power Point Slide Presentation at Final Community Celebration
## Title Here (Service Learning with (Name of Community Partner))

Your name, year, major, name of the SL course taught by Instructor Name, semester, year

### Community Partner
- Community partner's name, address, mission, and population served
- Include photos or logo

### Impacting the Community
- Nature of your service-learning activities
- Impacted on the community

### Academic Learning
- How your service related to your academic course of study

### Personal Growth through Service Learning
- Personal Growth including:
  - Understanding of community issues
  - Personal Awareness
  - Future career plans

### Challenges and Rewards
- Your challenges at the service-learning sites
- Your rewards

### Acknowledgements
- Community Partner
- Supervisors/Mentors
- Faculty
- Supervisors/Mentors
- Resources
Biology 101 for all majors

Academic Learning: To educate non-biology majors about the *life long value of biology*. To encourage engagement, the course focused on Food, including Food Inc and Thomas Freidman’s speech.

½ labs were traditional, ½ were service-learning

Civic Learning: Learn about Campus Kitchen and Community Partners

Meaningful Service to the Community: Growing Food; Preparing and delivering food for community service agencies through Campus Kitchens; Prepared brochures for community service agency on nutrition and related topics

Reflection/Integration Strategies: Journals, Writing assignments on movie, speech, power point presentations
Student Comments:

• How fun and engaged gardening could be
• Going to Horseshoe Apts. and finding out the types of lives that these people live and what they deal with
• It really opened up my eyes to the impoverished people who we delivered to
• I was so inspired by meeting Lee from Prodigals - it opened my eyes to a kind of life I had never thought about
• Preparing brochures allowed me to research and really understand some of the issues

• I learned more through the public engagement activities than I did through labs
• I liked learning how bio can apply to my life - as a non bio major I appreciate learning lifelong skills instead of memorizing info
Taking the classroom outside

Students learn about plant life from the ground up

By JANICE GASTON

Students in Pat Lord’s biology class this spring learned some things that they hadn’t expected. They learned how the vagaries of nature — unseasonable cold, a blast of pre-summer heat, hungry rabbits — can nearly ruin weeks of work.

They learned about the energy-efficiency of rain-fed plots.

As part of their spring biology class, Emily Earle, Kris Frantz and Nick Conte work in the campus garden to learn about plant physiology, sustainability and community service.
Service is not an experience of strength or expertise; service is an experience of mystery, surrender and awe. Those who serve have traded a sense of mastery for an experience of mystery, and in doing so have transformed their work and their lives into practice.

Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen
Your ideas for incorporating service-learning about hunger and food security in different disciplines

• Academic learning
• Civic learning
• Meaningful service to the community
• Reflection/integration strategies