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Introduction

In academia, experiential learning, service-learning, and civic engagement have become common-place terms. While differences exist in their meaning, expectations, and deliverables, the field is growing and, in response, many institutions of higher education around the world have embraced and adopted these learning practices. Many conferences, workshops, published articles, manuscripts, and on-line resources are available to share, advance, and support this relatively new field. In fact, many organizations such as the American Association of Community Colleges, the American Association for Higher Education, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the Carnegie Endowment for Teaching and Learning, Campus Compact, the League for Innovation, and the New American Colleges & Universities:

...have challenged America’s colleges and universities to make student learning central to the academic mission of higher education. Those who have accepted this challenge have found service-learning to be a powerful strategy for engaging their students in mastery of academic skills and content through service to their communities. (Jones, 2003, p. 1)

Results from Campus Compact’s 2010 member survey reveals that campuses that are committed to preparing students for democratic participation and are applying resources to address their communities’ needs have increased to over 1,100 colleges and universities in the U.S. — a growth of 70% since 2000. Their findings show that across all institutional types, the spectrum of student participation in service-learning activities, with some schools at 100%, is wide; but, on average, 35% of students engage in service activities and spend an average of 3.7 hours per week on these activities. Furthermore, these interests are not limited to just students; faculty engagement is also quite significant. Among Campus Compact’s responding schools, 93% reported offering service-learning courses during the 2009–2010 academic year. This translates to an average of 35 faculty members per campus, or 7% of all faculty. (Campus Compact, 2010)

Additionally, the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement in their book, A Crucible Moment: College Learning and
Democracy’s Future, “calls for investing on a massive scale in higher education’s capacity to renew this nation’s social, intellectual, and civic capital.” (The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012) During his January 10, 2012 speech at the White House, Dr. Guarasci, one of 11 national higher education leaders on the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, emphasized this point:

> Our goal here is to do three things. First, to fundamentally increase learning in the disciplines for our students; increase their civic learning—what it means to be connected to publics they will serve in the professions they choose—and, finally, that we are actually changing things in a community, that there is an impact in those areas where we are focusing our attention. (Guarasci, 2012)

This book, *Experiential Civic Learning—Construction of Models & Assessment*, is a compact but all-inclusive resource guide for faculty, departments, and administrators in higher education at all levels and in all disciplines, that can be used to develop, implement, and assess experiential civic engagement from an individual course to a departmental level series of courses. This book is unique as it provides both the background literature as well as the rationale, practicalities, and guidance for all the phases of this learning initiative and includes new resources: the different modalities of experiential learning, funding considerations and resources, the construction of a civic engagement course, the construction a departmental civic engagement series of courses (including the considerations in constructing and implementing these initiatives), and the assessment process: how to informally and formally assess the initiatives.

In addition to guiding faculty work through the "nuts and bolts" issues related to experiential civic learning and providing the necessary resources, this book has another goal: to encourage more faculty members to partake in this curricula initiative and collaboratively address the challenge of producing a more skilled, ethical, and civically engaged student citizen.

**How to Use This Book**

The book is divided into seven chapters.

Chapter 1 chronicles how traditional classroom learning has evolved to include outside-the-classroom experiences. It offers a definition, a brief literature
review, and the rationale and benefits of each learning modality, which will serve as the basis for the rest of the chapters in the discussion and construction of experiential civic models: reflection, service-learning, civic engagement, and learning communities. This chapter concludes with a comprehensive model—the incorporation of the above learning modalities into one course.

Chapter 2 is a brief but important topic on project funding and grants. It explores the question of whether funding is needed; the budget; funding proposal considerations; and proceeds to explore the process in obtaining funding. Twelve sources for grant opportunities are made available for your ready use.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the development of a single course experiential civic learning model. It includes a discussion on the challenges and considerations in the construction of a community-based civic engagement course; the importance of a mutual support system; changes in pedagogy and epistemology; the integration of civic engagement in a traditional course; and offers two examples of the experiential civic learning model— one initiative emanating from an Institutional grant, and another from an Instructor-written grant — with information from considerations in selection and changes to courses, partners, curriculum, project, and student and faculty deliverables. In addition, to serve as a guide and reminder, this chapter includes a “To-Do” checklist of activities that should take place before, during, and after the course or project ends. Lessons learned from educators undertaking these initiatives conclude this chapter.

Chapter 4 builds upon the discussions in the prior chapter and is dedicated to the construction and implementation of a departmental civic engagement model. It includes a discussion on the considerations in creating a departmental civic engagement initiative; the selection of its structure, the number of courses to be part of this initiative, and the number of student experiential hours; whether to use a single or multiple community partners; student-community goals, project and experiences; an example of a departmental initiative with a single community partner utilizing sequenced and different-field courses; and the advantages to the faculty in creating and participating in a collaborative departmental civic engagement program. A Departmental Course Creation Worksheet is included for ready-reference and use.

In Chapter 5, the views, definition and challenges of assessment as well as the tools of indirect assessment are reported. Considerations and the construction of an indirect assessment plan built around individual and departmental

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learning goals for the exemplars given in Chapters 3 and 4 are explored. Included is the sample “Civic Engagement Assessment Questionnaire” utilized in assessing the exemplar projects. A recap of Miller & Leskes’ Assessment on Five Levels is next offered. Lastly, the considerations in obtaining permission to publish quotes and/or data are discussed, and a sample Permission/Release Form is offered for ready reference.

Chapter 6 is devoted to direct assessment. It is divided into two sections: constructing and assessing an individual experiential course; and assessing a departmental experiential system of courses. Specifically, Section I discusses: the definition of formal or direct assessment, considerations in constructing and assessing an experiential project, rubrics for assessing critical and civic thinking. An assessment plan for a single civic engagement project by utilizing one of the following: a reflection paper, research paper, or an oral presentation as the only source of assessment and applying rubrics for assessing content, writing, oral presentations is shown. An assessment plan utilizing multiple measurements of assessment is also offered. The materials in this section, except for the critical and civic thinking taxonomy, are new constructions. Section II uses the tools and rubrics discussed in Section I and offers a methodology in which to summarize assessment scores of individual courses into one departmental assessment rubric.

In Chapter 7, the first part of the chapter relates experiential activity, assessment scores and course grades; and shows a methodology of how to convert assessment scores to students’ course grades. The second part of the chapter discusses the importance of “closing the assessment-learning loop”—incorporating assessment results into your courses—as well as offers the steps to the assessment process. Final thoughts on this topic conclude the chapter.

These chapters can be read sequentially or in isolation. As this is a resource book, please feel free to skip to the chapters or headings that attract your attention or can best meet your interests and needs.
Chapter 1

The Expansion of Experiential Learning

This Chapter Contains:

Traditional Classroom to Experiential Learning
  Reflection
  Service-learning
  Civic Engagement
  Learning Communities
  Putting it all Together—A Comprehensive Model

TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM TO EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

In higher education, classroom learning continues to evolve from what Freire (1970) referred to as the banking method of education — where the instructor deposits information into the students’ brains; and from what Coleman (1976) referred to as classroom learning which purely focuses on symbolic or information assimilation. “Deliberate” learning — learning which is intentional and where the students know they are learning; learning with a specific goal(s), as opposed to generalized learning, with a portion of this type of learning taking place outside of the classroom (Tough 1979) — is the new order.

“Students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside of the classroom. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning.” (National Survey of Student Engagement)

So, in recent years, how have colleges responded to this new order? Service-learning, experiential learning, publicly engaged learning, and civic engagement are common-place terms in today’s educational system. According to Imagining America, a Resource on Promotion and Tenure in the Arts, Humanities, and...
Design, “one should recognize that research, teaching, and community outreach often overlap.” (p. 26) As such, service-learning, civic engagement, or, experiential/publicly engaged academic work, can be defined as:

...scholarly or creative activity integral to a faculty member’s academic area. It encompasses different forms of making knowledge about, for, and with diverse publics and communities. Through a coherent, purposeful sequence of activities, it contributes to the public good and yields artifacts of public and intellectual value. (Eatman, 2008, p. 26)

Many models and activities have emerged to offer the students: a taste of the real world and interconnectivity; a chance to reflect; the ability to witness the imperfections and incompleteness of the models and frameworks they read in their textbooks; a deeper engagement of civic/public issues; and an opportunity to form a deeper self understanding. These characteristics, in parts, have been manifested in reflective practices, service-learning, and civic engagement in stand-alone courses; within learning communities; and/or as part of a departmental initiative. However, a distinction in the literature exists amongst the service-learning and civic engagement modalities.

What follows are the definitions, rationale, and benefits of reflection, service-learning, civic engagement, and learning communities as well as their inter-connections. This chapter serves as a precursor to the experiential civic engagement exemplars initiatives fully developed in Chapters 3 and 4.

REFLECTION

What is reflection and why should we reflect?

There is no doubt that the father of reflection is John Dewey. Dewey (1916) defines reflection as “a process which perceives connections and links between the parts of an experience” (in Boud, p. 25); or “…a form of response of the learner to an experience.” (Boud, 1985, p. 18) In the context of learning, it is considered a generic term for “those intellectual and effective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations.” (Boud, 1985, p. 19) Additionally, Boyd and Fales (1983) define reflection as: “The individual experiences a ‘coming together’ or creative synthesis of various bits of the information previously taken in, and the formation of a new ‘solution’ or change in the self – what might be called a new gestalt.” (p. 110)
In his later works, Dewey (1933) further expanded on reflection and defined reflective thought as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it leads…it includes a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality.” (p. 9)

In recent times, educators use reflection to heighten intellectual discourse on course material, public opinion, and out-of-classroom learning. The modes instructors employ to expand upon these efforts include assigning short papers, journaling, blogs and discussion boards, and carving out classroom time for reflective thought. While reflection may take place in isolation or in association with others, it is reflection with the association with others that is of heightened concern to educators. (Boud, 1985) However, you should note that while the instructor may be comfortable in leading a discussion on reflection, not all students are conditioned to be reflective, nor are they comfortable in explicating their reflective thoughts. Therefore, coaching on the part of the instructor is required for reflection and for this type of learning to take place inside and outside of the classroom. Faculty members that employ reflective practices will concur with Schön (1987) that those that receive real-time coaching and encouragement to reflect or think carefully about what they do while they are doing it, learn in a more profound way. In fact, the current National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data support reflective practices to increase student learning.

NSSE 2010 data, by top and bottom curricular peer interaction quartiles, show comparisons of the overall percentage of first-year students who participated in reflective learning—investigating one’s own thinking and applying new knowledge to one’s life—in three categories: 74% vs. 38% of top and bottom curricular peer interaction quartiles of first-year students examine the strengths and weaknesses of their own views; 82% vs. 48% try to better understand the views of others; and 86% vs. 49% learn something that changed the way they understood an issue. For these same three categories, compared to seniors in all other majors, senior psychology students had an increased average percentage difference of 4%, 7%, and 6% respectively. (National Survey of Student Engagement)

In a course tied to an experiential component, reflection as a pedagogy is critical. Jones (2003) says it best when he argues that “the educational context for the service activity requires students to reflect upon their service experiences in relation to community principles, civic ideals, and universal virtues, as well as course content.” (p. 2)
SERVICE-LEARNING

In higher education, modern ideas about the integration of service and learning are shaped by the early writings of John Dewey, who affirmed that better learning occurs when students have the opportunity to put into practice, in an effort to reinforce, the ideas that they are learning in the classroom. (Dewey, 1944)

So, how can we define service-learning? Is it tied with reflection? Will this require the faculty to make changes in pedagogy and/or in epistemology? Does it really produce better student learners?

Service-learning can be defined as an academic study closely tied to community service through structured reflection. This type of learning connects thought and feeling in an “intentional way” creating a framework in which students can explore how they feel about what they are thinking and what they think about how they feel. Through guided reflection, service-learning offers students opportunities to explore the relationship between their academic learning and their civic values and commitments. (Ehrlich T., 2000)

More than forty years after Dewey, other educators have begun to further explore this type of learning. The increased attention to service-learning is part of a heightened focus on engaged teaching and learning practices with scholars and academic leaders such as: the late Ernest Boyer, most noted for creating a dialogue between teachers and administrators about teaching methods and programs; John Barr and Robert Tagg, most noted for professing that the purpose of higher education is student learning and not merely providing instruction; George Kuh, most noted for his high-impact educational practices; and Terry O’Banion, noted as one of the leading spokespersons in the country on “Learning Revolution”.

The heightened attention to this modality is supported by data. According to the 2010 NSSE data, 38% of first-year students in public institutions have participated in service-learning activities, and this percentage increases to 48% for private institutions. For seniors, these percentages further increase from 46% to 54% for public and private institutions, respectively. (National Survey of Student Engagement)

However, in conducting an effective service-learning course, changes in pedagogy and in epistemology are required. Jones (2003) states that adopting a service-learning component to a course not only raises issues of pedagogy but also raises issues related to what to teach (epistemology). “This is because
service-learning shifts the authority of knowledge in the classroom and intentionally places community in the center of the learning process.” (p. 1)

Therefore, for engagement to occur, educational design is critical. Furthermore, he argues that service as academic work “assumes that cognitive, affective, and moral growths are inseparable, and that a student’s ability to analyze situations and material is critical to his or her ability to make responsible decisions outside of the classroom.” (p. 1)

Similar to employing the pedagogy of reflection, “service-learning is inevitably unpredictable and often uncomfortable. It challenges faculty and students on many levels as it incorporates shifting dialogues and actively engages participants in issues such as equity, difference, inclusion, tolerance, justice, and power.” (Jones, 2003, p. 1)

In recent years, other service-learning champions have emerged and espouse how service-learning enhances traditional class-room learning in a variety of ways. In Furco (1996), he posits that service-learning should “…ensure equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring.” (p. 3) It is this combination of factors that distinguishes service-learning from other experiential modalities such as internships, which are designed primarily to benefit the student, and volunteerism designed to primarily benefit the community. In fact, unlike internships and other practica, service-learning “instills in students a profound understanding of community responsibility.” (Tucker, McCarthy, Hoxmeier & Lenk, 1998)

Additionally, Robert A. Rhoads (1997) explores what we can learn from student involvement in community service that sheds light on how higher educational learning might be structured to involve an encounter between the self and the other, and restructured around an ethic of care. Jones (2003) states that: “Service-learning offers students an opportunity to explore the connections between the theoretical realm of the classroom and the practical needs of the community. It simultaneously reinforces the skills of critical thinking, public discourse, collective activity, and community building.” He further argues that “perhaps the most important long-term benefit of service-learning is the opportunity for students to connect to a community and identify their civic roles in that community.” (p. 2) Furthermore, Buddensick & Lo Re (2010) showed that students enrolled in service-learning courses have enhanced student awareness not only of themselves, but also of their communities, as well as promoted student inquiry of broader global and social issues. It is in the fulfillment of these goals that service-learning models far surpass other experiential modalities and activities.
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement can be dated back to Jane Addams, a social and political activist, an author and lecturer, a community organizer, a public intellectual, and a 1931 Nobel Peace Prize recipient who emphasized that we have a special responsibility to clean up our communities and make them better places to live. But, what is civic engagement and is it synonymous with service-learning? Many new-comers to this field use these terms interchangeably; however, a distinction exists in the literature.

Civic engagement is a broader motif encompassing, but not limited to, service-learning. It has been defined as "individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern." (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 403) As Thomas Ehrlich would echo, community engagement activities teach students “to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and develop the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference” (p. 404). Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual voluntarism to organizational involvement. It can include efforts to directly address an issue or work with others in a community to solve a problem, and it can encompass a range of specific activities.

Rudolph (1990) posits that in the United States, part of the mission of higher education is to educate students for civic engagement and responsible citizenship. Jones (2003) submits that “in both civic and intellectual life one must consistently reflect on one’s position, reconcile one’s preconceptions with the lived experiences of others, and uphold an ethic of personal accountability and social responsibility.” (p. 2) In fact, in many studies, community collaborators have stated that they value service-learning/civic engagement partnerships because they bring additional resources to the organizations and provide the opportunity to educate future professionals and community citizens (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006; Gelmon, Holland, Seifer, Shinnamon, & Connors, 1998a; Gelmon, Holland, & Shinnamon, 1998b; Leiderman, Furco, Zapf, & Goss, 2003; Seifer & Vaughn, 2004). Furthermore, students who are engaged in civic activities “gain more in ethical development and contribute more to the welfare of their communities. Participating in civic activities also develops habits that will lead students to continue participating in civic life.” (NSSE, 2011, p. 8)

Recently, institutions of higher education have received much disparagement in terms of what is being taught, or more importantly, what is not being taught. Then in 2006, the Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings
commissioned “A Test of Leadership Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education” study. The report found the following:

- “The quality of student learning at U.S. colleges and universities is inadequate and, in some cases, declining,” and these shortcomings, have real-world consequences. (p. 3)
- “Employers report repeatedly that many new graduates they hire are not prepared to work, lacking the critical thinking, writing and problem-solving skills needed in today’s workplaces,” (p. 3) and “lack the new set of skills necessary for successful employment and continuous career development.” (p. 13)
- “Institutions as well as government agencies have failed to sustain and nurture innovation in our colleges and universities.” (p. 15)

While there is still much to be done to address the concerns of society expressed in the media of what we are teaching our college students, the civic engagement modality responds to higher-education’s imperative to instill civic responsibility as well as the overall critique that book knowledge fails to expose students to the complexities of life.

Thus, civic engagement goes beyond Bringle & Hatcher’s (1996) service-learning model to deliver a course with an experiential component with the objectives to have: (1) a further understanding of course content; (2) a broader appreciation of the discipline; and (3) an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. Civic engagement allows students to go beyond being civically aware; it allows students to actively engage-in or take-on a topic or topics that concern the public at large. Lo Re, et.al. (2011) argue that civic engagement is a superior model to service-learning in the sense that civic engagement “not only heightens the effect of civic awareness and responsibility, but also civically engages the students on an issue or issues of public concern.” (2011, p. 80)

It is in the strength of this type of modality to which the examples in Chapters 3 and 4 are devoted.

**LEARNING COMMUNITIES**

The origin of learning communities dates back to 1928 when Alexander Meiklejohn, philosopher and advocate of free speech, formed the two-year Experimental College at the University of Wisconsin. During the first full-year of study, the curriculum stressed Greek civilization while the second year’s curriculum stressed the civilization of England. Even though the “experimental
college inspired its students… [it] was an administrative failure and ended in 1932.” (Encyclopedia Brunoniana, 1993)

How can we define a learning community? Is it related to reflection? Does it have (or is it required for) a service, civic engagement and/or experiential component (initiative)?

According to Smith, et.al. (2004), a learning community is defined as:

a variety of curricular approaches that intentionally link or cluster two or more courses, often around an interdisciplinary theme or problem, and enrolls a common cohort of students. This represents an intentional restructuring of students’ time, credit, and learning experiences to build community, enhance learning, and foster connections among students, faculty, and disciplines. At their best, learning communities practice pedagogies of active engagement and reflection. (p. 67)

Additionally, according to Price (2005), learning communities are “the pedagogical embodiment of the belief that teaching and learning are relational processes, involving co-creating knowledge through relationships among students, between students and teachers, and through the environment in which these relationships operate.” (p. 6)

Learning communities are yet another proven national and growing movement aimed to enhance student learning. Over one thousand institutions responded to a survey conducted by the National Resource Center (Tobolowsky, 2008) of which “more than 40% of responding institutions offer learning communities” (p. 98) and some type of experiential learning. Today, given the rise of academic journals, conferences, and organizations devoted to this type of pedagogy and learning, that percent is even higher. According to the National Learning Communities Directory Search, there are currently over 300 institutions that offer learning communities, and 86 of them have started learning communities within the past year. (Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education)

While these institutions have first-year learning community experiences, many institutions have created more than one type of learning community. Among the many examples, in 1998 Wagner College instituted a campus-wide plan with the focus on “learning by doing”—a curricular approach that centers on the learning-community concept and field or community-based experiential learning. Initially, this consisted of a Freshman Learning Community and as of 2001, the plan consists of three prongs: a freshman (First-Year Freshman
Learning Community), an Intermediate (Intermediate Learning Community), and a Senior Learning Community (Senior Learning Community). “LC’s are clusters of courses that are linked together by a single theme and that share a common set of students. The faculty plan their LC courses with overlapping assignments, common readings and joint problems so that courses share some common ground” (First-Year Freshman Learning Community).

There are many learning community models. However, please note that unlike reflection, service-learning and civic engagement initiatives which can be associated with merely one course and one instructor, a learning community will require a minimum of two instructors and disciplines. The construction of learning communities mainly takes on five broad forms, and the links created in these models may be created in six broad forms. Therefore, an Institution can first decide on the form of the LC and then choose the link that best meets the needs of the LC.

The five learning community structures can be summarized as follows:

1. “Co-teaching”—
   Usually one course, taught by two instructors, and cross-listed in 2 different disciplines. The students can elect to register for the course in the discipline of choice. This model is found in many institutions.

2. “Linked or cluster courses”—
   From two to four discipline courses, containing the same cohort of students, all sharing a common link/theme; Instructors coordinate their syllabi and assignments so that the classes complement each other. Examples of Institutions include: LaGuardia Community College’s Liberal Arts AA Programs, Portland State University’s cluster programs, the University of Washington’s Interdisciplinary Writing Program; Wagner College’s Intermediate and Senior Learning Communities, and Western Michigan University’s Honors College Program.

3. “Federated Learning Communities” can take three forms—
   a. Based on a common theme, two separate discipline courses containing the same cohort of students, little or no coordination of syllabi, plus a third course, usually a seminar or skills course, such as writing, or a speech course, where the two disciplines’ links are created. The third course is either co-taught, or the class is split up into two groups where each instructor teaches the link(s) between the two disciplines. Among other institutions, at
Wagner College, this is found in the Freshman Learning Communities.

b. "Freshman Interest Groups" within an academic major links three freshmen courses together around a theme with little or no coordination of syllabi. In addition, it includes a peer advising component led by a peer advisor. Examples of institutions include: St. Louis University, Sonoma State University, SUNY at Purchase, the University of Oregon, the University of Missouri, the University of Texas-Arlington, the University of Washington, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the University of Wyoming.

c. Three theme-based courses with little or no coordination of syllabi, in addition to a three-credit seminar taught by a Master Learner (i.e., a professor from a different discipline or faculty tutor) who co-enrolls in all 3 courses and in the seminar, and explores the themes from all 3 courses. Examples of Institutions include: Cabrini College, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, SUNY at Stony Brook, Thomas Nelson Community College, The Community College of Baltimore County, and the University of Texas at Brownsville.

4. “Coordinated Studies” curriculum—explores a theme or problem rather than discipline methodologies and content; includes multiple teachers from different disciplines-often co-teaching; provides for larger blocks of class time (3-4 hours) and credits (10-15 credits); uses student seminars for exploration of material; requires significant amount of writing; and develops an active collaborative teaching and learning environment. Examples of the institutions that use this type of learning community include: Edmonds Community College, e-Learning at North Seattle Community College, Evergreen State College, Green River Community College, Pacific University Oregon, Seattle Central Community College, Tacoma Community College, and University of British Columbia.

5. “Living-Learning Communities—A partial or full semester of courses with programs and facilities to support and accommodate a common interest/theme. Among many, some of the institutions that offer this program include: Miami University, Portland State University, St. Lawrence University, Texas A & M, UNC Chapel Hill, University of Arizona, the University of Denver, the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, and the