The Implementation of Service-Learning: Challenges and Prospects

Betty Cernol-McCann, Ph.D.
Vice President for Programs
United Board
Academic Service-Learning

- Service-learning articulates the Christian dimension of higher education
- Service-learning gives life to the mission “to serve others”
Academic Service-Learning: Its place in the College/University

- Provides a way to unite the three-pronged mission of the institution:
  - Teaching
  - Research
  - Public service
Service-Learning: Assumptions

- a pedagogy grounded in the belief that students learn by doing
- as a teaching strategy, it builds on experiential learning theories
- shaped by education reform principles that encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning
- inspired by the belief that the academe has a fundamental responsibility to prepare students for lives of active citizenship
Features of Service-Learning

- a teaching methodology
- utilizes a community involvement component
- a means for students to gain a deeper understanding of disciplinary course objectives
- a way to gain deeper understanding of civic life and participation
- use of structured reflection
Experiential Learning Cycle: conceptualize, experiment, reflect, revise

A critical matrix of learning and teaching

Concrete experience

Testing implications of concepts in new situation

Formation of abstract concepts and generalizations

Observations and reflections
Integrating Service-Learning Into the Curriculum

Within the framework of institutional S-L program, each S-L activity shows:

- Preparation
- Engagement or Service
- Reflection
- Reciprocity
- Public Dissemination or Celebration
Service-Learning: Approaches/Variations in Asia Pacific

- An institutional course offering, designed to introduce students to the theories and principles of SL – may be required or elective
- As a departmental program integrated into courses required for graduation (practicum, internship, national service and training, etc.)
- As a methodology in the teaching of courses
- As utilized in the conduct of special programs such as educational tours, field trips, student exchange, etc.
Application of service-learning

- AS PART OF A COURSE
- AS A ESPECIALLY-DESIGNED COURSE
  - the entire course adopts a SL approach
- AS A DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAM
  - e.g., internship program, practicum requirement; Environment and Health Awareness Programme offered to students in Zoology
- AS A DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAM IN COLLABORATION WITH AGENCIES
  - e.g., Chemistry department doing water analysis in cooperation with the City Water District; Nutrition and Dietetics Department preparing food plan for senior citizens in cooperation with the Home for the Aged
Service-Learning: Modes of delivery

- Teacher-initiated
- Staff-mediated
- Agency-driven
Commitments to S-L

- How can faculty members integrate service-learning into their subjects?
- How can service be sustained at the community level?
- How can the college/university promote service-learning?
Fig 1. Diagram to illustrate the process of institutionalizing Service-Learning in colleges/universities

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SERVICE-LEARNING

Fig 2. Inroad to institutionalization of service-learning in colleges/universities in Asia.
(Source: Conference Participants, “Service-Learning Coordination Conference,” Hong Kong Baptist University, 22-23 August 2003)
- Faculty Commitment

- Integration of S-L approach in subjects taught
- Development of modules/curriculum
- Application of appropriate learning evaluation strategies
- Monitoring efficacy of S-L in learning outcomes
- Information exchange through web page/publications, brochures, handouts
- Study visits, exchange programs with S-L providers
- Networking- local, national, international
- Conferences- local, national, international
B - Agency Partnership

- Needs assessment/analysis
- Placement procedures/requirements
- Supervision of learners
- Formal agreements - MoU
C - Institutional Commitment

- Designation of S-L officer for the college/university
- Budget allocation
- Provision of office space, support staff
- Incentives for S-L faculty
- Set up mechanism for the integration of S-L in the academic disciplines
Where is the Learning in Service-Learning?

S-L as a meaning-making learning activity
- Independent but integrated learning
- Critical thinking

S-L as a communal learning enterprise
- Community of learners
- Formation of networks
- Dissemination and publication
Learning gaps

Recall

Understanding

Ability

Wanting to

Doing

Changing
Bringing S-L to a higher level (1)

- Organize S-L around community issues or pressing problems such as those related to:
  - environment (water, forest, farms, coastal resources, pollution)
  - health (maternal and child health, epidemic)
  - interreligious understanding
  - basic education
Bringing S-L to a higher level (2)

- Compare lessons learned across communities to highlight similarities and respect differences
- Disseminate results, recognize achievements and publish outcomes to a wider audience
  - use web-based modes of communication
Bringing S-L to a higher level (3)

- Address issues of reciprocity in learning
- Evaluate SL programs and learning outcomes
  - to include ethical considerations
- Establish mechanisms for institutionalization
  - ensure program sustainability
“I am among you as one who serves.”

Luke 22:24
Sources of information


- http://www.ipsl.org
- http://www.iue.indiana.edu
- http://www.compact.org