

Building Partnership in Service Learning

SOME REFLECTIONS...

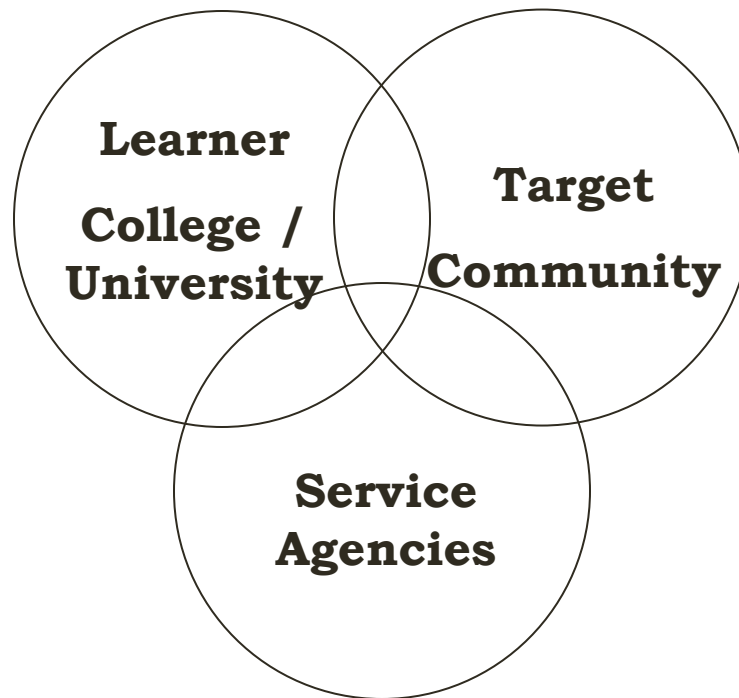
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Why Partnership?

- Partnership removes the hierarchy between the service provider and the receiver.
- Partners in any task share responsibilities
- Partners have equal share in the gains also
- Partners benefit from each other's strength & learn from each other's experience
- Partnership ensures sustainability of the program

Collaborative and co-operative effort of the **learner**, the **target group** and the **service agencies** results in a **synergic effect** enhancing the benefits for all the three.

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S-L Approaches

S-L Programs can be...

- Course related
- Discipline related (Departmental)
- Interdisciplinary
- Institutional
- Multi institutional
- International & Intercultural

Course related

- Major players-Course teacher, Students & Community
 - Course Teacher and students carry out need assessment of the identified the community
 - Course Teacher, Students and community supervisors design suitable activities
 - Course Teacher evaluates students' performance and learning along with the community partners
- Facilitators-College Administration & Agencies

Discipline related

- Major players-2 or more faculty members
- Coordination at Departmental level by HOD or a deputed faculty
- A separate course on S-L encompassing selected topics/ areas of a particular discipline

Eg.

- Communicable Diseases-prevention & care
- Promotion of Environment and Health Awareness

Interdisciplinary S-L Program

- Involves partnership among member departments
- Requires coordination to facilitate smooth & effective conduct of S-L activity
- Single target community - issues dealt from different perspective

Eg: 1. Pollution of drinking water in a community

2. Water pollution of a nearby river (Chemistry, Life Sciences & Economics Depts)

3. Personal & environmental Health status of a local community (Sociology, Life Sciences, Physics & Chemistry Depts)

Institutional S-L program

- Integrated approach to engage with a target community
- Each dept allots a few students to study & serve from their own discipline perspective
- An institutional coordinator-to steer the S-L project is required
- May involve agencies to collaborate
- Concrete achievements-possible
- Address community issues holistically

Multi Institutional (within country)

- Partnership among many institutions in a region to address a major issue - Tsunami, floods or outbreak of some infectious diseases (Dengue, Swine flu)
- Effectiveness – concerted and quick action possible
- Visible achievements
- One Institution to take the lead and coordinate the interested partners

International & Intercultural S-L

Model A- Students exchange for S-L between two institutions from different countries on mutually agreed basis

Model B- Students drawn from different countries hosted by a single institution-S-L activity common for the entire group (SLAN model)

Model C- Host institution organizing S-L activity for international students from another institution (not multi cultural)

What does it involve?

- Institutionalized S-L- all disciplines to practice S-L
- A separate S-L office to coordinate S-L programs with full time staff
- A separate office to cater to international students-travel food, accommodation & program arrangements
- Orientation for the students before the placement - program schedule, safety measures, expectations, (do's and don'ts), functional terms in local language, reflection questionnaire etc
- Agencies who are reliable & long term partners of the institution to be involved as collaborators
- Accommodation on campus to host international students and catering services
- Transport facilities for regular community visits

Issues & Challenges

- How to integrate with the existing programs of departments/ institutional activities?
- How to make it mutually beneficial & not a burden or extra work to host institution?
- Ways to be worked out to get the students of host institution join the international group for effective learning & partnership

Other challenges...

- Extra work and time constraints
- Extra effort to integrate with regular college activities- including in the calendar
- Additional responsibility to take care of international students-safety, language and health issues
- Mobilizing the travel grants & other needed financial resources particularly to sponsor meritorious students
- Finding amicable partner agencies to work with
- Identifying & building partnership with like-minded overseas institutions

Suggestions

- Involve few students from host institutions exempting them from regular classes on compensation basis & extra credits/ recognition
- Plan common after-class activity-possibly with resident students
- Careful selection of participants especially for the international program
- Prior preparation by the participants enhances the involvement in the program – they can come prepared with materials for the activities like singing, action songs, painting, hand works, drawing, colouring, nail colouring, etc...
- Visiting the proposed Service agencies for the S-L activities will help the participants to come mentally prepared so that they learn that language is not a barrier and the universal language is 'LOVE'.
- Home visits to be organised- to know local culture and family values
- Arrange for cultural, sports activities for host & guest students
- Periodic Reflection sessions to enhance learning

Building partnership requires

- Institutional vision & mission to align with S-L goals
- A leader with a vision and commitment for S-L
- Initiative on the part of the leader to invite / visit prospective partner institutions and negotiate
- Cooperation and support of management and faculty
- Mobilizing funds and making budgetary provisions
- Liaison with Agencies and negotiate terms & conditions-mutually beneficial

Gains ...

- Accomplishment of the 'Vision' and the 'mission' of the partner Institutions
- Internationalization of campus & curriculum preparing students for global citizenship
- Multicultural symbiosis-understanding & appreciation of other cultures & broadening their views to get a global perspective

A sample of S-L sites

(International Service-Learning Program)

- Children's homes
- Schools for special children
- Home for the senior citizens
- Day Care centers for the mentally challenged
- Rehabilitation centers

To Conclude...

partnership in S-L makes it truly

- Participatory & collaborative
- Experiential & transformative
- Holistic –scope for higher level learning
- Beneficial to all partners



May our partnership in S-L light the world

Thank You