Matching Theory and Practice in International Service-Learning (ISL)

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Earl F. Mulderink III, Ph.D.
Director of Community Engagement Center

and

Rita Osborn
Director, Rural Health Scholars Program
Southern Utah University
Cedar City, UT USA
• Rural setting in Cedar City, Utah, USA
• Public liberal arts and sciences university of 8,000 students
• 2010 Carnegie Community Engaged Institution
• Four successive years to President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll (with Distinction)
• 141,000 hours of student service & service-learning
Earl Mulderink, Director of the Community Engagement Center, recognizes Rita Osborn as SUU’s 2013 Civically Engaged Staff Member.
Coordinating Programs

The Community Engagement Center (co)sponsors domestic and international service-learning opportunities with SUU’s Global Engagement Center and others such as the Rural Health Scholars Program.
Service-Learning at SUU

“Service-learning is a teaching method that utilizes student involvement in community service to meet instructional objectives of a course. Students apply information from a class to authentic settings while addressing real needs in the community. In addition to relating theory to practice, this service enhances their sense of citizenry in a democratic society. Furthermore, service-learning supports and fulfills SUU’s institutional mission, vision, and core values.”

- SUU’s Faculty Service-Learning Committee, 2002
- SL&CE web site: http://www.suu.edu/serve&learn/
About You

• Introductions, please
  – Who, what, where, why?
  – Interested in theory, practice, both?
  – Other aims and ambitions?

• We’re glad you are here!
Why Promote Service-Learning?

• Students engage in active and deeper learning that demonstrates the relevance of academic work for their life and career choices.

• Students develop broader perspectives of diversity issues, enhance critical thinking skills, and improve interpersonal skills.

• Students gain civic responsibility and awareness of current social issues.

• Fulfill institutional mission, vision, values (e.g. Carnegie Community Engaged Institution)
The Best Service-Learning Programs

• Are tied directly to the academic curriculum
• Meet a real community need
• Provide for structured group reflection time
• Engage students in group decision making and problem solving
• Find ways to match the skills and talents of students with community needs and partners
• Provide a wide variety of options for students
• Provide recognition for services rendered
Essential Elements of Service-Learning

• **Reciprocity**: Both the student and the community must find the service-learning to be worthwhile.

• **Reflection**: Intentional, systematic, and structured reflection about the experience is necessary.

• **Development**: Effective service-learning takes time through stages of planning and growth.

• **Meaningful Service**: Service must be instructive and challenging to strengthen critical thinking.

• **Diversity**: A priority may be placed on working in diverse settings and with a diverse population.
How Do We Fulfill Essential Elements of (International) Service-Learning?

• What are the greatest challenges in each area?
  • Reciprocity
  • Reflection
  • Development
  • Meaningful Service
  • Diversity
  • Other Elements
EDGE and RHS Promote ISL

Univ 1010 and Univ 3925

EE Experience

Univ 4925

Major, minor, & career

(From Kolb’s Model and Uptown 2010)

Experiential Education Provides an EDGE for Students

Education Designed to Give Experience

EDGE Program Mission & Vision

The experiential education EDGE Program (Education Designed to Give Experience) is a student-centered process that is relevant, authentic, and potentially transformative. Experiential learning enhances personal, academic, and professional growth by promoting opportunities for engaged and active learning.

Those deliberate learning opportunities will be facilitated through Southern Utah University’s Engagement Centers:

- Community Engagement Center
- Creativity Center
- Harry Reid Center for Outdoor Engagement
- Leadership Engagement Center
- Sargen Heinrich Global Engagement Center

Learning Outcomes

The EDGE requirement provides academic fidelity to the Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) “Essential Learning Outcomes,” as articulated by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Many students completing the Experiential Education requirement will engage with human cultures and/or the physical and natural world. All students should demonstrate:

- Personal and social responsibility
- Integrative and applied learning

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The “Experiential Weave”

SUU Experiential Learning Requirement

Tracks: Credit-Bearing General Studies Graduation Requirement

Emphases: Credit-Bearing Experiences

Undergraduate Research
  Or
Academic Service Learning
  Or
Internships
  Or
Individualized Learning

Tracks:
- Center for Civic Engagement
- Center for International Studies
- Center for Leadership Engagement
- Center for Outdoor Engagement
- Center for Creativity and Innovation

Transcript or Diploma Recognition

SUU Southern Utah University
Learning Lives Forever
Experiential Education Learning Cycle @ SUU

(From Kolb’s Model and Uptown 2010)
What is ISL?

“A structured academic experience in another country in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that addresses identified community needs; (b) learn from direct interaction and cross-cultural dialogue with others; and (c) reflect on the experience in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a deeper understanding of global and intercultural issues, a broader appreciation of the host country and the discipline, and an enhanced sense of their own responsibilities as citizens, locally and globally.”

-- Bringle & Hatcher (2011)
AAC&U’s LEAP Program Supports ISL

ISL provides academic fidelity to the Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) “Essential Learning Outcomes” as articulated by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).

Students completing an ISL program should gain:

– Focused engagement with human cultures and the physical and natural world
– Practiced intellectual and physical skills
– Anchored personal and social responsibility
– Demonstrated integrative and applied learning
– Other learning outcomes???
SUU Has Taken the AAC&U LEAP

Liberal Education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g. science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.

The Essential Learning Outcomes

- Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World
  - Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts
  - Focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

- Intellectual and Practical Skills, including
  - Inquiry and analysis
  - Critical and creative thinking
  - Written and oral communication
  - Quantitative literacy
  - Information literacy
  - Teamwork and problem solving
  - Practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance

- Personal and Social Responsibility, including
  - Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
  - Intercultural knowledge and competence
  - Ethical reasoning and action
  - Foundations and skills for lifelong learning
  - Anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges

- Integrative and Applied Learning, including
  - Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies
  - Demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems
ISL & High-Impact Practices (AAC&U)

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects
AAC&U’s Shared Futures Holds Much Promise for Institutional and International Initiatives
AAC&U’s “Shared Futures”

Global Learning and Social Responsibility

– AAC&U’s initiative places questions of diversity, identity, citizenship, and responsible action at the heart of global learning. Students challenged to explore the relational nature of their identities -- identities that are variously shaped by the currents of power and privilege, both within a multicultural U.S. democracy and within an interconnected and unequal world.

– “What does it mean to be a citizen in the evolving global context?” and “How should one act in the face of large unsolved global problems?”
SUU’s Practices & Programs

• Summer Study Programs (History & ISL)
  – Kenya, 2010
  – Ghana, 2012

• RHS Programs (Alternative Breaks)
  – Mexico, until 2010
  – Dominican Republic, 2011-Present
  – Nicaragua, 2011; Panama, 2011
  – Domestic trips (Four Corners – Navajo Reservation; Las Vegas – Homeless Shelters)
History and Service-Learning in Kenya

- 3 upper-level history and 1 SL credit
- Partnered with *Africa Is Life-Changing*
- Nairobi and Naivasha, Kenya, for 2+ weeks, 2010
- Academic and service components combined
- Students’ reflections and “learning”
  - “Our trip to Kenya truly changed me as a person as well as all of my outlooks on life. Before this trip I had never really seen true poverty. . . . This trip completely changed my life and I wish that everyone in the United States got the opportunity to experience what we did because I think as a whole it would make our country a much better place.”
RHS Panama 2012
ISL can help students to:

- Gain a deeper, comparative knowledge of world’s peoples and problems
- Explore historical legacies, dynamics, and tensions
- Recognize own identities shaped by power and privilege
- Develop intercultural competencies & perspectives
- Sustain conversations despite differences
- Understand democratic practices within a global context
- Engage in practical work with fundamental issues that affect communities not yet well served by their societies
- Believe their actions and ideas will influence their world
RHS Practices

• Creating effective partnerships
• Pre-departure seminars
• Health & safety
• Assessment and reflection
• Skill(s) development
• Cultural immersion
• Social media, multimedia, & print resources
• Public relations & marketing
Other Resources

- [http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/sps_ebooks](http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/sps_ebooks)
- Other suggestions?
More Discussion Points

• ISL should address all learning dimensions (adapted from Roxanne Amerson, Clemson University)
  – Cognitive (readings, lectures, discussions
  – Practical (role-playing, language skills, interview informants, cultural assessments)
  – Affective (jounaling, discussion, debriefing and other forms of reflection)

• Do it all through integration of service, social, cultural, academic, and personal interactions!
A 21st Century liberal education must provide students with the knowledge and commitment to be socially responsible citizens in a diverse democracy and increasingly interconnected world. Colleges and universities committed to liberal education have important civic responsibilities to their communities, their nation, and the larger world. Global learning -- including ISL -- is the pathway through which students become better prepared to fulfill these responsibilities.

-- AAC&U
Selected References

Association of American Colleges and Universities & Global Learning:  
http://www.aacu.org/

Building a Better World:  http://criticalservicelearning.org/


http://www.nsee.org/.