
CETL Professional Development Session: Best Practices in Service Learning
December 7, 2017

Key Takeaways:

Heather Schilling: First Year Seminar

- *Step back, and let students take ownership of the project*
 - Students propose the focus of the project and select as a class
 - Large group planning identifies key committees required for successful project
 - Select 2 project managers
 - Create committees based on large group planning
 - Committees select chairs

- *Create a foundation for success*
 - Incorporate planning time into course
 - Open lines of communication
 - Help students see larger picture to the project; when the project benefits the greater good, students are more engaged

- *Empower students*
 - Provide opportunities for students to interact with people outside the class
 - Celebrate successes
 - Brainstorm as group (or small groups) solutions to roadblocks
 - Talk about your own experiences with projects and interacting with others
 - Push them to see their potential

- *Thoughts on grading:* I have never graded students' work on these projects. I have incorporated them into courses as a way to model collaboration and to provide opportunities for students to see how they can contribute to something larger than themselves. Grading their participation or the quality of their work doesn't seem authentic; throughout adulthood, we participate in a variety of collaborative activities for which we never receive a grade or compensation. 😊

Tim McKenna-Buchanan: Advanced Public Relations

- Students may need some encouragement (don't allow students the easy way out); challenge them to think outside the box.
- Adapt the service learning to what will be most beneficial for your classroom (it could be one small assignment or a semester-long project; do what works best for each class).
- Reinforce your course objectives by utilizing service learning.
- Allow several opportunities for reflection, address challenges and failures as learning opportunities, do not give up.

Ahmed Abdelmageed: Medical Management of Vulnerable and Underserved Patients

- *Engaging the students with community partners*
 - Materialized the theoretical concepts for them
 - Allowed them to see the whole person, not just the "disease"
 - Open discussions, and a judgment free zone, allowed the students the opportunity to explore their own subconscious biases
 - The faculty learned just as much

- *Challenges*
 - Time outside of the classroom
 - Exploring one's own biases
 - Projects and level of student interest

Jeff Osbourne: Medical Practicum

- *Service-learning experiences in the course benefit students in a variety of ways:*
 - Emphasizing the accompaniment of the Nicaraguan health care providers and villagers in the health care work cultivates partnership with community partners.
 - An emphasis on cultural humility enables students to identify incorrect assumptions and biases.
 - The loose structure of service tasks within the trip allows students to choose their focus, improving motivation to learn and developing leadership skills.
 - The nature of traveling and working together on difficult tasks builds stronger faculty-student relationships.
 - Participating in pre-trip sessions, implementing the logistics of group living, and of running the clinic helps students develop teamwork skills.
 - Interacting with patients of all ages with a great variety of health needs while serving the host communities builds connections between the students and the communities.
 - Assisting doctors, dentists and pharmacists in providing health care builds on previous coursework to synthesize connections between prior, foundational knowledge and new applications.
 - Living for a few weeks without the luxuries often considered necessities while becoming immersed in the culture of a developing country builds durability in students, making subsequent international travel easier.
 - Being a minority, an outsider, and feel the frustration of insufficient language ability builds cultural humility and global perspective.
 - Speaking in each evening meeting and guided, daily journaling helps students discuss their experiences meaningfully.
 - After returning, the reflective essay and presentation force students to analyze the trip and articulate its implications for their future.