EUROPE ENGAGE

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH SERVICE-LEARNING

WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE

Assestment tools for the design, implementation and evaluation of results of Service-Learning activities

2017

CONTENT

Evaluating and Ensuring Quality in Service Learning Projects

In addition to measuring the learning of students, lecturers running service learning projects also need to ensure their module and the service experiences meet certain quality standards.

Among the tools already in use by our partners we found the one below particularly useful. Used by a university in Croatia and developed by the Youth Service in California it provides a checklist of questions for tutors to grade their own projects. Students can also be involved in this activity by providing their feedback on how the module went and their experience of it. This has been reproduced in full but may also need to be adapted to fit the local context.

Service-Learning Dipsticks - A Project Assessment Tool

Teachers who are developing or implementing a service-learning project often ask, "How do I know if this project is an effective one? What makes for high quality service projects?" In response to these questions, a group of experienced service learning practitioners helped the Service Learning 2000

Center staff develop the Service-Learning Dipsticks as a quick and easy way to assess service- learning project ideas and actual existing projects.

In their work with thousands of teachers over the years, the Service Learning 2000 Center staff has found that successful service-learning programs have seven elements in common: integrated learning, high quality service, effective collaboration, ongoing student voice, promotion of civic responsibility, multiple opportunities for reflection, and intentional evaluation. The dipsticks elaborate on each of these seven elements, and ask you to make judgments about your own service-learning project.

When you follow the dipstick process, you will end up with a visual picture of the strengths of your service-learning project and the areas that might benefit from more attention. The final picture is meant to be only a rough measure. If you choose to make changes in your project, go slowly. The best service-learning projects grow and develop over a number of years.

We hope you find this tool helpful in developing high quality service-learning. If you have suggestions for improving it, please let us know.

Components of
Integrated Learning

_____

Place check marks next to each of the components of Integrated Learning according to the following scale:

2 checks: the component is strong in this service-learning project

1 check: the component is present but weak in this service-learning project

0 checks: the component is missing in this service-learning project

_____The service-learning project has clearly articulated knowledge, skill or value goals.

_____The knowledge, skill or value goals arise from broader classroom and school goals.

_____The service informs the academic learning content.

_____The academic learning content informs the service.

_____Life skills learned outside the classroom are integrated back into classroom learning.

_____**Total number of check marks.**

Enter this number in the Integrated Learning box at the bottom of the last page.

Components of
High Quality Service

_____

Place check marks next to each of the components of High Quality Service according to the following scale:

2 checks: the component is strong in this service-learning project

1 check: the component is present but weak in this service-learning project

0 checks: the component is missing in this service-learning project

_____   The service responds to an actual community need.

_____   The need is recognized by the community impacted by the service.

_____   The service is age-appropriate.

_____   The service is well-organized.

_____   The service is designed to achieve significant benefits for students and community.

_____   **Total number of check marks.**

Enter this number in the <u>High Quality Service</u> box at the bottom of the last page.

Components of

Collaboration

Place check marks next to each of the components of Collaboration according to the following scale:

2 checks: the component is strong in this service-learning project
1 check: the component is present but weak in this service-learning project
0 checks: the component is missing in this service-learning project

_____ The service-learning project is a collaboration among as many of these partners
       as is feasible: students, parents, community-based organizations,
       businesses, school administrators, teachers, and the people on whose behalf the
       service is done.

_____ All partners are involved in the planning of the service-learning project.

_____ All partners contribute to the service-learning project.

_____ All partners benefit from the service-learning project.

_____ Roles and expectations of each partner are clearly defined.

_____ **Total number of check marks.**

Enter this number in the <u>Collaboration</u> box at the bottom of the last page.

Components of
Student Voice

_____

Place check marks next to each of the components of Student Voice according to the following scale:

2 checks: the component is strong in this service-learning project

1 check: the component is present but weak in this service-learning project

0 checks: the component is missing in this service-learning project

_____ Students engage in a process that leads them to define "community" and "need."

_____ Students are involved in choosing and planning the service project.

_____ Students participate actively in the collaboration among the project's partners.

_____ Students are involved in planning the reflection sessions, evaluation, and
            celebration.

_____ Student voice is age-appropriate.

_____ **Total number of check marks.**

Enter this number in the <u>Youth Voice</u> box at the bottom of the last page.

Components of
Civic Responsibility

_____

Place check marks next to each of the components of Civic Responsibility according to the following scale:

2 checks: the component is strong in this service-learning project

1 check: the component is present but weak in this service-learning project

0 checks: the component is missing in this service-learning project

_____ The service-learning project promotes young people's responsibility to care for others and to contribute to the community.

_____ The service-learning project helps students understand the historical and community context of their actions.

_____ By participating in the service-learning project, students understand how they can impact their community.

_____ Students use critical thinking skills to analyze their project and the related issues.

_____ The service-learning project provides opportunities for students to connect with adult role models.

_____ **Total number of check marks.**

Enter this number in the <u>Civic Responsibility</u> box at the bottom of the last page.

Components of
Reflection

_____

Place check marks next to each of the components of Reflection according to the following scale:

2 checks: the component is strong in this service-learning project

1 check: the component is present but weak in this service-learning project

0 checks: the component is missing in this service-learning project

_____   Reflection occurs before, during, and after the service-learning project.

_____   Reflection activities utilize multiple techniques so all students can successfully reflect.

_____   Reflection examines the results, processes and relationships in the service-
          learning project.

_____   Reflective activities help participants consider the social and ethical dimensions
          of their experience.

_____   Reflection establishes connections between students' service experiences and the
          academic curriculum.

_____   **Total number of check marks.**

Enter this number in the <u>Reflection</u> box at the bottom of the last page.

Components of
Evaluation

_____

Place check marks next to each of the components of the Evaluation according to following scale:

2 checks: the component is strong in this service-learning project

1 check: the component is present but weak in this service-learning project

0 checks: the component is missing in this service-learning project

_____ The evaluation has a clear purpose and target audience.

_____ All the partners, especially students, are involved in evaluating the service-learning project.

_____ The evaluation seeks to measure progress towards the learning and service goals of the service-learning project.

_____ The evaluation uses tools that respect the diversity of learning styles.

_____ The evaluation is planned before the project happens, rather than afterward.

_____ **Total number of check marks.**

Enter this number in the Evaluation box on the bottom of the last page.

Service-Learning Dipsticks

When you have transferred the numbers from the previous pages to the boxes below each dipstick, use a pencil, pen, or marker to fill in each dipstick up to the corresponding level. The result will give you a visual picture of the strengths of the service-learning project as well as the areas that might benefit from more attention.

Project Name: _____ Your Name:

Integrated Learning	High Quality Service Evaluation	Collaboration	Student Voice	Civic Responsibility	Reflection	

Tasks designed assess transversal competencies within Service Learning projects

A key element of Service learning projects is the development in students of transversal competencies, or the human skills of working with diverse groups of people in practical and impactful ways. These are often measured through a series of reflective writing tasks requiring students to reflect on what they have gained from their projects and how these have impacted on their values and their futures.

Task 1: The Reflective Portfolio

The first task comprises completion of a portfolio designed to get students to focus on their values and reflect on their learning in these areas. The format, a series of questions with a specific word count limit for the answer, mirrors the requirements of an application form or a research or funding proposal, where writing critically and reflectively, within a tight word limit, is an important element.

We have provided an example of this below but are aware that partners will need to adapt these to fit their own local contexts and may communicate and gain feedback from partners on student performance in different ways. Some institutions will wish to do their own followup, but in situations where there are large numbers of students this may be possible. Here it is suggested that students summarize their learning (on the final page of the portfolio) and ask partners to comment on this. Students can then take responsibility for collecting these comments and returning them to their module tutor.

Task 2: Assessed Presentation to Peers

The second task requires students to develop a prezi or visual and give a presentation about their experience, designed to reflect some of the 'real world' requirements of community based activism or civil society work. Instructions for students are provided below.

'Design a Prezi or visual to accompany a 15 minute presentation to your peers reflecting on your own values in relation to your project, the way it has impacted on these and how it might affect what you aspire to do in the future. Use creativity to try to inspire others to take an issue you care about more seriously.'

1. **The Reflective Portfolio**

Below are a list of transversal competencies designed for use in Service Learning,

Ability to organize and plan
Problem solving
Decision making
Team work and work in interdisciplinary teams
Ability to work in different cultural contexts
Interpersonal relationships
Adaptation to new situations
Creativity
Leadership
Knowledge of other cultures and customs
Initiative and entrepreneurship
Social Motivation
Sensitivity to environmental issues
Critical thinking and the ability to be reflexive and self critical.

The questions below have been designed to assess your progress in developing these. Please answer them as thoughtfully as you can, keeping within the word count recommended.

1. Critically analyse the nature of the organisation or group you were working with, making reference to their mission statement, funding mechanism and governance structure and how far these reflect the kind of organisation in which you would like to work in the future (maximum 500 words)

2. Outline the motivations behind your choice of project. (150 words)

3. Give evidence of incidents when you were able to work in a team with people from similar and different disciplinary backgrounds. Identify an incident when you were able to bring different skills together to solve a problem (250 words)

4. Reflect on a situation in which you were able to provide leadership and make decisions, what has this taught you about your ability to do this? (200 words)

5. Assess your ability to deal with people who are very different from yourself, using different communication methods or confronting different ways of being.(250 words)

6. Identify ways in which you have been able to adapt to new or unexpected situations, showing how far you are able to cope with change (200 words)

7. Identify ways in which environmental issues are a factor within your project. Have you been able to make any small changes in the way that your partner takes account of environmental impact? (150 words)

Summarsing your learning and gaining feedback from your community partner

Write a short evaluation your own learning from this project (150 words)

Ask a person in a position of responsibility within the organisation or group in which you worked to comment on your statement in the space below.

Signed:……………………………………………………………………………………………..*Student*

Signed: …………………………………………………………………………………………*Community Partner*