

## Chapter 3

### Planning, Developing, and Implementing Service-Learning Projects

“Service-learning is a topic that all teachers, current and future, must learn about to better serve the needs of students, their families, and the communities in which we all live.”

—Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

This chapter provides major steps and procedures to implement the ideas of service-learning into meaningful practice.

#### Exploring Service-Learning Ideas

The idea of service seems to be ingrained in our general understanding of what it means to be a fully actualized individual, a good citizen, a responsible person, a highly qualified teacher, or a devoted social worker. The list can go on, but the reason for service remains the same: we find an ultimate purpose of our existence in general and what we do in particular in serving others.

Service-learning is an extension of the idea of service for many individuals, including those of us who are on the NLU Service-Learning Team (SLT). Inspired by the notion of serving others, we intend to inspire others—our students and colleagues, and to encourage them to pursue meaningful SL projects. It is difficult to imagine how ideas for SL projects can be generated successfully by those who do not find the philosophy and pedagogy of SL meaningful and useful. We do not have secret formulas for success in creating and implementing successful SL projects. We do that out of our own inspiration and dedication. We share the ideas with each other and bring them later to our classrooms.

We volunteer our time to explore the communities where we live and to reach out to schools, agencies, and organizations situated in those areas to explore the ideas and to find placements for prospective SL projects. Over the past few years, our SLT has created a database of contact information for our students to pursue SL projects as optional or mandatory assignments for their course work. With each course, the database is being expanded due to the efforts of our students who, once on the quest for SL, do their own search in the communities they live and work. Students are offered to choose out of the suggested list of placements or find their own. This freedom of choice provides an ample opportunity for them to pursue meaningful to them projects and to expand tremendously the opportunities for others.

Below is the list of several placements for conducting SL projects generated as a result of volunteer efforts on the part of NLU students and instructors:

**Fermilab, Teacher Resource Center Program**

PO Box 500, MS 777

Batavia, IL 60510

(630) 840-3094

**Susan Dahl**, Program leader

[sdahl@fnal.gov](mailto:sdahl@fnal.gov)

[www.wr.org](http://www.wr.org)

**Project C.A.R.E. Plus**

**Nancy Ruet**, Coordinator

Bensenville School Dist. 2

(630) 766-2602 ext. 6102

**DuPage Children's Museum**

301 N Washington St

Naperville, IL 60540

(630) 637-8000 (Ext. 4680)

**Diane Ernst**, Volunteer coordinator

[dernst@dupagechildrensmuseum.org](mailto:dernst@dupagechildrensmuseum.org)

[www.dupagechildrensmuseum.org](http://www.dupagechildrensmuseum.org)

**McCormick Freedom Museum**

435 N Michigan Ave

Chicago, IL 60611

[www.FreedomMuseum.US](http://www.FreedomMuseum.US)

**Cantigny First Division Foundation**

1 S 151 Winfield Rd

Wheaton, IL 60187

[MNewmann@FirstDivisionMuseum.org](mailto:MNewmann@FirstDivisionMuseum.org)

[www.firstdivisionmuseum.org](http://www.firstdivisionmuseum.org)

Jennifer Benton, Museum guide & tours

**Kohl's Children Museum**

2100 Patriot Blvd

Glenview, IL 60026

(847) 832-6600

[www.kohlchildrensmuseum.org](http://www.kohlchildrensmuseum.org)

**S.C.A.R.C.E.**

**(School & Community Assistance for Recycling & Composting Education)**

799 Roosevelt Rd, Building 2, STE108

Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

(630) 545-9710

[ecoed@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ecoed@sbcglobal.net)

**Refugee Center/World Relief Organization**

DuPage County Office

1825 College Ave

Wheaton, IL 60187

**Anitra Shaw**, Volunteer Coordinator

(630) 462-7566, x64

[ashaw@wr.org](mailto:ashaw@wr.org)



NLU SL website provides a list of additional SL web resources:

[www.compact.org](http://www.compact.org)

Campus Compact supports the practice of service-learning in higher education. Get resources, including syllabi from service-learning courses in various disciplines and information on how to apply for grants and funding.

<http://www.cns.gov/>

The Corporation for National and Community Service is the nation's largest grantmaker supporting service and volunteering. Through their programs, they provide opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to express their patriotism while addressing critical community needs.

[www.ipsl.org](http://www.ipsl.org)

The International Partnership for Service Learning offers programs for students to study abroad and perform community service in an international setting.

[www.learnandserve.gov](http://www.learnandserve.gov)

Learn and Serve America is a national service grant program that funds service-learning programs in the United States. Learn about the projects they support and how to apply for a grant

[learningindeed.org](http://learningindeed.org)

Learning in Deed is a national initiative started by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to increase student involvement in service-learning.

[www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org)

The National Service Learning Clearinghouse gathers and disseminates information on service-learning. Resources include self-assessment for service-learning and recent dissertations on service and service-learning.

[www.edb.utexas.edu/servicelearning/index.html](http://www.edb.utexas.edu/servicelearning/index.html)

Learn, Serve, and Surf is an Internet resource kit for service-learning practitioners. It includes links to sites that will assist in the establishment and teaching of successful service-learning courses.

[www-gse.berkeley.edu/RESEARCH/SLC](http://www-gse.berkeley.edu/RESEARCH/SLC)

The University of California Berkeley Service-Learning Research and Development Center has many resources about the University's well-established service-learning program as well as tools for creating and assessing your own program.

[www.servicelearningpartnership.org](http://www.servicelearningpartnership.org)

The Service Learning Partnership is a national network of members dedicated to advancing service-learning as a core part of every young person's education. This site contains service learning tools, resources, best practices, and a national network of service learning supporters.

## **Developing Service-Learning Projects**

The development of successful SL projects requires inspiration and willingness of participants, modeling, continual monitoring, and hard work. It is very important to clearly articulate the purposes and goals of the course, its relevance to the project, responsibilities of all participants, and expected outcomes and the meaning of the project. It is suggested that instructors have extensive discussions with students on the nature and purposes of SL, its meaning, history, philosophy, and conceptual frameworks before students consider the topics for their projects.

The most effective way to introduce SL is to ask students about their service experiences and make connections to their knowledge of experiential, contextual, and situated learning theories. Such discussions will provide the background definitions and understanding of SL and clarify major differences between community service and other related concepts with SL.

When embedding SL component in the course, it is important for instructors to ask the following questions:

- What knowledge would you like students to gain when taking your course?
- What skills are important to their mastery of the material?
- What opinions and attitudes would you like them to form while taking your course?

The following is an example of how SL can be embedded into the course goals and requirements:

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### **Social & Cultural Politics of Education: Personal & Contextual Perspectives**

#### **Course description & purposes**

In this course, students will examine current social, cultural, political, and economic factors that affect American education and schooling. These factors will be examined in relation to students' personal, professional and social identities, beliefs, and experiences.

The intent is for educators to understand the socio-political, historical, philosophical and cultural contexts of their practice and their abilities and responsibilities that help shape those contexts. Students will engage in ongoing discussion of and reflection on the moral and ethical responsibilities of educators who also will construct and implement a plan of action that reflects a commitment to democratic schools and social justice.

This course includes *experiential site-based learning projects* that require 15 hours spent outside the classroom.

#### **Note on Experiential and Service-Learning**

This course offers unique opportunities for students to learn from direct experience that links academics with the world at large. Experiential learning allows students to construct their own knowledge of themselves, the school environment, and various socio-cultural and political contexts.

Service-learning (SL) is part of experiential learning, but differs from it in that it requires direct engagement of students in the work of specific agencies, organizations, or after-school programs. SL includes volunteering time and making commitment to the recipients of service. SL promotes active learning and fosters a sense of civic responsibility. SL promotes the value of diversity, strengthens critical thinking, interpersonal and communication skills, and promotes students' personal and social growth and leadership development.

In this course, students will choose among various experiential or/ and service-learning projects. An instructor will guide the students throughout the process of choosing, implementing, and completing their projects.

### ***Experiential & Service-Learning Expected Students' Outcomes***

- Students will become knowledgeable of the partner agency
- Students will be able to articulate how they integrate their academic experience with the analytical and practical skills to formulate a solution to a real-life problem
- Students will be able to articulate how their community-based learning experience relates to their careers
- Students will acquire a better awareness of civic responsibility
- Students will reflect on the course experiences and relate them to their cumulative learning experiences at NLU

### ***Description of class assignments and evaluation***

Experiential/ Service-Learning project portfolio: up to 50 points

- Description of the project: up to 20 points
- Reflections: up to 20 points
- Class presentation: up to 10 points

During the first two or three weeks, you will read and discuss articles on experiential and SL, and you will be considering the choices for your project. Think about what makes you feel really passionate about to accomplish. Consider time, your circumstances and capacities realistically. Although we cannot change the world, we *can* make a difference in people's lives in our local communities. You will be offered a list of options for your prospective projects. You may as well choose your own. Look around: Is there an interesting after-school program in your neighborhood school? An autism center? A museum? Are you interested in politics or in arts? Start with yourself and choose what *you* would like to pursue in this project.

After choosing the topic, create a plan, make initial contact with a school or organization, keep the log of your hours and activities and the journal of your reflections. It is important to be organized and to follow these steps systematically. An instructor will provide guidance and direction throughout the process. Ask questions and share the progress of your project with your classmates.

Typical steps and procedures of the project include:

- creating tentative plan for services and activities
  - keeping record of your time and activities, and taking reflective notes
  - finding connections between your chosen topic/ project and class readings and discussions
  - collecting materials and artifacts that can be included in the project's description (e.g., brochure from the agency, pictures, paper clips)
  - putting together the description of your project
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The following steps are usually recommended to develop, facilitate, and implement SL projects:

- Assessment of community needs
- Project development
- Project implementation
- Reflection
- Evaluation
- Celebration and recognition

SL is a reciprocal process. Initially, all participants should clearly identify their needs. Samples of contact letters and other documents related to a planning and development stage are provided in the appendices of the manual.

Once the assessment of the needs is completed, instructors monitor individual projects by focusing students' attention on the issues relevant to the course content. The following questions may assist students to develop a plan for the project implementation:

- What academic knowledge and skills could be included in SL project?
- What values will the project emphasize?
- How much time the project will take?
- How can we obtain permission from the school principal to involve participants in the project?

An example of SL project-in-progress report below demonstrates a detailed description of the project, tentative plan, participants, timeline, and important connections of the project with the course content.

### **Sample of Project-in-Progress Report**

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#### **Description of Project**

My project is a service learning project focused on a fundraising walk to support children with diabetes and their families. The walk is sponsored by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF), an organization that helps raise money to fund research for juvenile diabetes. "The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International is the leading charitable funder and advocate of type 1 (juvenile) diabetes research worldwide. The mission of JDRF is to find a cure for diabetes and its complications through the support of research." ([www.jdrf.org](http://www.jdrf.org), 2007). JDRF welcomes children with diabetes, their family members, and other community members to promote public awareness of diabetes by participating in walks and other fundraising activities. The three mile walk will take place on Sunday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007 in Lisle, Illinois.

I chose to participate in this walk because a good friend of mine, 12 year old Josie, was recently diagnosed with juvenile onset diabetes. Her family formed a team that will participate in the JDRF walk and I wanted to be a part of their team in order to support them.

### **Connecting Philosophies with Action**

In my project I will focus on the idea that children with diabetes should be empowered self-advocates for their health, happiness, and future. In my project I will explain how my friend Josie, upon diagnosis and involvement with JDRF, decided to take positive steps towards self-empowerment and advocacy. In one of these positive steps, Josie decided to involve members of her school community. My project will focus on Josie's actions within her middle school community and how her actions within her classroom relate to some ideas and perspectives found in progressive education. Josie has played an active role in getting her school community involved to support the JDRF walk on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007. She has begun a dialogue with her teacher and classmates as a way of creating awareness of her juvenile-onset (type 1) diabetes. Josie has taken a stand on a topic that she believes in and has begun to actively involve herself in the community in order to support her cause. I think this is a strong example of a young individual exercising her rights for social justice. I will also discuss school community member response to Josie's actions and involvement with JDRF.

### **Connections with academic sources**

<http://www.jdrf.org> (Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, JDRF)

[http://www.jdrf.org/files/General\\_Files/Life\\_with\\_Diabetes/lifene newsletter/LifewithDiabetesMay05.pdf](http://www.jdrf.org/files/General_Files/Life_with_Diabetes/lifene newsletter/LifewithDiabetesMay05.pdf) Discusses the rights that students with diabetes have in school, including a 504 individualized education plan.

[http://www.jdrf.org/index.cfm?page\\_id=103664](http://www.jdrf.org/index.cfm?page_id=103664) Discusses how teens with diabetes should be empowered self-advocates. Support groups, comments from other teens who have diabetes, etc.

[http://kids.jdrf.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.viewpage&page\\_id=22A4FA3A-5004-D739-A53DAAA2DF5B7725](http://kids.jdrf.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.viewpage&page_id=22A4FA3A-5004-D739-A53DAAA2DF5B7725) Includes information about how children with diabetes can become advocates and "make a difference" in their communities and with government officials.

### **Shultz, F. (1995). Sources: Notable selections in education.**

**bell hooks** and her ideas of "engaged pedagogy" in the classroom link to Josie's independent actions as well as her actions with her teachers and peers in her classroom. hooks believes in a classroom environment that cultivates and "emphasizes mutual participation between teacher and students" (hooks, 1994, pg. 189). hooks believes in having open dialogue and communication with her students in the classroom, "...engaged pedagogy is really the only type of teaching that truly generates excitement in the classroom, that enables students to feel the joy of learning... it is this passion for ideas, critical thinking, and dialogical exchange that I want to celebrate in the classroom, to share with students" (hooks, 1994, pg. 189). Josie's dialogue and actions in the classroom had an effect on the dialogue and actions of her classmates, and her classmates became excited, lively classroom participants.

### **Schultz, F. (2001). Sources: Notable selections in education.**

**John Dewey's** concept of education as a "reconstruction of experience" (Dewey, 1916, pg. 41) focuses on the idea that education connects actions with meaning and that educational "reconstruction of experience may be social as well as personal" (Dewey, 1916, pg. 41). Dewey argues that students learn by doing, experiencing, and adapting to their surroundings (Dewey, 1916, pg. 41). Josie's actions in her classroom have personal as well as social meaning. She, herself, taught the teacher and students in her classroom about juvenile diabetes and what others can do to become actively involved in the JDRF fundraising walk that welcomes all community members. Josie took her own experiences, both social and personal, brought them into the

classroom learning environment, and shared these experiences and knowledge with her teacher and peers. As Dewey argued, children learn by doing, experiencing, and adapting to their surroundings. It is clear to me that Josie has learned a lot by doing for herself and advocating for herself in regards to her recent diagnosis with juvenile diabetes.

**Herbert R. Kohl** believes in nonauthoritarian ways of teaching, meaning that students should take a more active role in the classroom, that the teacher is not the single beacon of knowledge within the learning environment. Kohl believes that students should be allowed to have at least ten minutes a day during class time to do what they want (Kohl, 1969, pgs. 106-107). Kohl states teachers should “Think about what is happening during those ten minutes and learn to be led by the students. If certain things are particularly interesting to one group, find out about those things, learn as much as you (the teacher) can, and seeing their interest, present them with ways of getting more deeply into what they care about” (Kohl, 1969, pg. 107).

Josie’s experience in her classroom closely relates to Kohl’s ideas about students playing active roles in the learning and teaching process. Josie’s teacher let her have some class time to teach her classmates (as well as her teacher!) about her diagnosis and about the JDRF walk, getting her peers involved in something that she has a true interest in. Josie was able to choose some of the educational material that was being presented to her class. During this process, Josie’s teacher played the roles of observer, student, and a facilitator for learning, not an authority figure on learning about juvenile diabetes. Josie, the student, became the authority figure, teacher, and presenter of knowledge and experience to her classroom. Kohl believes in the importance of classrooms/schools having a connection with the social/community environment that surrounds them. Kohl also believes that students should be exposed to community events, field trips, internships, volunteer work, etc. (Kohl, 1969, pgs. 108-109). In addition to teaching her classmates about juvenile diabetes, Josie also welcomed her classmates to join her in the JDRF walk as fundraisers for a cause she personally feels strongly about. Josie’s actions illustrate how she is connecting community participation and involvement to classroom learning.

**Site:** Lisle, Illinois, Sunday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007. JDRF Fundraising 3K walk.  
Josie’s Middle School, Naperville, IL. Butler Junior High School, Oak Brook, Illinois

#### **Description of 15 Hours Spent**

- Approximately 4 hours were spent setting up my fundraising website on JDRF by writing and posting a letter to family and friends about JDRF via email, explaining the walk and why I was participating, as well as explaining the process for becoming a walker and/or accepting donations. During these 4 hours I also sent emails to the members of my employment community, school Dist. 53 faculty, staff, and community members. I set up a donation envelope in my mailbox at work which is located in the teacher’s lounge. I spent time talking to friends, family members, and co-workers about the JDRF walk.
- Approximately 2 hours were spent casually interviewing Josie and Josie’s mom, Linda about Josie’s diagnosis, her response to the diagnosis, and the steps she was taking to stay healthy and happy. I also talked to Josie about her actions and involvement at her middle school with regards to the JDRF walk and her diagnosis with juvenile diabetes.
- Approximately 3 hours were spent researching juvenile diabetes on the JDRF website and other various web resources to use as sources for my project.

- Approximately 2 hours were spent researching progressive education perspectives as sources of information for my project.
  - Approximately 4 hours were spent on the actual day of the JDRF walk in Lisle, gathering together with the members of Warrens Warriors, talking, preparing for the walk, walking 3K, taking pictures of Josie and other members of Warrens Warriors, and wrapping up our 3K walk.
  - Approximately 4 hours were spent writing, researching, creating the PowerPoint presentation, and rehearsing the presentation for my project.
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## **Approaches to Service-Learning Activities**

### **Methods of Service-Learning**

There are at least three ways to use SL components in a course. Students are required to go to an organization in the first two, while the other method allows students to accomplish their SL requirement in a college setting.

The first method takes place on-site at the community-based organization. It is a short-term project in which students visit an organization several times and provide a short-term service such as assisting with a building project or facilitating a special weekend community project. While these activities are useful, their short duration makes it hard for students to gain a sense of the community-based organization's purpose and the needs and resources of the organization's clients. It also may be more difficult for instructors to find links between short-term activities and course goals.

The second method also takes place on-site at the community-based organization. It requires students to make commitments to visit the organization for several hours a week for a period of six or more weeks. This is a more common model for SL. The extended time period and the multiple visits allow the students to have a greater variety of experiences and to gain a deeper sense of the organization's mission and its clients. This model also makes it easier to identify and link the service with course goals, to provide on-going reflection, and to assist students' understanding of civic responsibility.

The third method takes place in the classroom. Because students do not need to provide all services on-site, they may work on assigned service activities in the classroom and present results to the organization's representative at the end of the term. These services can be activities such as designing brochures and newsletters, conducting surveys, analyzing data, preparing reports, preparing databases, or auditing and evaluating financial reports (Adapted from Stacey, Kathleen, et. al. *Academic Service-Learning: Faculty Development Manual*. Eastern Michigan University. p. 15-16)

## Types of Service-Learning

In addition to methods, the service component of a project usually falls into one of three types of service-learning. The three types of service, direct, indirect, and advocacy, are defined in the table below and include several examples.

| <b>DIRECT Service</b>   |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Definition</b>       | Activities that directly involve interaction with a recipient of the service. Establishing personal contact with people in need.   |
| <b>Examples</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A student in a English class has adopted a nursing home patient with whom she reads books.</li> <li>• Students in a Social Studies class visit a veteran’s home and prepare life histories of the veterans.</li> <li>• Students in a Business class prepare taxes for the elderly.</li> <li>• Students in a Health class set up a free health fair for members of the community.</li> </ul>                       |
| <b>INDIRECT Service</b> |  |
| <b>Definition</b>       | Activities that do not directly involve the recipient but will benefit the recipient. Students may have little or no contact with the recipients.  |
| <b>Examples</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students in a Math class work with measurements to assist in a habitat house.</li> <li>• Students in a Drama class perform a play to raise money for a charity.</li> <li>• Students in a Science class do a stream clean up and learn to test water quality.</li> <li>• Students in a Social Studies class read a novel about the less fortunate and do a food drive to support the local food pantry.</li> </ul> |
| <b>ADVOCACY</b>         |  |
| <b>Definition</b>       | Using voice as a service to others.  |
| <b>Examples</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students in a Communication Arts class make calls to local businesses to support a neighborhood watch program.</li> <li>• Students in a Civics class write letters to the editor to support some issue affecting their community.</li> </ul>  |

When designing your SL project consider the different methods and types and decided which will work best for you and your course.

## Reflection as the Key Component of Service-Learning

Reflection is a critical element of SL experience. Meaningful reflection includes recapturing an experience to learn from it and develop new understandings.

Reflection activities should ...

- Link experience to learning
- Occur regularly
- Involve feedback to the learner to enhance learning
- Help clarify values
- Be oriented toward specific objectives
- Be successful in terms of critical thinking
- Include goals for future actions
- Generate change in the learner's life

(Adapted from Bringle, R. G., Hatcher, J. A. (1999, Summer). Reflection on service-learning: Making meaning of experience. *Educational horizons*, 179-185)

The process of reflection usually includes description, analysis and synthesis, as well as expressing one's feelings and emotions about the project. Learning experience and objectives are intertwined in reflecting on one's SL experience, and further possible developments are being projected. SL reflections range from structured to semi-structured to non-structured activities similar to the types of reflections in other projects. NLU students involved in SL projects are often asked to write critical reflection essays focused on the following questions:

- What motivated you to undertake this project?
- Why do you think it was so meaningful to you?
- What was the need of recipient(s) of your services?
- How did your service meet that need?
- What new knowledge, skills, and attitudes did you develop as a result of this project?
- What were the challenges of the project? How did you meet them?
- What did you learn about the value of your service?
- Will you continue your service after the project is completed? How?
- What was the most meaningful experience for you during the project?
- What recommendations for improvement would you provide?

Instructors adapt their goals, requirements, expectations, and criteria for evaluation of SL projects according to specific courses, programs of studies, and student audiences.

Below is an example of reflections created by an NLU student in M.Ed. program.

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## ***Giving a Voice to Those with Autism***

I am at National-Louis University to pursue my M.Ed. in special education; more specifically, I am studying to work with those living with severe and profound disabilities. My passion and experience has most often surrounded those with autism. Since high school, my volunteer work, studies, and work experience have displayed my keen interest in working with and advocating for these individuals. This is why the conditions for the autistic patients at [R] Hospital became my focus almost immediately upon starting my employment there. I've worked closely with every autistic patient admitted to the pediatric and adolescent units, and this service learning project provided me with a method of publicizing and fighting the injustices I feel befall these patients.

Despite the alarmingly high prevalence of autism, with statistics that keep growing from one year to the next, I find that most people are alarmingly ignorant to the disorder and how to interact with people who live with it. I was shocked to discover the lack of knowledge in this environment; I assumed that because the hospital was a psychiatric facility that admitted patients with a wide variety of psychiatric and developmental disorders, the staff would be intellectually equipped with the knowledge to work with them appropriately. I continue to find it absurd that the hospital admits patients whom the staff, doctors, nurses, and therapists do not know how to work with. I understand that the staff come from a plethora of backgrounds with no requirement that they have experience with disabilities, but then why not provide immediate training and staff development during the week-long orientation process? Allowing this ignorance is inexcusable.

What upsets me further is that most of the staff accepts their own ignorance and has no desire to obliterate it. Some voice that it is "not their job" to go out of their way to educate themselves on the disorder; some simply do not want the hassle of having to work with the "difficult patients." While I feel it a moral obligation to seek out information that will help me treat my patients, I have been working on accepting the fact that many of my coworkers do not agree with my urgency. I often find myself getting angry and frustrated. I'm worried that this frustration and self-education will one day lead to self-righteousness; that is worrying to me [...].

Staff intolerance for B was similarly shocking and appalling. I feel that the treatment he received was at times bordering on abuse and neglect. B was immediately and continually secluded from his peers. He was confined to an 8x8 room with a bed, a grated window, a cubby, and a chair. He was only allowed into the main dayroom or on the playroom if his peers were off the unit. Any efforts towards socialization was discouraged and at times forbidden. Admittedly, B was aggressive when agitated or over-stimulated, but otherwise he was a loving and happy boy who would have benefited tremendously from human contact.

Furthermore, there were times when I would be unable to work with B because he would smell so bad and be so dirty that hygiene would become the first priority. His hair would be matted and contain debris, and his clothes would be soiled with food from numerous meals. This is neglect; unfortunately the hospital tends to employ the "passing the buck" policy, and it is *always* someone else's responsibility. The issues reflect the social power dynamic present at the hospital—the staff has "power" over B for numerous reasons: he is a child, he lives with a disability, he cannot speak up in his own defense, he is dependent upon others for health and survival, and he has been isolated. To ignore this power differential is ". . . reinforce the sense that those who "help" are, in fact, superior to those who are "helped" (Lucas, 183). It is that feeling of superiority that allows staff to treat patients ill with no guilt or moral questioning.

R would probably claim the idealistic premise of this definition as applying to *all* of their patients, not just those living with mental retardation; ironically, their treatment of B leads more to the horrific conditions actually uncovered by documentaries like "W 2." There are studies that

show the correlation between institutionalization and lower IQ and lack of language development in those with severe disabilities (Haney, 39). The idea of “least restrictive environment” is a staple in special education field in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; however, it was also the premise of the deinstitutionalization efforts in the 1970s. The Illinois State Board of Education requires that each child, to the maximum extent possible, be educated with their non-disabled peers—this idea was also the basis of institutions. Why, then, were we not applying the same concept—accepted by both the educational and psychiatric fields—to B?

Overall, my experience with B was enlightening. I got to see all the concepts I’ve studied—all of the techniques I believe in—work. I had the opportunity of seeing a scared non-verbal patient with autism, one who had been taken from his familiar environment and forced into a barren room with no one of comfort, open up and learn with nothing more than my attention, my time, and my empathy. I got to see B smile, every day. Perhaps if other staff had paid attention to that smile, had let it touch them how it touched me, B’s time at R could have been more productive.

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## **Documenting and Evaluating Service-Learning Activities**

Evaluation is another critical component in project development and implementation. It is important for faculty to explain to students that although their SL projects are valuable and meaningful, it may not be apparent or understood by others (e.g., parents, administration). Although SL projects are usually conducted with proper ethics and professional conduct, one should be prepared to deal with occasional unpredictable instances of misunderstanding or even hurt feelings. On the other hand, most SL projects turn out to be much more meaningful and enjoyable than it was expected.

In either case, it is important to take into account complex relationships that can be formed among participants of SL projects and the context in which they are being conducted. Students are highly recommended to keep reflective journals and to document events and happenings thoroughly and consistently. Using simple equipment such cameras or tape recorders can be extremely helpful to collect data and to keep an accurate and consistent account of events, meetings, services, etc.

Evaluation can provide valuable data to promote SL in the university community, schools, agencies or organizations. The outcomes should be weighed against the goals set up in the beginning of the project. For instance, student learning outcomes might include skills in academic, behavioral, and social domains. Surveys can be sent to community partners to evaluate the impact of the project on the community. Various forms of assessment and evaluation, including self-evaluation, are used according to specific programs of studies and curricular. Below are examples of assessment rubrics for SL reflection papers adapted from Hawaii Campus Compact:

*Awareness of purpose of service*

| <i>Novice</i>  | <i>Apprentice</i>   | <i>Proficient</i>  | <i>Distinguished</i>                                      |
|--|---|--|---|
| Student demonstrates limited awareness of the purpose of SL. | Student expresses awareness of issues pertaining to one-on-one connection on the project but these are not applied. | Student expresses empathy and awareness of personal role in the solution and makes a connection to the bigger picture. | Student expresses and acts out personal role in solution. |

*Apply theory to service learning*

| <i>Novice</i>  | <i>Apprentice</i>  | <i>Proficient</i>   | <i>Distinguished</i>   |
|--|--|---|--|
| Student does not apply theory, or there is a limited, unclear connection of theory to service. | Student expresses some connection between theory and service | Student develops a perspective based on both theory and service | Student takes own perspective based on both theory and service and applies it beyond the curriculum. |

*Impact on student's personal life*

| <i>Novice</i>   | <i>Apprentice</i>  | <i>Proficient</i>  | <i>Distinguished</i>  |
|---|--|--|---|
| Student expresses very limited or no connection between service and self. | Student expresses a connection between service and self. | Student expresses how she/ he could change as a result of the service. | Student expresses change(s) in self because of the service. |

## **Celebrating Accomplishments**

Each university, school, or agency has its own established traditions to honor and celebrate SL achievements. SL projects often culminate in giving public recognition for students' service. During celebratory events, participants have a chance to share their experiences and to enjoy positive feedback about project outcomes. Larger celebratory events draw together students, teachers, administrators, community officials and leaders to recognize achievements and launch fundraising for worthy causes.

NLU has its own traditions and activities to honor the achievements of students, faculty, and community partners involved in SL. Chapter 5 describes some of these events and activities in detail. Individual faculty choose particular ways of distinguishing students engaged in SL. One of the most popular forms of celebrating students SL achievements is class presentations of SL projects in the end of the term.

Selected projects are presented at NLU SL symposia, workshops, professional development sessions, college and department meetings, or other events.

NLU faculty encourage students to use their creativity and imagination for writing and presenting their projects. Power point presentations, collages, photography exhibits, poetry, song, drawing, or narrative—are some forms of expression of the powerful SL messages conveyed by NLU students. Celebrations of SL achievements plug in a great variety of skills and talents and become truly unforgettable events for both students and faculty.

*“The notion of service-learning makes perfect sense to me... In our culture, we are reminded constantly that we have to fight – or dress – or shout – to be noticed, that our rights as individuals are constantly at risk at the hands of fellow citizens and the government and, of course, of our enemies abroad. Offering a service to a fellow citizen makes the world a less threatening, smaller place. As we forge relationships, we learn that our gifts are appreciated and we learn to recognize and appreciate the gifts that others give to us. And the beauty of it is that ‘service learning’ doesn’t need to become law or be accepted by a whole bunch of people in order for it to work. It will work as well if you are the only participant as it will if you are one of two, or ten, or a thousand...”*  
(NLU student)

