INCLUSIVE SERVICE LEARNING

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Session Overview

- What is Inclusive Service Learning and Why is it Important?
- Who are People with Disabilities?
- Fostering a Learning Environment that Welcomes Disability Disclosure
- Key Elements of Inclusive Service Learning
- Universal Design for Learning
- Resources & Wrap-up
Making the Case for Inclusive Service Learning
What is service learning?
The integration of community work with curriculum goals. This is a philosophy, pedagogical technique, and community development strategy with much to offer in optimizing inclusion.

Achieving goals requires that service learning is an intentional developmental strategy in planning and implementing projects that promote personal growth and community growth.

What service learning projects have you done?
What is Inclusion?

A process, a state of being involved, and a method for integrating those excluded (or at risk of being excluded) into the community. Service-learning projects are multifaceted and through principles of universal design, can be arranged to include all learning variabilities.
Principles for Universal Design
(Adapted from the Center for Applied Special Technology)

• Service learning provides multiple means of representation to optimize understanding for all students.

• Service learning provides multiple means of expression to allow students to demonstrate what they know.

• Service learning provides multiple means of engagement to appeal to different learning-styles and motivational preferences of students.
PARR Model for Service Learning
(Search Institute, 2000)

Preparation: Introduce students to the issues or topics that will be addressed in the program, select appropriate projects, and provide background information and training. This stage involves everything from selecting a project to preparing students with the knowledge and skills to be effective. Students are prepared to serve by giving them a basic understanding of what they will be doing and why. Tasks include: building enthusiasm, selecting a project, and introducing social issues.
**Action**: Help others in the community through direct or indirect service. It moves social issues from students’ “heads” to their “hearts” and “hands.” The tasks include: providing a supportive environment, coping with change, ensuring safety, building relationships with the people being served, and documenting the experience.
**Reflection:** Look back on the experience, raise and address questions, explore other opportunities for making a difference and assess the project or program. Have students keep a journal of experiences and insights. It is the intentional process of guiding students to discover and interpret the meaning of learning from serving. Tasks include: remembering the experience, identifying issues that surfaced and skills used, exploring possibilities, and assessing what worked and what did not work.
Recognition: Evaluate and honor what was done, by assessing outcomes, celebrating accomplishments, recognizing variabilities, and making plans and commitments for the future. It is a time to set the stage for ongoing involvement and commitment. Tasks include: celebrating the experiences and sharing learning and commitments with others.
Transformations

The goal of service learning is not just the participation in a community activity, but to use this experience to help achieve academic, social, emotional, or career goals.

• Individual Transformations
  – Empowerment
  – Skills acquisition

• Community Transformations
  – Inclusion – persons with and without disabilities working together
  – Perceptions – Movement from seeing persons with disabilities as recipients of services to seeing persons with disabilities as servers acting in the community
Current state of Service Learning – Where are we?

- Need more models for including students with disabilities in service learning
- Need to think about fostering inclusion through service learning

How have you used service learning for students with disabilities?
Implementing Inclusive Service Learning: What facilitates positive impact?

Be Intentional

- Plan explicit connections between curriculum and service
- Define and structure the mentoring role
- Create collaborations with equal investment from all partners
- Customize – use Universal Design for Learning (CAST, 2012) to anticipate and accommodate variability/disability
Creating a Foundation for Inclusion
“Disability” as Defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act & the Americans with Disabilities Act

- A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- A history or record of such an impairment
- Being regarded as having such an impairment, even when no limitations exist
- Someone who has an association with someone with a disability
“Major Life Activity”
Anything an Average Person can do with Little or No Difficulty

Major life activities include, but are not limited to: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, sitting, standing, lifting, reaching, sleeping and mental/emotional processes such as thinking, concentrating and interacting with others.

Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) additions: operation of major bodily functions such as the immune system, normal cell growth and the endocrine system.

http://www.jan.wvu.edu/bulletins/adaaa1.htm
Fostering an Inclusive Learning Environment that Welcomes Disclosure
Why did you not disclose your disability?

- The Culture or the Environment was:
  - “Gossipy”
  - Excessively competitive
  - Racially insensitive
- Fear of potential reactions
- Refusal by others to share equipment or workspace
- Not relevant
- Stigma associated with disability
- Need to disclose to other people first

Source: Information collected by research project at ICI
What was the impact of not disclosing your disability?

• Social isolation
  – Did not get close to others for fear of personal questions

• Feel compelled to misrepresent
  – Explained appointments by saying she was part of nutrition study
  – One individual told others she had a different diagnosis

• Unable to request accommodations

• Report less support than people who did disclose

• Stress of keeping the secret

Source: Information collected by research project at ICI
Things to Remember about Disclosure

It is up to each individual to:

- Decide if they wish to disclose their disability
- Decide how much information they wish to disclose about their disability
- Decide who has access to information about their disability

If an individual discloses a disability, that information must be maintained confidentially and cannot be disclosed to others
Characteristics of Inclusive Classrooms

• Assuring that the classroom is usable by students with differing characteristics, including accessible work stations and appropriate lighting and acoustic characteristics, etc.
• Building and maintaining an environment where all students feel comfortable expressing their opinions.
• Reviewing course content from multiple standpoints.
• Including research and writings from authors of diverse backgrounds.

Characteristics of Inclusive Classrooms (continued…)

• Using multiple teaching methods to aid the academic success of students with varying learning styles.

• Encouraging critical thinking and academic excellence in a respectful environment.

• Recognizing and appreciating within-group differences, i.e., not all members of any particular group will hold the same opinion on any given issue.

• Assuring that all activities, materials, and equipment are physically accessible to and usable by all.

# Sample Inclusion Strategies

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<td>Group use text, recorded testimonials and visuals used to depict progress</td>
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**Meaningful service**

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**Student Voice**

- **Planning/Prep**
  - Assess learning styles and identify visual, tactile, auditory methods to enable all students to express choices
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- **Evaluation/Recognition/Celebration**
  - Students photograph their role models to indicate their future personal goals

**Partnerships**

- **Planning/Prep**
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- **Reflection**
  - Disability organizations serve as consultants on access and accommodations
- **Evaluation/Recognition/Celebration**
  - Disability organizations provide testimonials on valuing all abilities etc.
CASE STUDY
CREATING AN INCLUSIVE SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

Source: http://www.servicelearning.org/slice/resource/sociology-education
Demographics

This class is comprised of 22 students, 13 female and 9 male. Of this 22, three have disclosed disabilities. These students self describe their disabilities as learning, health-related, and autism. All students are English-speaking; however there is a small handful of students you suspect have limited proficiency.

Many of the students in the classroom come from out-of-state, representing varied parts of the country. There are also three international students. Even though English is not their first language, these students are able to speak English fluently.
Sociology of Education Course Description

Sociologists use sociological imagination and a wide range of sociological theories to examine a variety of topics related to education, learning, schools, school processes, and educational systems. In this course, we will critically examine these theoretical perspectives, and relate them to our concrete service experiences in public schools.
Course Designation

This section of Sociology of Education will be taught as a service-learning course. Service-Learning courses focus learning through service.

In this course, we will work with a community partner and local schools to provide a critical service, reading with students identified as being below grade level.
Service Learning Options

All students will be required to:

• Perform at least 10 tutoring sessions, one per week over 9 weeks, plus once during either Fall Holiday or Thanksgiving Week.
• Read Required Readings.
• Participate in classroom discussions and activities
• Beyond this students may choose between two options, both involving equivalent levels of scholarly rigor, but one emphasizing service and the other reading:
Option 1: Tutoring Intensive Track

Students choosing the Tutoring Intensive Track will:

• Tutor twice a week, at least 20 tutoring sessions
• Read Required Readings
• Read and review summaries of Supplementary Readings
• Participate in reflections on service
• Participate in discussions of Required and Supplementary Readings.
Option 2: The Reading Intensive Track

Students who choose the Reading Intensive Track will

• Tutor once a week, minimum of 10 sessions
• Read Required Readings
• Read Supplementary Readings and prepare written summaries
• In addition, students in this track will prepare written summaries of Supplementary Readings in preparation for classroom discussions.
Your Task

• Cluster in small groups (5 or 6 people)

• Using the case study information and your worksheet, brainstorm how you’d apply principles of universal design to this service learning project or how universal design is already built-in.

• Prepare to share one or two things that your group feels are particularly important and/or creative.
What are some ways you can provide multiple means of representation to optimize understanding for all students?

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What are a few means of expression to allow students to demonstrate what they know?

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How can you ensure there are multiple means of engagement to appeal to different learning-styles and motivational preferences of students?

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National Service Inclusion Project – Service Learning  

Academic Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice  
www.uwsuper.edu/casl/awards/upload/AS-L-Standards-for-Quality-Practice.pdf  

National Service Inclusion Project – Presentation Handouts  
http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/presentations/  

Think College  
http://www.thinkcollege.net/  

Universal Design for Learning  
http://www.cast.org/udl/
Paula Sotnik
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Paula Sotnik has over twenty-five years of experience working as a director, curriculum developer, trainer, and diversity and disability specialist. She oversees the National Service Inclusion Project, the national T&TA center on accessibility and disability issues funded by CNCS. She also oversees the ICI Community Capacity Building team, which houses federal and state projects designed to support underrepresented communities and individuals to access mainstream services. Ms. Sotnik has served as a lead training consultant and author on culture brokering for the Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange at the University at Buffalo, SUNY.

Prior to this project, she developed and coordinated several capacity-building projects with community organizations that examined the experiences of individuals with disabilities from diverse cultures related to person-centered planning and assistive technology. Paula has served on several consumer advocacy boards, consulted nationally, and conducted presentations and published on topics related to diversity and disability, accommodations, responsive outreach strategies, and developing the capacity of organizations to include individuals with disabilities. Paula has undergraduate degrees in social work and psychology and has taken graduate courses in business and nonprofit management.
Jason P. Wheeler has been professionally committed to youth development and leadership for the past 17 years. His experience was catalyzed by his extensive involvement in National Service programs focused on issues related to education, disability inclusion and social justice. Currently, Jason provides national training, remote learning and technical assistance on a variety of topics ranging from disability inclusion, to strategic planning and youth leadership. Jason has worked extensively with a wide range of individuals, including LGBTQ youth, veterans and people with disabilities. He is a graduate trainee of the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) program at the Institute for Community Inclusion at Children's Hospital Boston. LEND is an advanced interdisciplinary training for health professionals and families to improve knowledge in working with children, adolescents and young adults with developmental and related disabilities. Jason serves on the Board of Directors for the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) of Massachusetts. Most recently, Jason was appointed a Commissioner to the Massachusetts Commission on LGBT Youth.
Felicia L. Wilczenski, Ed.D. is a Professor and the Interim Dean in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She holds degrees from Boston University, Boston College, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Prior to her appointment at UMass Boston 14 years ago, Professor Wilczenski held faculty positions at SUNY Buffalo, Rhode Island College, and the University of Rhode Island.

Professor Wilczenski was recognized for distinguished scholarship with the Mary Tucker Thorp Award by the School of Social Work and the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development at Rhode Island College (2000) and for her book, *A Practical Guide to Service Learning: Strategies for Positive Development in Schools*, as a John Glenn Scholar in Service Learning by the John Glenn School of Public Affairs at The Ohio State University (2008). She has published four books and numerous articles on professional issues and service learning and has consulted on those topics both nationally and internationally. She was selected for a Fulbright Special project on service learning in China at Beijing Normal University in January 2011. Her research interests are applications of service-learning in k-12 and higher education and leadership development through mentoring.