Service-Learning @ ICC

FALL 2012

What is service-learning?
Service-learning is a powerful teaching strategy that incorporates important community service with instruction to enhance the experience of learning. Service learning incorporates reflection as a powerful tool to link the affective and cognitive domains to the service activity.

What are the goals of service-learning?
Service-learning unites service with learning in a way that improves both the student and the community.

Service learning can:
1. help develop a sense of civic responsibility
2. enhance self-esteem
3. develop critical thinking skills
4. strengthen the relationship between the community and the college
5. build teamwork
6. entice students to examine the big questions
7. help the student to engage with community leaders
8. create a platform to for students to witness the effects of racism, sexism, poverty and oppression

How does service-learning differ from community service or volunteering?
Community service is volunteering to meet the needs of others and better the community. Service-learning provides structured time for thoughtful planning of the service project and guided reflection by participants on the service experience. Overall, the most significant feature of good service-learning programs is that both learning and service are emphasized.

How do I get started with service learning at ICC?
These individuals can answer questions and provide assistance with getting started with service learning.

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Compassion, goodness, wisdom, and courage are worthy virtues not just for educators or students but for everyone. Service is one tangible way to demonstrate that we the people actually possess those virtues.

There are a couple of required forms that all faculty and students at Illinois Central College should use when participating in service learning. You can find these forms and instructions on using them on the ICC service learning page.

To learn more about service learning, visit http://www.icc.edu/innovation/servicelearning.html
**Introduction to Reflection**

Reflection is one of the most academically rigorous components of a service-learning course. Students who take the time to reflect on service-learning experiences will get more from those experiences. This is why reflections are a required part of service-learning classes at the University of Minnesota. Reflection helps students thoughtfully process their community work. It helps them critically assess and understand what they are seeing and doing. Service-learning practitioners and researchers have concluded that the most effective service-learning experiences are those that provide structured opportunities for learners to critically reflect upon their service experience.

*As students participate in a service-learning class they should ask themselves these questions: What? So What? Now What?*

The reflection process begins with a defining and sharing of the "What" of the student's experience, and follows a continuous cycle towards "So What?" and "Now What?"

- **What?** Report the facts and events of an experience, objectively.
- **So What?** Analyze the experience.
- **Now What?** Consider the future impact of the experience on you and the community.

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**Examples of Reflection Questions based on the Experiential Learning Cycle**

**What?**
- What happened?
- What did you observe?
- What issue is being addressed or what population is being served?

**So What?**
- Did you learn a new skill or clarify an interest?
- Did you hear, smell, or feel anything that surprised you?
- How is your experience different from what you expected?
- What impacts the way you view the situation/experience? (What lens are you viewing from?)
- What did you like/dislike about the experience?
- What did you learn about the people/community?
- What are some of the pressing needs/issues in the community?
- How does this project address those needs?

**Now What?**
- What seems to be the root causes of the issue addressed?
- What other work is currently happening to address the issue?
- What learning occurred for you in this experience?
- How can you apply this learning?
- What would you like to learn more about, related to this project or issue?
- What follow-up is needed to address any challenges or difficulties?
- What information can you share with your peers or the community?
- If you could do the project again, what would you do differently?