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Faculty and Student Participation and Perceptions of Service-Learning Outcomes

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SUMMARY. Faculty ($n = 55$) and student ($n = 75$) perceptions of service-learning outcomes were evaluated using a questionnaire format. Results indicated that while faculty strongly believe service-learning is important to student academic growth, few actually teach service-learning courses because of time constraints and unfamiliarity with service-learning course models. Comparisons of faculty and student perceptions showed that compared to students, faculty had a stronger perception of the value of service-learning for students. When students were divided into those who had ($n = 33$) or had not ($n = 42$) participated in service-learning, faculty and service-learning students' perceptions did not differ, and both rated these experiences more valuable than did non-service-learning students. [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-342-9678. E-mail address: getinfo@haworthpressinc.com]

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Societal issues such as physical and psychological illness are increasingly more difficult to manage given the current health care system, and most health care professionals would agree that treatment of a disease or disorder cannot be done during office visits alone. Illness is typically a manifestation of a larger societal problem (Costa & VandenBos, 1990)—issues of family abuse, depression, and alcoholism are generally a consequence of dysfunctional family and societal systems, and the rates of widespread illnesses such as cardiac disease, AIDS, and stress-related disorders are increasing yearly (Edlin, Golanty, McCormack Brown, 1997).

Indeed, society plays a significant role in both the definition of the illness and the success of treatment. In fact, it has been observed that illness is socially constructed through processes that include: identifying the origin of the illness, assessing responsibility for the illness, assigning guilt or innocence to the victim of the illness, and assigning responsibility for a cure (Herek & Glunt, 1988; Marlatt & Gordon, 1985). If it is the case that society socially constructs illness, we can socially reconstruct it through a series of processes: (a) Society must be educated formally about the illness process, (b) society must be involved with victims of illness, and (c) society must share these experiences. One way to initiate this process is by exposing undergraduate students to community issues as part of their academic experiences through service-learning. Students who participate in service-learning combine community service with formal study, providing an opportunity for them to reflect on classroom theories in relation to field experiences, and enabling them to employ systematic and creative methods when seeking solutions to problems.

Human services fields have become increasingly dependent on volunteerism and citizen participation in the past several decades (Sharon, 1991). Reliance on volunteer services has met needs: (a) to make up for reductions in publicly and privately funded programs, (b) to humanize services that have become impersonal and bureaucratic, (c) to provide constructive outlets for individuals who have excess leisure time, and (d) to generally improve community and societal conditions by involving lay citizens (Sharon, 1991). Consequently, homeless shelters and food banks, literacy programs, community youth centers, and public health programs utilize a growing number of young adults who assist human service providers, with the most active group typically being students. In fact, prior research has shown that nearly two of three incoming college students have participated in some form of volunteer work during the previous academic year (Astin 1984; Serow, 1991).

While most Americans endorse the importance of volunteerism, only about one-third actually volunteer some of their free time to help others (Independent Sector, 1988; 1992). Research on the primary reasons why people participate in community service suggests that volunteers want to help

others, to contribute to the community, to obtain training and skills, to enrich their personal lives, to be needed, to make new friends and be around others, to explore career options, to correct social problems, and to demonstrate behavior consistent with religious beliefs (Independent Sector, 1981; Serow, 1991). In addition to satisfying a number of personal needs, volunteer activity has been shown to reflect a high level of social interest—an interest in the general concerns of mankind (Ansbaucher, 1968; Crandall & Harris, 1976; Hettman & Jenkins, 1990).

Recent goals of higher education have focused on the education of the 'whole' student in the context of the total educational environment (Miller & Prince, 1976). Several studies have demonstrated the importance of a balanced, integrated environment and suggest that the more highly involved students are in campus activities, the greater their persistence, satisfaction, and achievement in college (Astin, 1984; Fitch, 1991). Service-learning, the integration of community-service and academic curriculum, is one type of activity believed to promote care, compassion, and responsibility in college students. Supporters of service-learning view community service experiences as a worthwhile extension to more conventional forms of civic and moral education. Consequently, research on the psychological outcomes of students who participate in service-learning consistently has demonstrated meaningful benefits (Palestini, Rowe, & Chapman, 1997) for students, including social awareness, social responsibility, and concern for others. In addition, service can provide opportunities to acquire interpersonal skills, proficiency in time management, and feelings of general competency on the part of student volunteers (Serow, Ciechalski, & Daye, 1990). Finally, participating students have the opportunity within a structured and supervised environment to address some of society's serious problems (Clary, Synder, Ridge, Miene, & Haugen, 1994; Rowe, Palestini, & Chapman, 1997; Palestini, Rowe, & Chapman, 1997).

A commitment to service in surrounding communities by colleges and universities is critical for several reasons. First, students need to find relevance between what is learned in the classroom and what is experienced in life. This might reduce the tendency on the part of some to see higher education as "an ivory tower of irrelevance" (Eby, 1995). Second, educators should take an active role in providing experiences that align knowledge and responsibility to produce civic minded citizens who are not only intelligent and responsible, but caring and compassionate. Students should be responsible not only for learning course material but for developing skills that will allow them to make appropriate decisions, skills which are developed when theory meets experience. Third, faculty involved in higher education cultivate new ideas, new ways of looking at problems, and new solutions to these problems. Service-learning provides institutions a way to apply a wealth of

intellect, research findings, and resources to find solutions to challenging societal problems, and may show students that each person can make a difference.

In order for service-learning to be effective, it should be integrated developmentally across the curriculum. For example, in our undergraduate major, "Interdisciplinary Health Services" (a program of study which combines the natural sciences, social sciences, liberal arts courses, and health-related curriculum), the first service-learning experience will focus on the ways in which society perceives and responds to people with illnesses and disabilities. The purpose of this initial experience is to raise *social awareness*. The second level of exposure will focus on how factors such as race, class, and gender shape physical and mental illness. Here, the emphasis of service-learning is on *social analysis*. During the third service-learning experience, students concentrate on the *ethical and legal* aspects of the health care system. The final step is a capstone experience and research project incorporating each of the prior three components. The emphasis is on the development of *leadership and creative problem solving* techniques as students are expected to identify, research, and suggest a solution to a health care problem.

Service-learning experiences take a variety of forms and can include the following: (a) Service-learning as a *Form of Scholarship* provides opportunities for structured reflection by combining classroom cognition and experiential knowledge, resulting in increases in student concern for civic values and service ethics (Eby, 1995); (b) *Peer Teaching*, the use of cooperative learning and academic interventions, has been demonstrated to be valuable for both the "teacher" and the "learner." In particular, students report a sense of freedom to express opinions and ask questions. More importantly, the development of metacognitive strategies resulting from the interactions between students is found more frequently than with traditional classroom methods (Vaidya & Clark, 1995); (c) *Community Literacy* engages students as literacy mentors. Since this typically involves a boundary crossing of race and socioeconomic status, students develop a respect for, and appreciation of differences between individuals along with a sense of social action and responsibility (Long, 1995); (d) *Intergenerational Community Projects* match students with older adults from public housing communities and has been shown to provide a sense of empowerment in solving social problems and a greater understanding of individual differences (Ward & McCrea, 1995); (e) *Child Mentor Programs*, in which students teach skills such as reading or mathematics to children, provides social support and friendship, increases students' sense of self-esteem and social values as well as mastery of the content area (Huwar, 1995); and (f) *Off-Campus Immersion Programs* involve off-campus volunteering usually during semester breaks. These projects vary depending

upon the site, but generally consist of living and working with recipients of the service project. Examples include building low-cost housing or a community playground and clean-up projects. Because students are immersed in the culture of their recipients, they report high levels of personal growth and a sense of control over social inequities (Crowner, 1995).

While the outcomes of service-learning are clearly beneficial to both the students and society, service-learning must be valued by students, faculty, and administrators alike to ensure program success. If faculty do not believe in the importance or value of service-learning, if they do not have administrative support, or if their schedules are too overwhelming, service-learning simply becomes another great idea that does not advance. The purposes of this study were: (a) To examine and compare perceptions of the impact of service-learning experiences between faculty and students, (b) to identify and evaluate the reasons why faculty do or do not include a service-learning component in their courses; and (c) to determine what information faculty require in order to consider including a service-learning component in their courses.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 55 faculty and 75 students served as participants. Faculty departments varied and included Aerospace Studies, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Economics, Education, English, Fine Arts and Performing Arts, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Health Services, History, Math, Philosophy, Physics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, and Theology. The faculty were grouped by academic division into Social Sciences ($n = 16$), Humanities ($n = 16$), Natural Sciences ($n = 8$), and Business ($n = 12$). The number of years of teaching experience averaged 13.44 ($SD = 10.71$), and all faculty held full-time tenure-track lines for at least one year. Few ($n = 11$; 20%) reported teaching service-learning courses.

Students were enrolled full-time and were taking an introductory philosophy course which fulfilled a general education requirement for graduation. Thirty-three students were enrolled in a service-learning section of the course while the remaining 42 students were in a nonservice-learning section taught by the same instructor.

Materials and Procedures

All faculty and students completed an eight item scale, the *Service-Learning Outcomes Scale*, that asked them to indicate their perceptions of students

who had participated in service-learning courses as compared to students who had not. Each item was answered on a 5-point rating scale (with endpoints being 1 = strongly agree, and 5 = strongly disagree), with individual items asking participants to compare service-learning and non-service-learning students they have encountered on: (a) their understanding of social problems, (b) the richness of their educational experiences, (c) their perceived efficacy to make the world a better place, (d) their level of self-esteem, (e) their ability to solve problems, (f) their potential to be future leaders, (g) their level of compassion, and (h) their sensitivity to social inequities. Scale items were generated by the authors based on prior research identifying the outcomes of service-learning for students (Astin, 1984; Fitch, 1991; Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Miene, & Haugen, 1994; Rowe, Palestini, & Chapman, 1997; Palestini, Rowe, & Chapman, 1997).

The questionnaires completed by faculty included two additional sections. Section II presented five dichotomous forced-choice items (Yes-No) that asked whether or not: (a) they taught a service-learning course, (b) a service-learning component was appropriate given their course content, (c) they would teach a service-learning course if they had more time, (d) they would teach a service-learning course if they had more information about how to do it, and (e) they had served as a mentor in any other type of community service program.

Section III of the faculty questionnaire included qualitative items which asked faculty why they do or do not teach a service-learning course, and if they did not, what they would like to know about service-learning in order that they might decide to offer a service-learning course. In addition, this section included demographic items (e.g., major discipline and number of years of teaching).

Questionnaires were sent to 138 full-time, tenure-track faculty through inter-office mail at the beginning of the first week of November. Faculty were provided with an introductory letter requesting their participation and describing the purpose of the research. Instructions appeared on the questionnaire, which took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Faculty were given one month to return the completed questionnaires, and were sent an e-mail reminder to do so two weeks after the questionnaires had been mailed. A total of 55 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a response rate of 40%.

The questionnaires were distributed to students during regular class time at the end of the semester (last week of November). Students were provided with an informed consent letter which specified the purpose of the research, the rights of human subjects, and the name and address of the Human Subjects Committee Chair. Instructions appeared at the top of the scale which took approximately 10 minutes of class time for all students to complete.

RESULTS

Service-Learning Outcomes Scale

Means and standard deviations of individual scale item responses are presented in Table 1 for faculty, all students, and service-learning and nonservice-learning student groups. Separate one-way analyses of variance were conducted on each of the outcome items to determine whether there were differences in perceived outcomes as a function of the faculty's academic division [Social Sciences ($n = 16$), Humanities ($n = 16$), Natural Sciences ($n = 8$), and Business ($n = 12$)]. No significant differences between divisions emerged on items suggesting service-learning students have a better understanding of social problems, have richer educational experiences, have greater perceived efficacy to make the world a better place, have higher self-esteem, or have greater potential to be future leaders. There were significant differences between faculty of different divisions in perceptions of service-learning students as better problem solvers, $F(3,48) = 3.84, p < .05$. A post-hoc Tukey HSD test demonstrated that Humanities faculty ($M = 4.13, SD = 0.81$) and Business faculty ($M = 3.83, SD = 0.84$) had stronger perceptions of the problem solving capacity of service-learning students than faculty from the Natural Sciences ($M = 3.0, SD = 0.54$). There were also significant differences between faculty of different divisions in perceptions of level of compassion of service-learning compared to nonservice-learning students, $F(3,48) = 2.95, p < .01$. A Tukey HSD test demonstrated that Business faculty ($M = 4.92, SD = 0.30$) had stronger perceptions of the compassion of service-learning students than the Social Science faculty ($M = 4.19, SD = 0.75$), and both Business and Humanities faculty ($M = 4.56, SD = 0.63$) had stronger perceptions than faculty in the Natural Sciences ($M = 3.75, SD = 0.89$). Finally, significant differences in perceptions emerged on the item assessing sensitivity of service-learning students, $F(3,48) = 3.07, p < .05$. A Tukey HSD test demonstrated that Humanities faculty ($M = 4.69, SD = 0.70$) and Business faculty ($M = 4.67, SD = 0.65$) had more positive perceptions of the sensitivity of service-learning students relative to nonservice-learning students compared to the Natural Science faculty ($M = 3.89, SD = 0.64$).

Separate t -tests were conducted on each of the perception items to determine whether there were differences in perceptions between faculty and students when comparing service-learning to non-service-learning students. Significant differences between faculty and students were found on each item, with faculty rating the value of service-learning outcomes significantly higher than did students (see Table 1). Specifically, faculty reported that service-learning students, as compared to non-service-learning students, demonstrate: (a) a better understanding of societal problems, $t(128) = 3.46, p < .001$, (b) richer educational experiences, $t(128) = 2.49, p < .05$, (c) greater

TABLE 1. Mean Perception Ratings of Service-Learning Outcomes of Faculty and Students

OUTCOME	GROUPS			
	Faculty	Service-Learning Students	Nonservice-Learning Students	Combined Students
Societal Problems	4.42 (.066)	4.27 (0.72)	3.74 (0.73)	3.97 (0.77)
Richer Educational Experiences	4.35 (0.70)	4.30 (0.81)	3.76 (0.79)	4.00 (0.70)
Greater Efficacy	4.15 (0.80)	3.67 (0.85)	3.71 (0.60)	3.69 (0.71)
Higher Self-Esteem	3.90 (0.81)	3.49 (0.83)	3.29 (0.92)	3.37 (0.88)
Better Problem Solvers	3.71 (0.86)	3.52 (0.76)	3.10 (0.84)	3.27 (0.83)
Future Leaders	3.96 (0.74)	3.70 (1.10)	3.57 (0.86)	3.63 (0.97)
More Compassion	4.38 (0.73)	4.36 (0.90)	3.71 (0.84)	4.00 (0.92)
More Sensitive	4.49 (0.69)	4.52 (0.80)	3.62 (0.94)	4.01 (0.98)

Note: Values in parentheses are standard deviations.

efficacy to make the world a better place, $t(128) = 3.38, p < .001$, (d) higher self-esteem, $t(128) = 3.42, p < .001$, (e) better problem-solving capacity, $t(128) = 2.97, p < .01$, (f) greater propensity to be future leaders, $t(128) = 2.15, p < .05$, (g) more compassion, $t(128) = 2.56, p < .05$, and (h) more sensitivity, $t(128) = 3.10, p < .01$.

Further analyses were done to determine whether there were differences in perceptions of outcomes between the Faculty and each of the student groups, the Service-Learning group, and the Nonservice-Learning group. Post hoc comparisons between the means of each of these groups were done using the Tukey HSD test. Significant differences were found on all items except the item suggesting that service-learning students have greater potential to become future leaders. Both Faculty and Service-Learning students indicated a significantly stronger perception than Nonservice-Learning students that students who participate in service-learning have: (a) a better understanding of societal problems, $F(2,127) = 11.83, p < .001$, (b) richer educational experi-

ences, $F(2,127) = 8.00, p < .001$, (c) greater efficacy to make the world a better place, $F(2,127) = 5.70, p < .01$, and (d) higher self-esteem, $F(2,127) = 6.36, p < .01$, compared to students who do not participate in community service. Likewise, Faculty and Service-Learning students reported a stronger belief than Nonservice-Learning students that students who participate in service-learning are: (a) better problem solvers, $F(2,127) = 7.24, p < .001$, (b) more compassionate, $F(2,127) = 9.48, p < .001$, and (c) more sensitive to social inequities, $F(2,127) = 17.12, p < .001$, than are students who do not participate in service-learning.

Dichotomous Items: Faculty Responses

Table 2 presents percentage of respondents indicating yes or no to each of the five dichotomous items on the faculty questionnaire. Percentages are presented for all faculty and faculty by division. It should be noted that chi-square analyses were conducted on the data, and significant differences between the divisions were identified, however, the data did not meet the criteria because more than one-fifth of fitted cells were sparse.

A majority of Social Science, Humanities, and Business faculty felt that service-learning was appropriate for the courses that they taught. Faculty in the Natural Sciences unanimously agreed that course content in the sciences is not appropriate for a service-learning component. Professors in the Social

TABLE 2. Percentages of Responses on Dichotomous Items by Academic Division and All Faculty

Item	Social Sciences (<i>n</i> = 16)		Humanities (<i>n</i> = 16)		Natural Sciences (<i>n</i> = 8)		Business (<i>n</i> = 12)		All Faculty (<i>n</i> = 55)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Appropriate to course taught	88	12	75	25	0	100	75	25	60	40
Do you teach SL course	19	81	38	62	0	100	8	92	20	80
If more time would you teach SL	69*	25*	63*	25*	12	88	58*	33*	58*	35*
If more info would you teach SL	50*	44*	63*	19*	38	62	67*	25*	56*	35
Mentor other community service	31	69	19	81	0	100	8	92	16	84

*Some subjects did not respond, thus total does not equal 100%

Sciences, Humanities, and Businesses are currently teaching service-learning courses, with the greatest percentage of faculty teaching these courses in the Humanities. A larger majority of faculty in the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Business indicated their willingness to consider teaching a service-learning course if they had more time to devote to developing the course, with a much smaller percentage of Natural Science faculty indicating the same. A majority of Humanities and Business faculty indicated willingness to teach a service-learning course if they were provided with more information relevant to course development, whereas Social Science faculty were more evenly split on the question, and Natural Science faculty indicated they were not willing to consider the possibility even with more information. Clearly, many Social Science faculty are already involved in service activities with students outside of the classroom, with Humanities faculty indicating some involvement in other community service projects. Whereas Business faculty indicated some involvement, none of the Natural Science faculty responding have served as student mentors in service projects.

Qualitative Items

Separate content analyses were conducted on each of the qualitative items. Of those faculty who reported that they teach service-learning courses ($n = 11$), reasons given for doing so included: (a) to enrich the course content into a multi-leveled experience, (b) to raise the awareness of social issues and social inequities, (c) to provide real world experience (theory into practice—"University life is a very closed world"), (d) to develop student leadership skills, (e) because it is consistent with the mission of the University, and (f) because it should be required for all students.

Of those faculty who reported they do not teach service-learning courses ($n = 45$), reasons for not doing so included: (a) not appropriate to the content area, (b) it involves a major change to the course and curriculum, (c) it creates problems with standardized curriculum between many faculty teaching required large courses, (d) there is not enough time to cover all of the material, (e) priorities of other commitments (research, tenure, promotion), (f) not sure how to do it, (g) it should not be forced upon students, and (h) do not know why not.

Of the faculty who indicated they would like more information about incorporating a service-learning component in their courses ($n = 27$), information requested included: (a) how to balance rigorous academic content with practical experience, (b) how to incorporate service-learning into academic content areas and what fields are best suited for this design, (c) what the University is willing to do to encourage faculty participation (financial,

course reductions), and (d) how to actually implement it (site contacts, class sizes, course expectations, amount of time spent at the site).

DISCUSSION

There is reason to believe that service learning can be a powerful tool in infusing or developing a carative spirit in our young people. Educators have long recognized the transforming effect of study abroad. Changing a student's cultural context results in a personal self-evaluation as well as a great deal of learning. The experience of community service, in linking a student to an environment in which knowledge can be put to use and reality can be tested, can have a similarly transforming effect. Given the potential for positive outcomes delineated in this and previous studies, academic programs should be encouraged to include service-learning experiences in the curriculum.

The results of the present study indicate that faculty agree students who participate in service-learning have a better understanding of societal problems, richer educational experiences, are more inclined to become leaders, become more compassionate, and are more sensitive to social inequities as compared to their nonservice-learning peers. However, only a relatively small portion of faculty who responded actually teach service-learning courses. For service-learning programs to be successful, it is imperative that faculty support and encourage students to participate. To facilitate faculty participation, it would be important to provide faculty training with respect to various service-learning models appropriate to their disciplines, as well as administrative support in organizing and coordinating activities with service site personnel. Indeed, the major reason provided by faculty who do not teach service-learning courses was that they were not sure how the service-learning process worked. Specifically, they needed training in what content areas were appropriate, how to develop site contacts, how to balance the required curriculum with experiential learning, and the general details of how much time students spend at the site, assignments, and course requirements.

Comparisons between faculty and students on their perceptions of the outcomes of service-learning experiences resulted in an interesting pattern. Faculty rated service-learning outcomes more favorably than did students. However, when students were grouped into those who had and had not participated in service-learning, results showed that faculty and service-learning students, relative to nonservice-learning students, believed that students who had participated in service-learning had a better understanding of societal problems and richer educational experiences, were better problems solvers, more compassionate, and more sensitive than students who had not participated in service-learning. The differences in perceptions between ser-

vice-learning and nonservice-learning students could be a function of the need of service-learning students to justify the time and effort they expended beyond normal course work in the service-learning section of the course they took. Clearly, however, no similar explanation would be plausible for the perception on the part of the majority of faculty of the positive outcomes provided by a service-learning experience, since the majority of faculty have not offered service-learning courses.

The results of this study are noteworthy and clearly reflect the importance of service-learning. Some learning outcomes cannot be transfused into a passive student sitting in a lecture hall, but must involve some form of "real world" experience, the kind that service-learning experiences may offer. The present study suggests that faculty and students who have participated in service-learning believed this opportunity can be an important and valuable learning process which promotes care, compassion, and understanding of societal issues and inequities. It should be noted, however, that this research was conducted at a small, private, metropolitan, Jesuit University with a mission that includes life long learning and commitment to community service. These results may have been different had the study been done at a large public University or College.

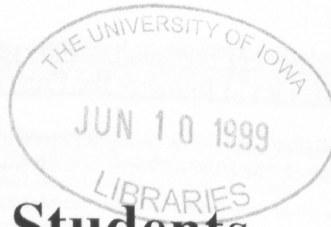
While the benefits of service-learning are quite lucid, there are some serious challenges for colleges and universities interested in offering service-learning programs to their students. First, it should be noted that not all faculty supported the concept of service-learning. When faculty were grouped into academic divisions (humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and business), faculty in the humanities and social sciences more frequently showed an interest in offering service-learning courses on a regular basis. Second, some students view service-learning as just another hoop through which they must jump to complete their academic degree requirements. For this reason, service-learning should be offered as an option rather than a requirement. Third, the academic administration must support service-learning and provide assistance with administrative needs of those working with service sites. In summary, the most successful service-learning programs are those in which there is a natural fit between the mission of the institution, academic course work, faculty expertise, and student interests. Future research should continue on service-learning and focus upon the role faculty play in the success of these programs as well as student achievement and outcomes.

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