

Service-Learning and the First-Year Experience: Promoting Civic Engagement in the First College Year

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"The most important thing an institution does is not to prepare a student for a career but for a life as a citizen." Frank Newman

What is Civic Engagement?

- How do you define civic engagement?
- University 101 at South Carolina defines the term “responsible citizenship” as the process of civic and political engagement, practicing personal, social, and environmental responsibility, and staying abreast of, and critically analyzing, local, national, and world affairs.

What are the Components of Civic Engagement?

- **“Learning from others, self, and environment** to develop informed perspectives on social issues
- **Valuing diversity** and building bridges across differences
- Behaving, and **working through controversy**, with civility
- **Taking an active role** in the political process
- **Participating actively in public life**, public problem solving, and community service
- **Assuming leadership** and membership in organizations
- **Developing empathy, ethics, values**, and sense of social responsibility
- **Promoting social justice** locally and globally” (as cited in Jacoby, 2009, p. 9)

Citizenship in a Global Context

- Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP)
 - Knowledge skills and values students need to be successful
 - Personal and Social Responsibility, including
 - Civic knowledge and engagement – local and global
 - Intercultural knowledge and competence
 - Ethical reasoning and action
 - Foundations and skills for lifelong learning
- Employers Evaluate College Graduates
 - Very Well Prepared
 - Social Responsibility 35%
 - Self-direction 23%
 - Global Knowledge 18%

Millennial Generation

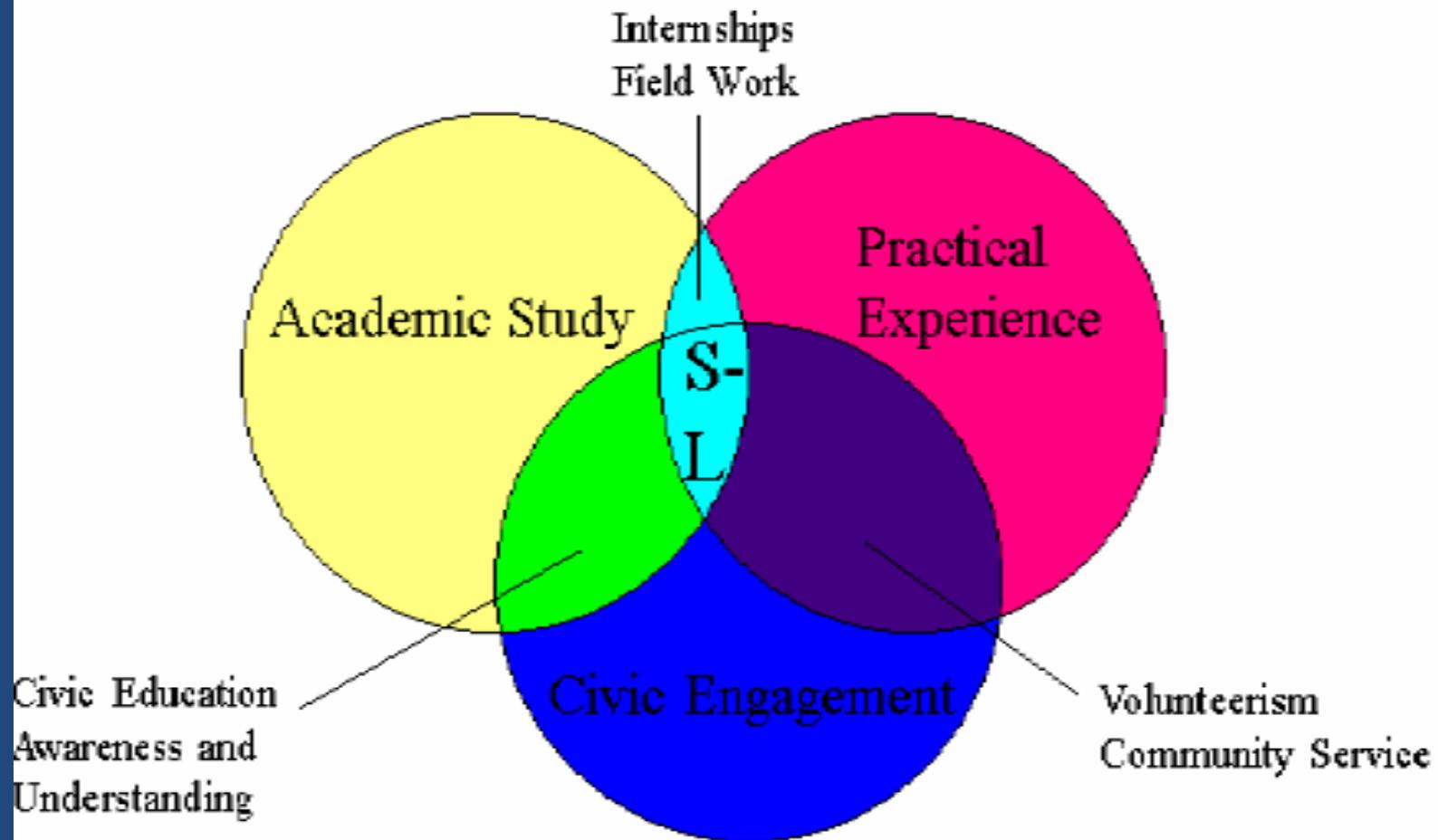
“I believe that [Millennials] want to make a difference in the world and personally responsible for doing so. They do not need to be told to care about pressing issues; they already care.” (Jacoby, 2009b)

- Things to be aware of:
 - The Millennial Generation is not homogeneous
 - Some researchers believe those entering college now are members of Generation Z

From Theory to Practice: How do you Incorporate Civic Engagement into the First-Year Experience?

Service-Learning!

A Visual Definition of Service-Learning



Carolina Service-Learning Definition

At the University of South Carolina, service-learning is a form of **active learning** that connects **meaningful community service** with **academic coursework** and **purposeful reflection**. The experience yields **reciprocal benefits** for all participants, a renewed sense of **civic connection**, and encourages **critical thinking** and **self-examination** while upholding the principles embodied in the **Carolinian Creed**.

Although several national organizations have articulated a variety of definitions of service-learning our definition aligns most with Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse.

Hallmarks of Service-Learning At Carolina

- Integrated Learning
- High Quality Service
- Collaboration
- Civic Responsibility
- Reflection
- Evaluation and Assessment

Principles of Good Practice

- Academic Credit is for Learning, Not for Service
- Do Not Compromise Academic Rigor
- Establish Learning Outcomes
- Establish Criteria for the Selection of Service Placements
- Prepare Students to Learn and Work With the Community

How is service-learning emphasized and supported on your campus?

How are you assessing the benefits/impacts of service-learning on students, the classroom, and community?

How have you incorporated service-learning into your first-year experience?

**Promoting Service-
Learning and Civic
Engagement in the First
Year of College**

National Literature

- Astin, Vogelsang, Ikeda, & Yee (2000)
 - Service-learning has a significant impact on academic, personal, leadership, and career outcomes
- Leskes & Miller (2006)
 - Service-learning promotes civic engagement and other outcomes
- Mayhew & Engberg (2011)
 - Service-learning in the first-year experience were effective in promoting charitable responsibility

Experiences that Matter

- Pat Terenzini from the 2011 Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience
- Characteristics of Experiences that Influence Students
 - Entail encounters with challenging ideas & people
 - Require active engagement with those challenges
 - Occur in a supportive environment
 - Emphasize meaningful, real world activities
 - Involve relational interpersonal activities

University of South Carolina: University 101

- Extended orientation based
- 13 Learning Outcomes
 - Describe and demonstrate principles of responsible citizenship within and beyond the campus community.
- Partnered with 2 agencies
 - University 101 students paired with 6th grade middle school students for 10 weeks through the Transitional Coaching Program
 - Cocky's Reading Express – Literacy program

In Students Own Words

- Hopefully, I'll be able to continue mentoring Patrick in the spring, and monitor his development. **Every day I feel more obliged to reinforce some of the lessons I taught him**, so as they do not recede into mere forethoughts.
- Due to the service learning at Hand Middle School, **I learned a considerable amount** about maintaining composure when a situation is not going how you had planned.

In Students Own Words

- I would prefer service-learning to be extended to all students at the University of South Carolina at least once. **Everyone should be required to make an impact in the community; because in the end that is the overall purpose of South Carolina's flagship academic institution—to make a positive impact on the state.**
- Service-learning is a good requirement for University 101 classes. Telling students it is important to get involved will not normally actually get them involved. However, requiring students to get involved can open up their eyes to the benefits of involvement and service. **In my case, it opened up my eyes to the usefulness of a particular service that I may never have heard of or appreciated otherwise.**

Important issues to consider:

- Is service-learning the right fit for your course?
- Students enter at different points developmentally
- Identifying and connecting to community needs
- Utilize a variety of assignments and reflection tools

Questions for Discussion

What are the challenges and barriers you face in developing service-learning initiatives in the first-year experience?

First-year service-learning success stories?

What other ways can you incorporate civic engagement into the first-year experience beyond service-learning?

Resources

- American Association of State Colleges and Universities. (2005). *Democracy and civic engagement: A guide for higher education*. Washington, DC: American Association of State Colleges and Universities.
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- Hart, P. D. (2008). *How should colleges assess and improve student learning? A survey of employers conducted on behalf of the Association of American Colleges and Universities*. Retrieved from: http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/2008_Business_Leader_Poll.pdf.
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- Leskes, A. & Miller, R. (2006). *Purposeful pathways: Helping students achieve key learning outcomes*. American Association of Colleges and Universities, Washington, DC.
- Mayhew, M.J. & Engberg, M.E. (2011). Promoting the development of civic responsibility: Infusing service-learning practices into first-year success courses. *Journal of College Student Development*, 52, 1, pp. 20-38.
- Mehaffy, G. (2008). *Preparing undergraduates to be citizens: The critical role of the first year of college*. In M.J. LaBare (Ed.), *First-year civic engagement: Sound Foundations for college, citizenship and democracy* (p. 6).
- Vogelgesang, L. J., & Astin, A. W. (2005). *Post-college civic engagement among graduates*. Higher Education Research Institute. Retrieved from: <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri/PDFs/Atlantic%20-%20Report%202.pdf>

Notes from the
discussion:

- Importance of Civic Engagement:
 - Voting- promote voter registration in the community and especially on your campus
 - Service & Service-Learning
 - Do both on your campus
 - Try to find opportunities that allow you to do projects on campus – helps solve the transportation issue!
 - Important to know the goals, missions, and definitions on your specific campus, if they don't exist, create them!
 - National Resources Available
 - Campus Compact, Learn & Serve America, National Democracy Project
 - Educate yourself and your students for new funding sources, ideas, or support
 - Theme weeks & days of service
 - Tap into national/local programs or themes
 - Examples: MLK Day of Service, 9/11 Day of Caring, National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness week
 - A list of some of these days can be found online at:
 - <http://www.servicelearning.org/topic/area-service/days-of-service> and
 - <http://www.servicewire.org/seasonsofservice>
 - Allow students ownership and creativity – they can take ideas and make them great if you let them!
 - Work with your local government and community partners
 - They will help you learn community needs and be most effective in meeting them
 - HandsOn affiliates, United Way Centers, or other Volunteer Centers are great places to start if you have them in your community

- Service-Learning
 - Silos on campus can be a barrier
 - Can be challenging to get buy-in from faculty individually
 - Are there different levels of service-learning?
 - How does SL differ from the first-year to the senior year?
 - Must be aware of the student's level of development. Not all students can handle all SL projects until they are "ready"
 - How do we get our students "out"/off campus?
 - Transportation can be an issue
 - Cost
 - Students don't have it
 - Liability!
 - Potential solution? Do projects that are campus based!
 - Look at campus issues such as adderal abuse, and create projects around it
 - Or bring community partners to campus if possible
 - Incorporate S-L into a Leadership Minor (or other specialized minors) to increase class offerings, importance on campus, enrollment in programs, etc.