CEA
Center for Economic Analyses

CEA Journal of Economics.....

ISSN 1857-5250
UDK 33

Price: 300 MKD (5 EUR)

Volume 4
Issue 2
1-58 pages

Skopje, Macedonia
December 2009

CEA Journal of Economics

ISSN 1857-5269
UDK 33
Volume 4, Issue 2
Skopje, December 2009

Editorial Board and Reviewers:

Marjan Nikolov, M.Sc., Editor-in-Chief
Bryan Roberts, Ph.D.
Dimitar Bogov, M.Sc
Vesna Garvanlieva, MBA
Borko Handziski,
Miso Nikolov, M.Sc

DISCLAMER:

The opinions put forth in this publication represent the views of their authors.

Contents

Call for Papers 3

Discussion about the needs to intensify PPP at the local level - Marjan Nikolov 5

A critique on inflation targeting - Marjan Petreski 11

How service learning is conducted in a school of business - Nikola Levkov and Stuart Umpleby . . .25

Financial statement analysis in Albania - Rezarta Perri and Ingrid Shuli 35

Analysis of consumption of students and pensioners in Macedonia - Borce Trenovski 49

CEA Journal of Economics
Volume 4, Issue 2
1-58 pages
Skopje, Macedonia
December 2009

UDC 378.4:371.3(73)

HOW SERVICE LEARNING IS CONDUCTED IN A SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Nikola Levkov, M.Sc.
Department of Management, Faculty of Economics
University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius
Skopje, Macedonia

Stuart Umpleby, Ph.D.
Research Program in Social and Organizational Learning
The George Washington University
Washington, DC 20052
umpleby@gwu.edu

Abstract

The article describes the process of conducting service learning projects at The George Washington University on a graduate level. The main goal of the article is to explore service learning as a learning methodology and to stress some of the benefits and costs of this approach of teaching. Also this article presents some important lessons learned from conducting service learning at George Washington University and some figures about number of the projects done in past and type of the projects and clients. The emphasis is on projects conducted with private voluntary organizations in the DC area.

Key words: *Service learning, models of service learning, student projects, clients, benefits of service learning, lessons learned.*

Presented at the conference on Community Research and Learning
University of the District of Columbia, Washington, DC
April 19, 2008

Introduction

There are academic and professional discussions around the world that address the issue of the best teaching methods for higher education. Universities in different countries are applying diverse teaching methods depending on the country's history and culture and the previous or current economic and political situation. International academic collaboration and globalization of knowledge is a way of learning the most effective methods of teaching in higher education and then spreading those ideas through universities around the world.

A brief history of service learning shows that the roots of service learning can be found somewhere at the beginning of the nineteenth century. (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2009) But the essential features of contemporary service learning first appear in the 1993 National and Community Service Trust Act. That act characterizes service - learning as an educational experience

- in which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated in collaboration with school and community;
- that is integrated into the students' academic curriculum or provides structured time for students to think, talk or write about what they did and saw during the service activity;
- that provides students with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; and
- that enhances what is taught in school by extending students' learning beyond the classroom and into the community and helps to foster the development of a sense of caring for others. (Pritchard and Whitehead, 2004, pp. 2)

The Compact for Learning and Citizenship amplifies the definition of service-learning in the National and Community Service Trust Act by distinguishing it from community service. Taken together these two definitions identify four fundamentals of service- learning:

- Students provide service to meet authentic needs.
- Service links through deliberate planning to the subject matter students are studying and the skills and knowledge they are developing in school.
- Students reflect on the service they provide.
- Service - learning is coordinated in collaboration with the community.

An integrated definition of service learning can be extracted from the National Commission on Service Learning chaired by Senator John Glenn:

> "Service - learning is a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic studies to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities. It engages students in addressing real unmet needs or issues in a community and actively involves them in decision - making at all levels of the process." (Pritchard and Whitehead, 2004, p. 2-4)

According to the report on Service-Learning (2006, p. 4) prepared by The George Washington University Service-Learning Advisory Board, service-learning is defined as: "a philosophy and teaching methodology that integrates meaningful community service into course curricula to enhance academic rigor by helping students to achieve learning outcomes."

What was done over what period of time

The location of The George Washington University provides many opportunities for service-learning activities, because it is located in the nation's capital. The students from GW have easy access to both federal and global policy makers and institutions. Service- learning is widely practiced at GW. In the past few years, more than 30 faculty members in 17 departments have integrated service-learning into their course offerings. (Service-Learning Advisory Board, 2006, pp. 4-5)

The George Washington University has partners that support service learning efforts. The Office of Community Service (OCS) is the clearinghouse for service-learning activities at The George Washington University. OCS staff members work to support service-learning across all academic departments by

providing resources, support, and information to faculty, students, administrators and community partners. OCS has established more than 60 campus-community partnerships with local schools, agencies, and community organizations. Faculty engaged in service-learning may access the Office of Community Service as a resource for identifying a community partner for service-learning projects. (Service-Learning Advisory Board, 2006, pp. 8-9)

The assignment that was given to the students

Service-learning courses contain key elements that set them apart from traditional classes. The main differentiator of a service - learning course is that part of the course occurs outside of the classroom and in the community. However, service-learning courses possess a greater amount of complexity in terms of the number of stakeholders involved and the quality, resonance, and nature of knowledge transfer and competence building. Within a service learning course, a student's learning will go beyond the course subject matter to include capacity building, team work, leadership, communication and citizenship. (Faculty Service-Learning Toolkit, 2007)

While there are a number of models of service-learning, most service-learning experiences can be described in the following five categories:

1. **"Pure" Service-Learning** - These are courses that not only send students out into the community to serve but have, as their intellectual core, the idea of service to communities by students, volunteers, or engaged citizens. They are not typically lodged in any one discipline.
2. **Discipline-Based Service-Learning Courses** - In this model students are expected to have a presence in the community throughout the semester and reflect on their experiences on a regular basis throughout the semester using course content as a basis for their analysis and understanding.
3. **Problem-Based Service-Learning Courses** - According to this model, students or teams of students respond to the community much as "consultants" working for a "client." Students work with community members to understand a particular community problem or need. It is presumed that the students will have some knowledge they can draw upon to make some recommendations to the community or to develop a solution. Architecture students might design a park. Business students might develop a web site. Botanists might identify non-native plants and suggest eradication methods.
4. **Capstone Courses** - These courses are generally designed for majors and minors in a given discipline. As capstone courses they are offered exclusively to seniors or exceptional juniors. They ask students to draw upon the knowledge they have obtained throughout their course work and combine it with relevant service work in the community with the goal of exploring some new topic or to synthesize their understanding of the discipline. These courses offer an excellent way to help students transition between the world of theory and the world of practice while helping students make professional contacts and gather personal experience.
5. **Service Internships** - Like traditional internships, these experiences are more intense than typical service-learning experiences with students working as much as 10 to 20 hours a week in a community setting. As in traditional internships, students are generally charged with producing a body of work that is of value to the community or site. Unlike traditional internships, these internship programs have regular and on-going reflective opportunities that help involved students analyze their new experiences using discipline-based theories. These reflective opportunities can be done with small groups of peers, with one-on-one meetings with faculty advisors, or even electronically with a faculty member providing feedback. And unlike traditional internships these internships focus on reciprocity - the community and the student benefit equally from the experience.

6. **Undergraduate community-based action research** - This is a relatively new approach. Community-based action research is similar to an independent study option for the rare student who is highly experienced in community work. In this model students can work closely with faculty members and learn research methodology while continuing to serve as advocates for communities and the issues of importance to communities. The vast majority of service-learning courses fall into the first three categories - pure, discipline-based, and problem-based. All three have their strengths and weaknesses. (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, and Gray, 2001)

Students in the School of Business at GW are doing service-learning projects as the "laboratory" part of some courses. Students work in teams of three to five people and the goal of the project is to improve the functioning of some organization. The students use the knowledge and methods that they have acquired from the textbook and classes. Working with a client in an organization they work to improve some aspect of the organization. According to the classification above, the projects that are conducted in the Business School at GW are problem-based service-learning courses. On other campuses two difficulties have been found with problem-based service-learning courses.

- The limited exposure of the students to the actual working situation and conditions of the community minimizes the likelihood that the students' "solution" will address the full magnitude of the problem.

- There is a danger in promoting the idea that students are "experts" and communities are "clients." This underscores the cynicism many communities feel toward universities as pejorative entities that promote an insular way of knowing and understanding the world. (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, and Gray, 2001)

These problems are minimized in the projects conducted by GW students, since they work closely within a client in the organization.

Before the students start to work on a project, they have specific guidelines and recommendations on how to do the project, provided by the professor. These guidelines help students do the project effectively. Students fill out a project proposal form giving:

1. Semester and year,
2. Course number and name,
3. Student names, email addresses and telephone numbers,
4. Client name and telephone number,
5. Address of corporation, organization or agency,
6. Project description. (Umpleby, 2000)

Students also have some basic instructions for working on the project effectively and achieving the project goals. The list of instructions is:

1. Make an activity schedule. Stick to it. You may want use project management software.
2. Do not try to do too much. Discuss the size of the task within the group and with the client.
3. Keep notes on what happened at each meeting. Using email can be helpful here.
4. Be conscious of the group process. Talk about conflicts, differences in perception, and how work can be shared fairly.
5. The project is a laboratory, so talk about how your experiences with the project illustrate concepts covered in the course, for example, forming, storming, norming, performing, adjourning.
6. Start using the various analytical methods immediately. They should help you to understand the client system, your group, and the relationships between the two.

7. Present results to both the client and the class. Obtain an evaluation from the client. Write a summary of your report in the form indicated. (Umpleby, 2009)

At the end of the semester, when students finish the project, they prepare a final report which is presented both to the client and in class in front of their classmates. Instructions on how to prepare the final report are listed below:

1. A title page listing the title of the project, the students involved, their telephone numbers, and email addresses, the course and the semester and year.
2. A one-page summary of the project. See the examples at www.gwu.edu/~rpsol/service-learning. In addition to repeating the information in 1, include rationale, goals, methods, and results.
3. A table of contents with page numbers in the report.
4. Project selection. Briefly review the alternatives considered and the reasons for selecting the project chosen. Describe the client and the initial description of the problem or task.
5. Achievements. Say simply but completely what you did. The page titled, "Phases of Consultation," can be used as a rough outline.
6. In the report try to use some of the methods in The Deming Management Method. For example, if appropriate, include an example of each of the following:
    1. A run chart
    2. A Pareto chart
    3. A flow diagram
    4. A cause and effect diagram

7. How was the key problem or issue defined by the client? Sometimes reframing the problem is helpful in moving toward improvement. Did you redefine the problem during your work? Were you able to reframe the issue in a way that seemed helpful to the client?

8. Group process. Describe how your group worked together. What roles did people assume? Did national or cultural background seem to influence the roles that people played in the group? What personality conflicts or communication difficulties emerged? Were the communication difficulties in part the result of cultural background? Explain. Was email helpful? (Umpleby, 2009)

These guidelines help students to develop an appropriate path for doing the projects and not to lose time developing their own way of accomplishing the project activities. Also, these guidelines provide equality among the students in that all students must follow the same guidelines in their project work.

Types of projects

This article presents data on recent projects that have been conducted in two graduate courses in the School of Business at GW. From 1992 to 2007 students worked on 70 projects for different clients (local and state government, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and universities). The projects can be classified in five main groups depending on the type of organization. The distribution of the projects in terms of numbers and percentages is listed in Table 1 and shown in Figure 1.

Table 1. Clients of student projects

Clients	Numbers	Percentage
Businesses	24	34.28%
Federal government agencies	4	5.72%
Local government agencies	6	8.57%
Universities	19	27.14%
Non – profit organizations	17	24.28%
Total	70	100%

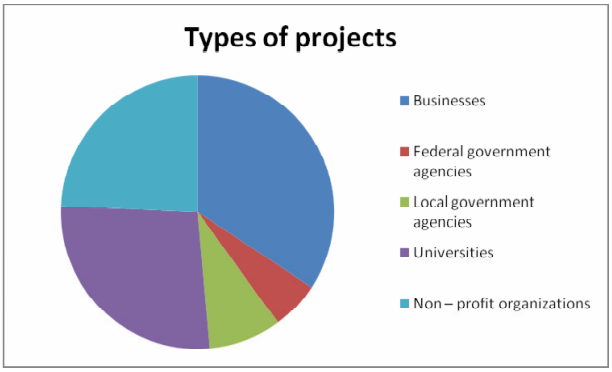

Figure 1.
Clients of student projects

Students used their skills and knowledge to do different kinds of tasks in their project activities. A short description of a few project tasks on which students worked shows a wide range of activities:

1. The students worked to increase the cultural awareness of current and future employees and volunteers at United Methodist Mission Church as well as to increase the usage of the current mission services by the constituent population.
2. GW students worked with Best Buddies International to help them find specific solutions to improving processes in the areas of marketing, strategic management, and human resources.
3. The students worked with the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) in Washington, DC, on website development.
4. A group of GW students worked with the U.S. Coast Guard to incorporate improvements into the new budget development process for the fiscal year 2008 budget cycle.
5. GW students worked with the City's Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA). The DCRA needed recommendations for the proposed restructuring of the information systems department and suggestions for how the staff could keep their technical skills current.
6. The students worked with the U.S. Department of Treasury Financial Management Service to find the best governance model to assist with managing the web portal.
7. GW students worked to improve the circulation of a Spanish language magazine by identifying their readership and providing feedback on the current reception of the magazine in the Hispanic community.
8. The students worked with a group of American and European investors who were exploring the idea of opening a boutique hotel in the Croatian coastal city of Dubrovnik. The investors needed assistance in developing a business plan.

9. GW students worked with the GW International Services Office to create a mentor program for incoming, international students pursuing an undergraduate degree.
10. The students created a new brochure for Japanese children who would attend the Cherry Blossom Festival in the city.

Lessons learned

Implementing service-learning in higher education over a long period of time provides information and experience, which is helpful for improving the process of service-learning. A few important lessons have been learned.

1. Clients are best found by the students

Several benefits result when the client is found by the students. When projects are conducted by graduate students, usually they decide to work with an organization in which one or more students are working. This approach to choosing the client produces several important benefits:

- More trust between the students and the client
- Better collaboration
- More knowledge of the organization and the businesses, processes and problems within the organization
- Less difficulty defining and analyzing the problems and developing solutions
- The recommended improvements are more likely to be implemented, because essential support for implementation continues with the student employee.

2. The initiator of a project must be the client

It is very important that students be supported by the client in their work on the project. If the person in the client organization who approves the project delegates supervising the project to a subordinate, there are usually obstacles for effective project work. In such situations very often a lack of trust is produced between the two people in the client organization. Employees at the lower level may suspect that their boss wants to spy on their work. The obstacles that can be identified in this situation are:

- Lack of trust
- Poor collaboration
- Poor sharing of information
- Difficulties in defining and achieving the goals of the project

3. Clients can be overseas

New information technology has brought many advantages in making higher education activities more global. Using contemporary information and communication technology provides opportunities to collaborate on projects with clients abroad. Working on international projects with clients from other countries provides several important benefits for students:

- Develop cross-cultural communication skills
- Expand knowledge about other cultures

- Develop flexibility by adjusting to another culture's working habits
- Become familiar with the information technology that is necessary for work on international projects
- Learn how to manage international projects in the future.

The benefits of this assignment to students, clients, university and community

Conducting service-learning projects in higher education provides benefits for all parties in the process. Research conducted at Portland State University is a response to the need to measure the impact of service-learning on four constituencies: students, faculty, universities, and community organizations. They used four service-learning courses as a sample for their pilot study.

Researchers identified multiple variables, indicators and measures to examine the hypothesis that participation in service-learning would have a positive impact on all four constituencies. They employed three methods of data collection: in-person assessments, independent reflection measures, and reviews of existing documentation. Preliminary findings supported the legitimacy of the predicted impact on students, community organizations, and faculty. Service-learning affected students in their awareness and involvement in the community; personal development; academic achievement; and sensitivity to diversity. The impact on community organizations was evident in that they perceived an effect on their capacity to serve clients. They received economic and social benefits, and they were satisfied with student interactions. Finally, faculty members felt that community service experiences could be fertile ground for research and other scholarly work. (Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, and Kerrigan, 1996, pp. 66-71)

Benefits for students

Service-learning strengthens students in many ways. Service-learning projects help students become better learners by enhancing their cognitive skills. Student reflection leads to deeper understanding and more genuine transfer of learning. Also they develop brainstorming and problem-solving skills as they work their way out of mistakes. Because service-learning is learning in context, students remember what they learned better and longer, growing educated in the true sense of the word. They are also more motivated to learn because they make many of the decisions about the service-learning projects.

Brain research says that this kind of in-context learning is deep and is long remembered. Students who do service-learning projects demonstrate the increased self-confidence and self-esteem that result from responsible, ethical, independent action. Doing legitimate service projects in the community helps students to feel useful. (Berman, 2006, p. xxvi)

The benefits for students from service-learning can be classified in 5 main groups:

1. Content Learning
- In - context learning
- Enhanced learning (in breadth and depth)
- More enduring learning
- Transfer of learning to new situations

2. Personal Development
- Perception of self as service giver
- Enhanced willingness to take risks
- Openness to new people and experiences

- Leadership, communication, and teamwork skills
- Exposure to and acceptance of different society groups
- Development of internal control
- More empathy - less judging

3. Cognitive skills

- Deepened understanding of concepts
- Enhanced transfer of learning
- Brainstorming
- Problem solving

4. Community connections

- Awareness of community problems
- Awareness of service organizations
- Enhanced civic responsibility

5. Life skills

- Knowing when to ask for help
- Knowing when to offer help
- Knowing how to find help
- Finishing a job that is started
- Following rules and directions
- Promoting personal safety
- Self-evaluation
- Deferring gratification
- Communicating clearly and precisely (Berman, 2006, p. xxviii)

Benefits for clients and the community

Conducting service-learning projects provides several important benefits for the clients and the broader community. Service-learning creates a partnership between the college and the surrounding community. By placing students into an environment outside of their own, the college is enhancing the individual and allowing him or her to participate in experiences that he or she would not have otherwise. Several benefits can be identified:

- Provides substantial human resources to meet educational, human, safety, and environmental needs of local communities.
- Allows the energy and enthusiasm of college students to contribute to meeting needs.
- Fosters an ethic of service and civic participation in students who will be tomorrow's volunteers and civic leaders.
- Creates potential for additional partnerships and collaboration with the campus.
- Fosters the development of relationships between organizations and faculty
- Provides additional human resources needed to achieve mission and goals
- Creates a larger pool of experienced volunteers from which to recruit future participants and leaders
- Allows organizations to play a role in educating and challenging student perceptions about current community issues
- Offers organizations the opportunity to identify and access University resources (Career and Community Learning Center, 2009; Ruiz, 2009)

Benefits of service-learning for faculty

Several important benefits can be identified for the university and the academic staff:

- Creates new avenues for scholarship and publication
- Enhances connections between research and teaching
- Provides networking opportunities for colleagues across disciplines
- Increases student recruitment and retention to departments due to increased enthusiasm and engagement with coursework
- Offers faculty the opportunity to be actively engaged and knowledgeable about community issues
- Fosters motivated teaching due to greater student interaction with subject matter
- Fosters the development of relationships between organizations and faculty (Career and Community Learning Center, 2009)

REFERENCES

Berman, Sally, "Service Learning-- A Guide to Planning, Implementing, and Assessing Student Projects," Corwin Press, 2006.

Career and Community Learning Center, "Community Involvement and Service-Learning." University of Minnesota. http://servicelearning.umn.edu/faculty/Benefits_of_ServiceLearning_for_Faculty_and_Instructors.html. Retrieved on November 26, 2009.

Career and Community Learning Center, "Community Involvement and Service-Learning." University of Minnesota. http://servicelearning.umn.edu/faculty/Benefits_of_ServiceLearning_for_Community_Organizations.html. Retrieved on November 26, 2009.

Corporation for National and Community Service, "Important Dates in the Development of Service-Learning." http://www.servicelearning.org/filemanager/download/timeline.pdf. Retrieved on November 26, 2009.

Driscoll, A., Holland, B., Gelmon, S., and Kerrigan, S. (1996). "An Assessment Model for Service-Learning: Comprehensive Case Studies of Impact on Faculty, Students, Community, and Institutions." Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 3, 66-71.

Eyler, Janet S., Dwight E.Giles, Jr., Christine M. Stenson, and Charlene J. Gray, "At a Glance: What We Know about the Effects of Service-Learning on College Students, Faculty, Institutions and Communities," 1993-2000: Third Edition. Vanderbilt University, August 31, 2001.

"Faculty Service-Learning Toolkit," Community Campus Partnership for Health and National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2007.

Payne, David A. "Evaluating Service - Learning Activities & Programs," Scarecrow Press. Inc., 2000.

Pritchard, Florence Fay and George I. Whitehead, "Serve and Learn" Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey, 2004.

Ruiz, Olga, "Service-Learning," City Colleges of Chicago. http://faculty.ccc.edu/oruiz/BENEFITS%20OF%20SERVICE%20LEARNING.htm Retrieved on November 26, 2009.

Service-Learning Advisory Board, "Report on Service-Learning," The George Washington University, December 2006.

Umpleby, Stuart, http://www.gwu.edu/~rpsol/service-learning, Retrieved on 04/02/2009.