

SERVICE-LEARNING COURSE DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE
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COURSE REVISION PROCEDURES

In the process of converting a traditional course into its service-learning equivalent, consider the following items. Try to address them *as specifically as possible*.

PART I: THE COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECT AND ITS VALUE

Name of Course: American Literature II

Instructor: Conrad Shumaker, Univ. of Central Arkansas

1. Briefly describe your course objectives as the course currently exists. Then briefly describe a community-based project (direct service, problem solving, resource creation, student research, etc.) that would complement those objectives.

Current Course Objectives:

1. Understand literature in cultural/historical context
2. Become better readers of literature
3. Increases skills in written/oral communication

Complementary Community-Based Project:

Group sets up presentation by Heifer International each writes a paper on what was learned as context for particular work, (e.g. Steinbeck, Hughes, Silko, etc.

2. Identify some specific ways in which the course's community-based project could reinforce, deepen, broaden and/or complement your current course objectives. Note: The value of the project may reveal itself in content-specific outcomes (utilization of a skill or methodology) or be related to more generic outcomes such as critical thinking, appreciation of diversity, enhanced communication skills, and leadership skills. Or it may do both.

Course Enhancements Made Possible by Community-Based Project:

1. Understanding context for literature of protest
2. Enhance knowledge of pressures on cultural groups
3. Understand impact of consumer culture on the "Other"

3. What *concrete benefits* would the community-based project provide for the course's community partner(s) and/or the community in general? (Since this question should ideally be answered by your community partner(s), your answer will necessarily be provisional.)

PART II: COURSE DESIGN

4. What would be the best format for the course's community-based activities: (a) mandatory or elective; (b) individual or group; (c) a major or a minor course component? Explain your choices. If you believe the community-based work should be mandatory, what current assignment(s) would it replace? If you believe it should be elective, how would you make it possible for the class as a whole to benefit from it?

Mandatory/Elective – Rationale:

Elective:

As a first time project it will be more manageable, give opportunity to discover complications.

- **If elective, how would the community-based work be made useful to the rest of the class?**

Students who participate contribute to discussion on chosen literary work

Individual/Group – Rationale:

Group:

Creates larger audience, encourages, teamwork, involves more students

Major/Minor Part of Course – Rationale:

One paper (Major) instead of traditional research paper

5. Are there any adjustments you would want to make to the course's non-community based components to integrate them better with the course's community-based work?

Classroom-based Adjustments:

1. Focus more on literature of protest
2. Make time for student participation on work.

6. How will your students need to be prepared for their community-based work? Identify both content-related knowledge (e.g., technical skills) and areas where special attention may be called for (e.g., social stereotyping, safety considerations, personal anxieties and concerns). Should anyone else be involved in the preparation process?

Content-Related Preparation:

Choosing appropriate works

Personal/Social Preparation:

Possible Preparation Assistance:

Heifer Training

PART III: FACILITATING LEARNING

7. Identify some of the *course-related* topics and competencies your students should be asked to relate – in class discussion and/or in writing – to their community project.

Topics: Literature in cultural context

Competencies: Ability to discuss literature in its context in both written and oral form.

8. What contemporary social issues could the project help students better understand? Are there “civic skills” you could use the project to develop (e.g., finding a “public voice”; providing testimony/official recommendations; communicating with non-experts; understanding public-policy issues; navigating political conflicts)?

Contemporary Social Issues: Social Justice, role of “America”

Civic Skills: Communication with groups; working with non-profit organizations

9. In what areas could the project help your students grow personally (e.g., recognizing unexamined assumptions, critically examining their judgments, learning to deal with diversity, developing time management skills, developing leadership skills)?

Personal Growth Areas:

1. Recognizing assumptions (poverty in “America”)
2. Develop organizing skills

10. Identify some of the more important outcomes of the community-based work that you want to be able to assess. Then identify some of the indicators you might use to measure success.

Student Outcomes: Describe and discuss relevance of literature to contemporary issues
communicate to others the above

Project Outcomes: Increased community awareness of issues

Indicators of Each: Paper, discussion, evaluation by audience

