

**SERVICE-LEARNING COURSE DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE**  
**Dr. Edward Zlotkowski**

***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:** Organizational Communication

**Instructor:** J. J. McIntyre, University of Central Arkansas

**Group:** Kristen McIntyre (UALR), Martha Maddox (TN Wesleyan), Suzanne Hine (TN Wesleyan), Karuva Kaseke (Berea), Sherrie Sandor (UALR)

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:**

- Understand different approaches to studying organizations.
- Understand/critique an organization's culture in regard to communication.
- Understand/critique power dynamics in an organization
- Apply theory to real situations.

**Complementary Community-Based Project:**

- Cultural communication analyses of local organization (e.g. local businesses and non-profits)
- Describe how communication functions using theory. Create recommendations and implications both in class and for the organization.

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:**

- Communicate effectively in a variety of organizational settings
- Practice creating case studies
- Observe organization communication in a structured and real environment.
- Involved in the messiness of theory application

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.)

1. Increases awareness of organization to student body, community, and the university.
2. Receive an outside perspective of organizational functioning that normally could not afford.
3. Participate in an honest, ongoing dialogue about incoming employee com, deficits, expectations
4. Identify potential problems with organization
5. Improve organization
6. Find future employees

## 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:**

#### Mandatory

- **If mandatory, what assignment(s) would the community-based work replace?**  
Allow students to choose development area, address real problems, and experiences.  
Complete overhaul

### **Individual/Group – Rationale:**

#### Group

- Businesses want employees to have group skills, used often
- Promotes problem solving

### **Major/Minor Part of Course – Rationale:**

#### Major

- Meets course objectives
- Promotes additional skill development
- Skill and theoretical content transfer

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:**

- Students select group to work with, which allows them to choose the development area.

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:**

- Content before practice

- Grading criteria-rubrics
- IRB approval
- Ongoing process dialogue

**Personal/Social Preparation:**

- Understanding of service learning
- Professionalism
- Contact information
- Develop community partners
- Course goals -> create open communication channels

**Possible Preparation Assistance:**

- Double prep
- Faculty networking
- Community partners
- University

**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:**

- Perspectives to organizational study
- Theory
- Power

**Competencies:**

- Identify the most useful perspective
- Apply theory and create appropriate recommendations
- Identify and critique power structures

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:**

- Public voice
- Communicating with non-experts
- Understanding public policy issues
- Navigate Political conflicts

**Civic Skills:**

- Understanding organizational communication’s role as a central process to social change.

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:**

- See the practicality of theory
- See and understand communication at different levels of an organization.
- Develop group skills
- Learn to transfer class learning with experience

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:**

- Strengthen organization
- Generate two way feedback and communication

**Project Outcomes:**

- Exams
- Reflections
- Dialogue with partners

**Indicators of Each:**

