

Wayne State College

10 Points of Project-Based Service-Learning

- ☑ Project-based service-learning tends to produce community “outcomes” that are more tangible, more easily “documented.” “Indirect” projects and community-based research tend to result in more tangible products whose value extends beyond a particular semester.
- ☑ Service-learning efforts also tend to be completed in concentrated time blocks in the classroom, in the field or during agency consultations and/or presentations. This allows easier scheduling for students.
- ☑ Projects, particularly those involving direct specialized events/programs may require students to spend a block of time, at times an entire day at a site.
- ☑ Service-learning projects require more time from the instructor in planning, coordinating, and monitoring project progress with both agency partners and student teams.
- ☑ A project-based approach with an internal sub grant process can make budget management very challenging and time consuming.
- ☑ Service-learning time variations occur. The actual time students tend to devote to a project also tends to vary by course, depending on the project and course enrollment. For example, WSC student involved in the campus recycling project report completing 4-5 hours while the computer science students who were involved in a technology project for a small parochial school averaged 40-50 hours.
- ☑ The primary relationship of service-learning shifts from those between student and client to those between faculty and agency personnel. The fundamental faculty/agency bonds that emerge may contribute to future project partnerships and a stronger sense of reciprocity between partners than may be the case for direct placements.
- ☑ At times, the same agency may be a partner in multiple service-learning courses during a given semester. These situations lead to the development of what we might call “core” community partners. Coordination and communication are obviously key factors in managing these situations.
- ☑ Service-learning involves a “match game” linking appropriate courses and community projects which is not always successful. A community request for assistance may not be filled because appropriate courses and/or interested faculty are not available. On the flip side, there may be faculty members who cannot find a suitable community project for a particular course. Course rotations also impact this process.
- ☑ Project-based service-learning involves students with a more “institutional” type of client. Students spend more time with agency representations rather than clients, business managers rather than customers or employees, and teachers rather than students. In these cases, faculty must make special efforts to frame the project in a service-learning context to enhance the “learning to serve” component of the experience.