Service-Learning Faculty Handbook

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Service-learning landscape design studio course, near Tanyard Creek (Courtesy Dr. S. Lee)
Introduction: What is Service-Learning?

As a 2010 recipient of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, the University of Georgia (UGA) is invested in linking instruction and outreach to community needs locally, statewide and internationally. One key way for faculty members to engage in such work is through academic service-learning. Service-learning helps integrate two core aspects of UGA’s mission—teaching and service—and is explicitly recommended in UGA’s 2010-2020 Strategic Plan; UGA’s promotion and tenure guidelines also allow “service-learning and outreach courses at home or abroad, where research and new knowledge are integrated” to be classified as research/creative activities. Over 125 courses that involve service-learning are now offered, spanning most of UGA’s schools and colleges, with additional coursework being developed and taught every semester. Service-learning is also a recommended aspect of the First-Year Odyssey Program.

Service-learning at UGA is defined as “a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility.”1

Pharmacy students involved with smoking cessation programs (Courtesy Dr. D. McEwen)

In academic service-learning, credit is not given simply for completing service hours, but for the learning that takes place. Service-learning differs from community service, internships, or field study experiences because the service activity is connected to the course learning goals through reflection and critical analysis, and seeks to balance the benefits to the student with benefits to the community

partners. Service-learning activities engage and partner with the community, whether local, state-wide or international; thus, the service activities should respond to community-identified needs, and when possible, the community should have a voice in the design and implementation of the service activity. In many cases, the community partner becomes a co-educator, and valuing this community knowledge and expertise is helpful in sustaining collaborative partnerships.

**Service Project:** UGA students paint the walls of a local school with murals to help improve the building’s appearance.

**Service-Learning:** In the context of an Art and Culture course, UGA students work with the community to develop and paint murals on a school building that reflect the community’s vision, demonstrating course learning outcomes relating to working with clients and helping teach the elementary students about art design and techniques, and reflect on the experience and its link with the academic aspects of the course.

**Service Project:** Students serve meals at the homeless shelter.

**Service-Learning:** As part of a gerontology course, social work students take part in the Meals on Wheels program serving local seniors. Students reflect on the experience and how it relates to their course readings on food insecurity issues for Georgia’s aging population. Using their disciplinary expertise, they develop and share with the agency recommendations for extending the program’s impact.

Decades of research into academic service-learning show that it can have positive outcomes not only for students, but also for faculty members, the institution, and the community.

For instance, students taking part in service-learning coursework have an opportunity to learn the academic content more deeply and perceive its applications to those outside campus. Students can develop professional competencies and skills such as collaboration, interaction with clients, communication, and problem-solving. Service-learning venues can also provide opportunities for meaningful interaction with others from diverse backgrounds, and can enhance students’ civic participation and personal growth. Students gain an appreciation for the complexities of off-campus communities and how the university can work with community partners to solve problems.
At UGA, students participating in end-of-course surveys reported across semesters ($n=1213$, 2007-2010) that taking part in service-learning “helped me better understand the subject matter of this course” (81.7%), “developed a greater sense of personal responsibility for my own learning” (80.8%), “helped me better understand people of different ages, abilities, cultures, or economic backgrounds” (87.8%), and “helped me see how the material covered in this course can be useful in everyday life or in other situations” (87.4%). (For more on the end-of-course survey, see [www.servicelearning.uga.edu](http://www.servicelearning.uga.edu).)

“I truly believe that there is no greater education than service-learning; experience such as this, is something you could never learn from text books or multiple choice exams. You are able to learn and grow as a student while doing some good in our community and helping make the future brighter for many [others]; what more could you ask for?”

—Student reflection, ESOL Service-Learning tutoring course participant

Faculty members who engage in service-learning also report more contact with students, better student in-class interaction and motivation, and more satisfaction with their teaching. (In the end-of-course survey, for instance, 74.7% of students agreed that their “relationship with the course instructor or teaching assistant was more positive as a result of the service-learning activity.”) Service-learning also can open new venues for engaged research and publication, and can help keep faculty members current with emergent issues in their fields.

The university likewise can accomplish positive relationships with communities locally, statewide and internationally through service activities, and can demonstrate that its graduates are better prepared for their future civic and professional lives. UGA has received the Community Engagement classification from the Carnegie Foundation, as well as the President’s Community Service Honor Roll designation, in recognition of some of this engaged work.

Public Service & Outreach Student Scholars sampling water at UGA’s Marine Education Center (Courtesy OSL)
Getting Started with Service-Learning

If you’ve never been involved with service-learning previously, it may seem intimidating to successfully design and carry out a true service-learning course your first time. Starting small is OK! Many faculty members have begun with including an optional service-learning component, or with incorporating a smaller project as a pilot to get underway. Likewise, most faculty who start off with service-learning feel like they are “learning by doing” and often are concerned about how well they are following best-practice guidelines; this is a normal feeling, but it is also possible to prepare effectively for a new implementation of service activities into your course.

What should a faculty member think about in creating a service-learning course? Regardless of your field or context, here are four main considerations that can help walk you through the process. These steps are iterative, not linear; you may need to move back and forth across each of them multiple times as you refine your thinking and planning.

(1) Identify the community need and establish appropriate partnerships;
(2) (Re)design your course with these needs in mind, linking course goals with the service and learning activities;
(3) Effectively prepare your projects as well as your students; and
(4) Build in reflection and evaluation/assessment of the student and community experience.

See also the tools and planning sheets in the Appendix and at www.servicelearning.uga.edu.
Consideration 1: Establishing Community Need and Partnerships

As mentioned, a key tenet of effective service-learning is that students take part in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs. Many faculty members who are interested in particular communities or social issues may already have strong connections with potential community partners. However, it is also possible to develop ideas and activities that specifically relate to your course and academic content. Not only should you find an area that you and your students can be passionate about, but also it must be an actual need expressed within the community that you plan to work with. This is part of the reciprocity of the partnership—the community and partnering agency, not just the university, should have a primary voice in deciding what is a priority and how to address it. Try to avoid a “solution in search of a problem”—that is, there may be an activity you’d like to have your class involved in, but if it doesn’t help meet the perceived needs of your community partner, that’s a concern.

The Office of Service-Learning and other UGA units often have annual focus areas with faculty and community working groups interested in thematic topics that have been identified as priorities. These include, for instance, K-12 education, community/school gardening, food insecurity, Latino issues, poverty, childhood obesity, sustainability, public health, and more. Check with OSL to find out about current faculty interest groups and focal areas. UGA’s Archway Partnership also has well-developed connections with communities throughout the state, and is able to identify specific community needs and resource people. See http://archwaypartnership.uga.edu/.
The Archway Partnership collaborated with a faculty member in English to have students in her “Writing for the World Wide Web” course review and make recommendations for the Clayton County governmental website. Students applied their best practices for web writing to help make sure the website communicated effectively with the target audience in the community.

Some Faculty Concerns

When considering how to work with a community partner and the logistics of incorporating service-learning into your class, there are a few commonly perceived barriers by faculty:

- **Faculty Time.** Including service-learning generally requires additional faculty time outside the classroom, e.g. for meeting with community partners, orienting students to the activity, travel to offsite locations, etc. While a reality, most faculty members also find that the added benefits to their course, their students, the community, and their own motivation more than make up for the time committed.

- **Student Time.** Service activities also may take additional time outside the regular class hours, though service can also be productively incorporated into regularly scheduled class sessions. Some programs make their service-intensive courses 4-credit-hour to reflect this. Many faculty members also like to think of the service activities as a kind of “text.” Just as faculty members select a particular set of readings for the particular course being taught, a service activity can be chosen to illuminate particular issues, to help raise awareness or pose questions, etc. Student time spent on the service activity can be analogous to time spent outside class reading more traditional texts.

- **Transportation/Location.** If service activities are happening off campus, how will students get there? Negotiating bus routes, finding carpool partners, or the additional expense of fuel might all be hurdles for students. Of course, not all service activities need to happen far from campus; UGA itself might be the community partner for some activities (sustainability studies on campus buildings; health interventions targeting students or staff; ecology work with on-campus watersheds; etc.) and others (e.g. the Athens Community Council on Aging; downtown merchants; Oconee Hills cemetery; some schools; UGArd) are likely sufficiently convenient to campus. Some kinds of indirect service work (e.g., policy studies, advocacy work, recommendations for improving operating practices) as well as service via technology (online tutoring, website development, etc.) could be done without leaving campus. Of course, there are also benefits for students going off campus in terms of getting to know more about the rest of the Athens-Clarke County community, which may outweigh the challenges posed by leaving campus.

- **Finding a Community Partner.** Once a need or focal area for the service has been identified, how can faculty members find a partnering organization to work with? One of the best “one-stop shops” for finding local community partners is the Volunteer Solutions online database and portal, sponsored by HandsOn Northeast Georgia, OSL,
and UGA’s Center for Leadership and Service. Faculty or students can search by agency, by topic area, or by activity. Faculty members can also use the portal to set up customized service activities, and students can track and report their service hours. See more at http://www.handsonnortheastgeorgia.org.

A Workforce Education professor offering a course on “Network Design and Administration” worked with HandsOn Northeast Georgia to identify local community non-profits that needed assistance with selecting and setting up safe and effective computer networks for their agency. A team of students applied their knowledge to meet this community need and demonstrate their understanding of the course’s learning objectives in a real-world setting, helping the Athens Nurses Clinic.

Students in Network Design & Administration course (Courtesy M. Childs, College of Education)

See Appendices A & B for planning worksheets that may be helpful in thinking through planning your project. Additionally, for longer-running partnerships where substantial supervision or instruction is being provided by the community partner, talk with UGA Legal Affairs (http://www.uga.edu/legal/) about creating a formalized, annual Memorandum of Understanding between UGA and the agency.

Remember that inherent in the idea of partnership is that it should be reciprocal and mutually beneficial. While our students learn a tremendous amount from their work in the community, the partner organization should also be getting something from the experience, as if often requires a substantial investment of their agency’s time (e.g., supervision, paperwork) and even money (e.g., background check or payroll expenses for extra on-site supervisory personnel). It’s important that you communicate regularly and proactively with your community partner and that you fully consider and talk through logistical issues, concerns, past experiences, goals, etc. For instance, community partners may have a minimum commitment expected from students throughout the semester, so that they can accurately predict their service capacity and infrastructural needs. Some might want university assistance in helping collect and analyze impact data. Some departments may provide student workers to help support the on-site logistics (e.g. student sign-ins and reporting) of larger program partners.
Consideration 2: Course Design and Development

Designing a service-learning course may be a process of modifying a currently existing course, or developing an entirely new course offering. Some faculty members have been successful in beginning with an independent study or special topics course. Faculty members in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, for instance, might choose to use the FCID 3900S (“Service-Learning and the Arts and Sciences”) course prefix for piloting a new interdisciplinary service-learning course.

Other faculty members have begun by incorporating service-learning as an optional learning activity (e.g., in place of a research paper) in a “regular” course rather than requiring service activities for all students. It’s fine to start small and integrate more service aspects after you have piloted it for a semester. At some point, you may want to designate the course with an “S” suffix (see below). When service activities are primarily taking place outside of class hours, some faculty members have created a separate “lab” section for the service activities, or have increased the credit hours for the course, to help demonstrate this additional time commitment. However, remember that in service-learning, credit is given for the learning, not just for the service.

The Office of Service-Learning has additional information and faculty development programs and workshops that focus more deeply on service-learning course design and development. For instance, the Service-Learning Fellows program, an annual, year-long faculty development program run by OSL, is an excellent way to learn more about service-learning best practices, syllabus design, and implementation. This competitive program is highly recommended for faculty interested in developing a new service-learning course; applications are usually due in March. OSL staff and departmental faculty who are engaged with service-learning are also willing to serve as mentors, answer questions and share resources. For more information or individual help with your course design, contact the Office of Service-Learning.
S Designation

If you are including a service-learning element in your course (whether a new course, or a redesigned one), we encourage you to have it designated as a service-learning course through UGA’s CAPA course approval process. Course with a service-learning component can now be designated with an “S” suffix (e.g., ENGL1101S). This allows students to recognize it as a service-learning course, and it shows up as such on their transcript; it also facilitates institutional tracking and awareness of campus service-learning initiatives. Both “S” and “regular” versions of the same course can exist and the appropriate version loaded for the particular faculty member or semester as desired. Directions and FAQ are available at the OSL’s website, www.servicelearning.uga.edu.

SLIC Database

The Office of Service-Learning is also creating a searchable relational database for faculty and students to track service-learning courses offered, activities, and contacts; this “Service-Learning Inventory of Courses” (SLIC) database is linked to the syllabus and course descriptions, and can be accessed at xxxx.

Integrated Course Design

A helpful tool for any course design is L. Dee Fink’s model, which focuses on “creating significant learning experiences” by tightly linking and integrating learning goals for students, the assessment activities to be used, and the learning activities such as the service-learning or community-based component (see Figure 1). In integrated or “backwards” course design, faculty start with the “end” of the learning process and work back through the design of the course. Fink suggests asking the following questions:

- What do you want students to learn by the end of the course? (learning goals)
• What will students have to do to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning goals? (assessment)
• What would have to happen during the course for students to do well on the assessment activity? (teaching and learning activities, including the particular community service activity)

Figure 1. FINK’S (2004) BACKWARD COURSE DESIGN TRIADIC MODEL

Fink also provides a broader taxonomy of significant learning (foundational knowledge, application, integration, human dimension, caring goals, and learning how to learn) that aligns particularly well with service-learning benefits and outcomes as illustrated in the taxonomy wheel below (Figure 2).

Figure 2. FINK’S TAXONOMY OF SIGNIFICANT LEARNING
As you consider your service-learning course design, use the following three-column chart to think through the backwards course design model. For much more on Fink’s course design recommendations see [http://www.finkconsulting.info/files/Fink2005SelfDirectedGuideToCourseDesign.doc](http://www.finkconsulting.info/files/Fink2005SelfDirectedGuideToCourseDesign.doc)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goals</th>
<th>Assessment Activities</th>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundational</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Application</td>
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<td>Integration</td>
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Examples:

**WMST 4170/6170: Environment, Gender, Race, Class.**
This course examines how environmental degradation is connected to issues of social injustice. Students take part in service-learning work with local non-profit agencies on food rescue and distribution. Throughout the semester, students examine how campus kitchens can serve as models for universities and colleges to build community partnerships to combat hunger, to foster student leadership in service, and to encourage greater environmental sustainability on campuses.

Highlight from 3-Column Chart:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Dimension</th>
<th>Learning Goals:</th>
<th>Assessment Activities:</th>
<th>Learning Activities:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceive themselves as valuable contributors to positive social change</td>
<td>Two “current events analysis” assignments</td>
<td>Identify issues of gender, race, class and the environment in current events and develop suggestions for positive changes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect course material to their personal lives and everyday practices in meaningful ways</td>
<td>Reflection on participation in service-learning project with [community organizations] Full Plate and/or Food Not Bombs</td>
<td>Participation and experiential learning in activities of the two non-profits</td>
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Prepavring food for the Athens Community Council on Aging via Campus Kitchen (Courtesy P. Frey)

HACE 8900: Seminar in Financial Therapy.
Students provide financial counseling and financial therapy services to individuals and couples from the local community via the UGA Aspire Clinic. Students also provide financial counseling to survivors of domestic violence in partnership with Project Safe and at their facilities. The goal of students' work is to increase the overall financial well-being of members of their community, while applying their classroom knowledge and developing their client relationship skills.

Highlight from 3-Column Chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Learning Goals:</th>
<th>Assessment Activities:</th>
<th>Learning Activities:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Integration of increasing technical knowledge within the working alliance and progress with clients</td>
<td>• Class members provide feedback on case presentations</td>
<td>• Present cases to the class on a weekly basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Integration of various sources of learning within class discussions</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify strengths and opportunities in peer case presentations and client sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop and improve case presentation skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Observe each other’s work with clients</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Foundational | • Develop knowledge regarding technical and interpersonal aspects | • Describe the stages of change | • Develop own “theory of helping” and relate to TTM |
|              | • Describe/demonstrate |                                      | |

**UGA Service-Learning Faculty Handbook, p. 14**
associated with improving individuals’ financial well-being
  • Understand the stages of the Transtheoretical Model of Change (TTM)
interpersonal strategies for developing rapport with clients and technical and non-technical interventional strategies
• Interactions with clients
• Discuss and compare intervention strategies with others in the class

Learning professional skills in financial counseling (Courtesy Dr. J. Goetz)

TXMI 5310: Advanced Design Methods.
Students work with older adults to develop strategies for healthy Aging in Place. Students focus on elements related to the built environment and provide advice on safety, clutter, storage, sustainability and healthy housing.
Highlight from 3-Column Chart:

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<th></th>
<th>Learning Goals:</th>
<th>Assessment Activities:</th>
<th>Learning Activities:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>• Develop compassion for self and others</td>
<td>• Team debriefing meetings with the instructor</td>
<td>• Programming and discussions on client population for service-learning project</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrate commitment to the field of design</td>
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<td>• Read case studies about the population</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Know that their theoretical design knowledge is special and they must “pay it forward” now</td>
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Consideration 3: Preparing the Project and Your Students

Part of course preparation is getting your community project component prepared, but equally important is getting your students ready for the service experience. As you consider what service-learning activities will allow your students to develop the learning outcomes you want, remember that the “service” activity itself does not necessarily have to entail the students leaving campus to meet a community need. Both direct service (e.g., tutoring) and indirect service (e.g., preparing materials for an agency) can be helpful for the community and for your students’ development.

More examples of service-learning by UGA faculty and students include:

Teams of students in a course on non-profit management meet with select Athens-area non-profit organizations. Students research, create and present a new policy manual with organizational governance recommendations for each organization.

Horticulture students in a Residential Landscape Design class work with low-income homeowners to design, renovate, and install landscaping in their yards, applying design principles and learning technical skills.

Pharmacy students develop and demonstrate their skills in health education and behavior change by providing a smoking cessation course to UGA employees.

First-year medical students learn about issues relating to seniors taking multiple medications through work with clients at the Athens Community Council on Aging, and design a database for the staff to help track medications and interactions.
Medical students learn about polypharmacy through service-learning (Courtesy Dr. L. Murrow)

Through UGA’s College of Environment & Design and the Fanning Institute, students at UGA Costa Rica work with San Luis community members (rural farmers, community organizations) to assess and implement ecotourism-oriented design and planning projects such as trail location, signage, website development, brochure design, and carry out charrettes focused on other identified community infrastructure projects.

Undergraduates majoring in Statistics provide a capstone statistics outreach project in which they assist UGA faculty members with targeted statistical analysis, helping them determine the best way to organize and analyze large sets of data for the faculty members’ research.

Photography students apply course principles in creating personal and professional dossiers of photos of Archway communities, and supply high-quality images back to the community for their use in marketing and promotion of their community.

Another way of thinking about your project and what you and your students will do, can be summed up in the “PARC” (Planning, Action, Reflection, Celebration) model (see Figure 3).
### Figure 3. THE PARC MODEL

#### SERVICE-LEARNING COMPONENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Planning</strong></th>
<th><strong>Need</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What issue, need, or problem will the project address?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Who will determine the need (e.g., students, faculty, others)?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What strategies will you use to determine the need?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What evidence of the need will you gather?</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Service</strong></th>
<th><strong>Learning</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What service will the project or activity provide?</td>
<td>• What prior learning is necessary for completing the project (e.g., background knowledge, teamwork skills, leadership skills)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who will determine the service?</td>
<td>• What learning do you anticipate being acquired during the project?</td>
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<td>• How will you document the service being provided?</td>
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<td>• What resources are necessary to provide the service?</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Participants</strong></th>
<th><strong>Reflection</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Who will participate in the project (e.g., students, faculty, community members, businesses, agencies, organizations)?</td>
<td>• In what ways will participants reflect before, during, and after the project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What roles will participants play?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What responsibilities will each have?</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Evaluation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Action</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How will participants be evaluated (e.g., traditional assessment, alternative assessment)?</td>
<td>• Are participants implementing the service according to plan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When will participants be evaluated (e.g., formative, summative)?</td>
<td>• What modifications are necessary?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Who is responsible for the evaluation?</td>
<td>• Are your resources sufficient?</td>
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<th><strong>Service</strong></th>
<th><strong>Learning</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Are participants implementing the service according to plan?</td>
<td>• What learning is taking place (e.g., foundational, application, caring, learning to learn...)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What modifications are necessary?</td>
<td>• What additional skills and knowledge are necessary (i.e., unanticipated learning)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are your resources sufficient?</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Evaluation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Documentation</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• Am I assessing participant learning (e.g., academic, non-academic)?</td>
<td>• How are participants documenting the service (e.g., surveys, questionnaires, interviews, observations, photography, artifacts, sign-in sheets)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Am I assessing the service being provided?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is the community partner providing feedback on the activities?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Am I assessing the status of the project?</td>
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*UGA Service-Learning Faculty Handbook, p. 18*
Preparing your Students

Students who have not taken part in service-learning previously may be especially concerned or confused about what the expectations are. If you have successfully developed a project that relates to your course learning goals, students will generally be more willing to engage with the activity. Likewise, ensuring that the students understand the expectations and details up front will help them manage their stress about the community-based component. Some ideas for helping manage student expectations:
- Include information in the OASIS course description letting students know they will need transportation, will spend time off campus, etc.

- Provide clear guidelines in the syllabus for the service experience (times, days, locations, etc.). Remember that many community partners expect a consistent commitment and/or an overall total amount of time from the students, to allow them to plan effectively for using the students.

- If past semesters’ students did summative reflections of their service experience, share those with current students to let them see the value of the experience.

Students will also need to know the details of the project itself. What are the expectations and “deliverables” for the community-based project? Are there background checks or on-site orientations required, and if so, when, where and how? What are basic details of logistics such as location, transportation, community partner details, timing, communications and language issues? How and by whom will service and service-learning activities be graded/evaluated?

Confirming your students’ prior experiences and expertise in the sort of project you have in mind can be helpful. Although it’s not uncommon for service-learning assignments to entail more ambiguity than in more traditional assignments, students generally will benefit from fairly detailed information regarding what they will be doing for their community-based activity, and their questions may help you think about aspects of the activity that you had not previously considered.

![Oyster-reef restoration project at Marine Extension/Skidaway Island (Courtesy B. Lipthratt)](image)
Our OSL analyses of the data from the end-of-course surveys also support the importance of dedicating time to reflection and in-class work on the service activity; in fact, in a study on UGA’s general-education learning outcome areas such as critical thinking and moral reasoning, there was a statistically significant, positive relationship between students reporting more in-class time on the service activity and these learning outcomes. Simply spending more time on the service activity by itself, however, did not result in the same improvements in the learning outcomes.

**Consideration 4: Evaluating and Assessing the Experience**

Not only should assessment of the students’ learning be something that is carefully thought through in advance (cf. Fink’s model), but assessing the service experiences as a whole (including the community and institutional aspects) is important.

**Reflection**

UGA’s definition of successful implementation of course-based service-learning includes making sure that students have structured opportunities to reflect on how the service activity links to their academic content and other civic and personal dimensions of learning. More techniques and tools for critical reflection can be found on OSL’s website, [www.servicelearning.uga.edu](http://www.servicelearning.uga.edu).

Briefly, many instructors have found that effective reflection requires careful consideration of the feedback prompts employed. To move students beyond just a description of what they did, for instance, some instructors use a “What? So What? Now What?” model to encourage critical reflection. Others use arts-based reflection (photo essays, sketches, etc.) rather than only written reflection. Instructors have also found that international service-learning is especially supported by incorporating reflective prompts into the course reading packet itself, which may include responses not only to informational readings, but also to photos, poems, fiction, and cultural items. Again, the assessment items (e.g. reflection) need to be carefully linked both to the course learning outcomes, and to the community-based activities.
Assessment

Student learning outcomes can be assessed via reflections, pre/post instruments, course evaluations, final projects, etc. You may wish to work with the UGA Human Subjects/Institutional Review Board to gain approval to use these data for research purposes, as well.

The Office of Service-Learning has an end-of-semester Service-Learning Course Survey, used with service-learning courses campus-wide to assess the activities and impact, including elements relating to UGA’s general education abilities. (A revised version is available for courses taught at UGA Costa Rica, which includes aspects of language and cultural competence.) The OSL reports the information gathered back to each individual instructor, and also uses the aggregate data for institutional reporting. Contact the OSL to see a copy of this survey and to sign your course up. This survey can be administered either online or through paper copies.

As part of the evaluation of the service activity, students should have the opportunity to present their “deliverable” or provide feedback on the experience to the community partners. A culminating community celebration/presentation of student work should also be built in when possible. This provides an important opportunity for reflective assessment of the outcomes, impact, and next steps, and provides an opportunity for the community partner to comment on and view the student work. If there will be “deliverables” following at a later date, you should establish a clear time-line and means for communication with community partners so they aren’t left wondering if and when they should expect to receive this product.
Likewise, the community partner should have some formalized opportunity for providing feedback on the quality and impact of the student service. Many venues such as schools or after-school tutoring programs routinely set up sign-in sheets and help track student hours and participation; however, assessing the overall partnership experience (not just the individual students) is also important. Depending on the context, an online questionnaire, a paper feedback form, or a face-to-face debriefing might be appropriate for this purpose.

**Possible Guiding Questions for Community Feedback:**

*What worked well with the project/activity?*

*What could be done differently by the students? By the community? By the UGA faculty?*

*Was the amount of time spent on the project sufficient? Not enough/too much?*

*What are the next steps for building on this project—can it be replicated or continued?; how could it be improved if replicated?; did the community need get fully met?; was the experience valuable and worth the investment in time and resources in terms of the outcome provided?*
Students learning about the State Botanical Garden of Georgia (Courtesy OSL)
Campus Supports for Service-Learning
A number of UGA supports exist for faculty interested in service-learning. These include grants, awards, and professional development opportunities.

Grants for Service-Learning
The Office of Service-Learning annually provides mini-grant funds on a rolling basis as “just in time” support for service-learning. Applicants may request up to $500 for local, state-wide or international service-learning support. Preference is given to projects that directly impact the expansion and support of academic service-learning opportunities for UGA students addressing critical community needs. Faculty members teaching course-based service-learning are strongly encouraged to ensure that the relevant course carries the S suffix.

Successful past requests have included supplies for student outreach projects, travel costs, student background checks, materials for community partner agencies, support for hourly and student workers, and community-based research or outreach activities connected to service-learning projects.

From FY09 to FY11, OSL provided 33 service-learning mini-grants to faculty members and graduate students, totaling $15,866 in support for service-learning activities. See the OSL website for current information on mini-grants availability.

Local elementary students work with UGA students to learn about plants (Courtesy Dr. S. Miller)

Additionally, with funding from the Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach, [former SOE grants info here...]

Faculty Development Programs
The Service-Learning Fellows Program is a year-long faculty development program that provides an opportunity for selected faculty members to integrate service-learning into their teaching, research, and public service work while becoming recognized campus leaders in service-learning pedagogy and community engagement. It includes a $2500 fellowship award.
The Service-Learning Fellows Program is open to all permanent, full-time UGA faculty members including academic tenure track, academic professionals, public service faculty, lecturers, medical school, and clinical faculty members with an interest in service-learning. Previous experience in service-learning pedagogy or familiarity with service-learning or civic engagement research is not required. Up to 8 Fellows are selected for each academic year in a competitive review process; applications are generally due in March. As of 2011-12, some 47 faculty members have participated since the inauguration of the program in 2006.

2010-11 Service-Learning Fellows at the Fall Retreat (Courtesy OSL)

UGA faculty, students, staff, and community members are also welcome to attend the periodic meetings of the Service-Learning Interest Group (SLIG). Meetings focus on topics of interest ranging from community initiatives to research and more. OSL also maintains an informational listserv to share announcements and opportunities relating to service-learning; contact osl@uga.edu to be added.

Faculty Awards

The Service-Learning Teaching Excellence Award recognizes UGA faculty for excellence in developing, implementing, and sustaining academic service-learning opportunities for UGA students in domestic and/or international settings. The Service-Learning Research Excellence Award recognizes UGA faculty for excellence in research related to or resulting from academic service-learning. All full-time, permanent UGA faculty members in any career track are eligible to apply.

These two service-learning awards for faculty were established in Spring 2011. These awards are presented annually and include a $2,500 faculty development award and campus recognition. Award deadlines, criteria, and application/nomination paperwork are available on the OSL website.
Dr. Su-I Hou receiving the 2011 Service-Learning Research Excellence Award from Dr. Shannon Wilder (Courtesy OSL)

Additionally, UGA selects up to one faculty member each year to receive the Scholarship of Engagement Award. This award, first presented in 2008, honors tenured associate or full professors who advance civic engagement through scholarship and service-learning opportunities for students and whose scholarship has made significant contributions toward identifying or addressing issues of public concern. The award provides the honoree with a $5,000 faculty development grant to support public service and outreach projects. UGA’s Scholarship of Engagement Award honoree is also nominated by the University for consideration for the Thomas Ehrlich Civically Engaged Faculty Award, a national recognition selected by Campus Compact.

Departments or units on campus who agree to focus significant attention, resources and effort on incorporating service-learning best practices into their curriculum and activities are eligible to apply for designation as an Engaged Department. This designation... (insert details)
Reflection Tools
Here are a few collected resources that have been used successfully for fostering critical reflection with service-learning. Reflection activities should be structured, not just left to chance; they should be regularly occurring, not only happening at the end of the semester (indeed, “pre-flection” is also useful); they should be able to be evaluated, for instance with a rubric; and should explicitly link the service activity to the course learning outcomes. Reflection can serve as the hyphen between service and learning in service-learning!

Reflection Resources from Dr. Kathy Thompson, College of Education:
A helpful way to frame questions for reflection is by using this handy triad:

What?

So What?

Now What?

Here’s how it works:

• **What?** This pertains to the substance of the experience and what happened to you. It deals with facts and leads naturally into interpretation. The *What?* is used to start the reflection process by asking, “What happened in this service experience?” *What* questions could include:
  o What are we doing?
  o What have we accomplished?
  o What have we learned?
  o What skills do I bring to the project?

• **So what?** This pertains to the difference the experience made to you. It looks at the consequences of the service experience and gives meaning to it. The *So What?* asks, “What did your experience mean to you?” and/or “What did you learn from your experience?” *So What* questions could include:
  o What difference does/did it make?
  o Why should we do it?
  o How is it important?
  o What have I learned about this issue?
  o How do we feel about it?
  o What have I learned about myself?
  o How is this service related to my studies/field?
  o How is this service related to my career objectives?

• **Now what?** This involves the process of taking lessons learned from the experience and reapplying them to other situations and the larger picture. It is a time for goal setting and long-range planning. The *Now What?* asks “Where do you go from here?” *Now What* questions could include:
  o What’s next?
  o What will I do differently next time?
  o What am I going to do about this issue?
  o Where do we go from here?
  o What has this prepared us for?
o How has this service affected my life goals?
(Source: Service Learning Center, Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, VA)

Examples of typical questions to ask both during and after the project:

- What do you think you will do and what impact do you think you will have?
- What needs did/does/will your project fill?
- What are the causes of those needs?
- How do people contribute to this problem? How do we help solve it?
- What expectations do you have about your service experience?
- Did anything surprise you? If so, what?
- What did you do today that made you feel that you made a difference? Why?
- Did anything happen that made you feel uncomfortable? If so, what, and why do you think it made you feel this way?
- What did you do that seemed to be effective or ineffective in service to others?
- How does your understanding of the community change as a result of your participation in this project?
- How can you continue your involvement with this group or social issue?
- How can you educate others or raise awareness about this group or social issue?
- What are the most difficult and most satisfying parts of the service you are performing? Why?
- What do you think is your most valued contribution to the project?
- Is there a person or activity you find interesting or challenging in your project?
- How do you see your role with this project? How does that compare with how others may see your role?
- Have you learned from any disappointments or successes from your project?
- Has there been a problem situation that you want to discuss?
- How is your service relevant to your field/what you are learning in class?
(Source: http://www.goodcharacter.com/SERVICE/primer-6.html)

Examples of typical prompts to use both during and after the project:

- My thoughts about... (specific content or skills addressed by the project)
- What I learned about the impact of social problems on the community is...
- The life skill learning that I most want to remember is...
- I can use this life skill again when I...
- My greatest insight about the importance of doing service-learning is...
- My thoughts and feelings about my role as a member of this community are...
- The personal strengths I brought to this project are...
- Next time I want to improve...
- Improving is important to me because...
- This work will help my community by...
- This help is important to my community because...
- These are my most important learnings about... (e.g., how public art reflects a culture; elements of mural/painting design; what respect means; how I can show respect to others)
- My best actions and thoughts were...
- I “picked up” the following big idea...; I chose it because...
- My job today was...
Reflective Journals
Several UGA faculty members, including Pratt Cassity (Environment & Design) and Nancy Williams (Social Work) have had success in creating reflective journals for their students to use in international service-learning courses. These are similar to an interactive course packet, and incorporate scholarly articles, articles from the mainstream media, photos, images, poems, and other materials relating to the country, crossing cultural boundaries, and other relevant subjects. Embedded in the journal are a series of reflective prompts that students respond to.

Circle-Square-Delta Reflection Page

Arts-Based Reflection
Reflection does not have to be only through written response to prompts. Role-play, small-group discussions, photo essays, sculpture, multimedia presentations... all can be used for reflective purposes. Concept maps, for instance, create visual links between key phrases and can diagram complex relationships between and across concepts. Storyboards, like those used for movies, allow students to provide 3 to 6 “snapshots” of “scenes” of a narrative of interest (e.g., past-present-future).
Research and SL

Faculty members incorporating service-learning into their teaching often finds that this also creates new venues for research and publication. It is also useful to reiterate that UGA’s promotion and tenure guidelines also allow “service-learning and outreach courses at home or abroad, where research and new knowledge are integrated” to be classified as research/creative activities in faculty promotion and tenure dossiers. While a full discussion of engaged research goes beyond what can be presented here, a few guidelines may be helpful.

First, consider what kinds of data you are already collecting through your service-learning—student reflective writing? Impact data with your community partners? Vignettes demonstrating the outcomes of the student work? At a minimum, you may wish to seek IRB approval to be able to use the information you are already receiving through your service-learning, for possible future presentation or publication, even if you are not sure at the outset what will emerge.

Once you’ve done initial service-learning coursework and have a sense of what kinds of outcomes assessment are viable, consider implementing (with IRB approval) more formal research protocols, such as pre- to post-assessment of student learning outcomes, etc. Pre-existing questionnaires and research tools for service-learning and civic engagement outcomes could be used; contact the Office of Service-Learning for recommendations appropriate to your area of interest.

Many faculty members have found that a broader conceptualization of student learning outcomes (similar to that espoused by L. Dee Fink) allows for an awareness of field-specific professional
outcomes that are desired for graduates of their programs. Research showing how these competencies can be developed via service-learning has been conducted by UGA faculty in several disciplines.

Several good venues exist for presenting and publishing service-learning research, in addition to the options available within one’s own disciplinary journals and conferences. For instance, UGA is a cosponsor of the annual Gulf-South Summit on Service-Learning and Civic Education through Higher Education, as well as the National Outreach Scholarship Conference, and many UGA faculty present at these venues. The International Association of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (http://www.researchslce.org/) hosts an annual research conference with affiliated publications. The Journal of Higher Education Outreach & Engagement (http://www.jheoe.uga.edu) publishes research articles as well as descriptive work on engaged work with communities.

The Office of Service-Learning maintains and can provide a resource list with numerous other journals that publish service-learning work. There is also a listing of faculty presentations and publications on research in service-learning available on the OSL website.

![Faculty members at Georgia Coastal College learning about Service-Learning](image)

*Faculty members at Georgia Coastal College learning about Service-Learning (Courtesy OSL)*
Appendix B: Service Activity Coordination Worksheet

This worksheet should be shared between the faculty member and community partner. For longer-term partnerships, contact UGA Legal Affairs about creating a formal Memorandum of Understanding between UGA and the agency.

Faculty Member Name: Community Partner Name:

Departmental Affiliation: Affiliation:

Course Name/Number: Dates of Service Activity:

Relevant Student Learning Objectives:

Describe the Service Activity, including:

- How many students will be involved?
- Will students be working individually, in small groups, or whole-class?
- What is the primary location of the service activity? How will transportation be arranged?
- What is the expected timing (frequency, hours, days) of the service activity?
- What are the primary components of what students will do?
- How will students be supervised, and by whom?
- What is the expected “deliverable” that the students will produce?
- What resources are needed for this service activity? Who will provide them?
- How and when will the community, faculty, and students communicate? What translation services will be necessary (oral / written)?
- How and when will the service activity be evaluated?
Appendix B: Project Planning Worksheet

(insert here from separate file)