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## 4-H Center for Youth Development

FOCUS is a monograph that provides an extensive, timely review on a critical subject area in child development, program development, research, and education



# FOCUS

**The University of California at Davis**

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## Education Beyond the Walls

Historically, colleges and universities have served their communities by not only educating citizens, but also by providing vital services to meet community needs. As generators of knowledge, colleges and universities are in a unique position, perhaps more than any other type of organization, to contribute to the alleviation of social problems both locally and globally. Faculty work contributes to problem solving and knowledge generation within national contexts through the research and publication process. Scholarship and service can also be instrumental in local community problem solving by focusing on meeting needs within the community where the institution is located. This grass roots kind of service mission in higher education, however, has been minimized in relation to needs that seem more immediate and pressing at many institutions—namely, teaching, research, and grant procurement.

The local, grass-roots, community oriented component of service (e.g., student involvement in the local community through coursework, faculty participation in research relevant to local community needs) has almost been completely overlooked as faculty around the nation struggle to meet increased demands for research and scholarship while juggling heavy teaching and advising loads. "Service" in many institutions now means faculty committee work and involvement in disciplinary organizations—kinds of service that are not in line

with the meaning of service as it was and is presented in institutional mission statements. Service as part of institutional mission and philosophy has a very precise meaning. It signifies "the utilization of a university as an intellectual resource for its immediate as well as broader constituencies" (Lynton, 1995, p. 8).

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Institutional and disciplinary citizenship should not be confused with what higher education has historically meant by service as community outreach and involvement. As higher education has evolved, the notion of service as contribution to and involvement in the local community through teaching, research, and service (in the historic sense) has almost been completely overlooked by most faculty and goes unrewarded by many administrators.

Campuses are typically a focal point of the communities in which they are housed and they undoubtedly give a lot to local community members. They educate citizens, host cultural events, provide an arena for intellectual stimulation, and are often



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located in a geographic hub in which surrounding communities congregate. Colleges and universities are also criticized, however, for taking as much, if not more, than they give to their communities. Campuses as “ivory towers” can lead an insular existence—enjoying the benefits of existing in a community without giving back significantly to that community—thus, creating tensions between “town and gown.”

As universities grapple with the meaning and enactment of public service they look to service learning as a way to get students beyond campus walls and into their local communities. Service learning, the integration of academic study and community service, is an active learning strategy that involves students simultaneously in academic study and community service. The benefits of service learning, as a structured out-of-class activity, for students include cognitive, moral, and psychosocial development (Boss, 1994; Kuh, Douglas, Lund, & Ramin-Gyurnek, 1994). For faculty, service learning means engaged classrooms—students involved both theoretically and practically in their subject matter. For institutions, service learning contributes to constructive community and campus relations which signifies the true enactment of institutional mission.

As national and state support for education wanes, service learning clearly illustrates what campuses are doing for their communities, that faculty work is meaningful, and that students are gaining the skills they need to participate fully in an educated citizenry. Faculty and student involvement in local community problem solving makes tangible the nature of scholarly pursuits and can counter the “widespread perception that academic institutions, most particularly universities, are disconnected from the concerns and needs of society” (Lynton, 1995, p. 7). Service learning also helps institutions realize the meaning of preparing students for civic life—a long held tradition and expectation of higher education.

## SERVICE LEARNING THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

The state system of higher education in Montana is in a period of rapid change and growth. Public higher education was recently restructured to create a binary system consisting of the two state flagship universities—The University of Montana and Montana State University-Bozeman—as principle institutions each with satellite and affiliate campuses. Like many public institutions, campuses within the state system are evolving from being state supported to state assisted. Times are changing in Montana’s higher education system and at The University of Montana, in particular, both in terms of student enrollment (size and composition) and campus infrastructure.

An important element of the change process has been dialogue among institutional leaders and faculty about organizational mission and philosophy. Leaders are grappling with the idea and enactment of what it means to be engaged in “service” by asking: What is the meaning of service? Where does it fit into the institutional mission? What has service come to mean on campus? How do faculty and students enact institutional goals for service?

At The University of Montana, the president has made a strong commitment to moving the University forward in a way that engages students and faculty in their communities as part of the academic experience. To initiate and maintain this commitment, the president and the vice provost for academic affairs appointed a faculty committee—the Service Learning Working Group—with the charge “to make recommendations about the future of service learning at The University of Montana.”

The working group, comprised of six faculty, a student, and a staff person, addressed this charge by looking at other similarly situated campuses and how they de-

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fine and integrate service learning to determine (1) if service learning should be encouraged at the University, and (2) if so, in what direction the University should move to implement service learning into academic life (e.g., extracurricular volunteerism, service learning classes). Immediately it was decided that a service learning requirement within the general education requirements would NOT be an end the committee would pursue. The committee focused on the benefits of service learning for student learning, bridging gaps between town and gown, and integrating the tripartite (teaching, research, and service) demands of faculty work.

The committee's work culminated in the fall of 1995 with an interim report that offers recommendations to the administration as to how service learning might be more fully integrated into undergraduate life. Among the recommendations were: hiring a full-time person to act as a service learning coordinator, encourage (not require) students to take service learning courses, encourage faculty to offer service learning courses, recognize and reward faculty that offer service learning classes, cultivate interest in service learning at the departmental level by identifying a faculty member in each department as a contact person about service learning, and avoid linking service learning with the increased productivity requirements of the new faculty contract (a new contract was adopted in 1995).

Service learning is undoubtedly a means to enhance student learning and in this way addresses the never-ending faculty concern of how to engage students more fully, both theoretically and practically, in subject matter. However, the faculty culture at the University, like many state liberal arts universities in the country, is in a state of flux thus causing concerns for how to balance teaching, research, and service. At one time, University faculty were first and foremost teachers. Faculty are still expected to teach, and teach quite well an increasing numbers of students. They are also expected

to focus more on their scholarly agendas and become more active in externally funded-research and grant procurement. Clearly, a shift in faculty culture is taking place at the University of Montana as is the case with many public universities.

Service learning is not only a way to engage students in their academic work it is also a way to help faculty INTEGRATE their work. At a time when faculty are facing both internal and external pressures to do more with less, faculty need to find ways to coordinate their work. Service, within the context of service learning, provides faculty a nucleus around which they can consolidate their work. Service learning can become part of a classroom based research agenda, can increase student involvement in their course material, show the community active campus participation, and allow faculty to meet their own professional needs for public service.

For students at the University of Montana, a majority of whom are from Montana—a geographically dispersed and racially homogenous state—service learning is not only a way to engage them in learning it is also a way to involve them in a community that is different than their own. As more students migrate to Montana for higher education, the demographics of the student population are starting to change. However the 11,000 student population is still predominantly white and middle-class. Within the walls of the University, students find a cadre of students much like themselves in terms of race, class, and age. The student population is 92 percent white and eight percent racial and ethnic minorities (of which six percent are Native American). Twenty seven percent of students are from out of state (a number that has steadily increased) which creates some diversity in terms of geographic location, history and culture, and socioeconomic status but the campus is still largely based on sameness. When students look around campus they tend to see others who are much like themselves.

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Within a campus context that is based on likeness service learning is a mechanism to expose students to people different from themselves. Service learning moves students beyond campus walls to learning environments that can contribute to greater diversity of experience and socialization than if they simply congregate in classrooms with others who are much like themselves. The ultimate goal of any educational institutions is to generate graduates who are “educated” and “prepared” to productively function in public life. As the world becomes increasingly diverse and globally centered, service learning helps educate and prepare students for active civic responsibility in the “real world.”

In this paper we use the example of an education class on literacy, entitled Literacy Strategies for Secondary Teachers, to illustrate the power of service learning as a humanizing, democratizing, and participatory pedagogy that moves students beyond campus walls. We first describe the class and the methods used to engage students in service learning. We then turn to the students’ voices as they talk about their service learning experiences and the impact it had on them as learners and citizens. Finally, we offer some conclusions on the implications of service learning for providing communities with students who are not only consumers of education, but more importantly students who are prepared for life in a diverse world. We also discuss the implications of service learning for providing faculty with an integrated vehicle for demonstrating and presenting their work as researchers, teachers, and service providers.

## The Class

The School of Education at The University of Montana is a leader in the service learning effort from a natural proclivity as well as a commitment to the learning aspects provided through this vehicle for students. Indeed, the field of education it-

self is a service field. But the service component students need to embrace goes far beyond the walls of a classroom building or the University campus site—we do not want to intimate that service learning belongs only to the confines of schools of education, sociology departments and other fields of human services. In this culture of change in higher education, service learning belongs to us all for compelling pedagogical as well as philosophical reasons.

The class that serves as the focus for this paper is a secondary literacy strategies course. The students are pre-service secondary education majors, and come from every discipline on campus. There are biology, history, and english majors, as well as students of the fine arts. In some cases, this is the first educational methods course they have taken. The gist of the course is to teach future educators the psychological processes of literacy and strategies for use in the classroom to support high school student’s efforts to learn from text, lecture, film, and each other. One of the requirements for this course is the service learning field experience project. The requirement is for the students to go into the community and volunteer their time in some aspect of literacy where they have little to no previous experience and there is a demonstrated need for service in literacy. The minimum number of hours for this requirement is fifteen, but many of the students spend thirty to sixty hours in their field experience, making it truly a volunteer effort.

Students may self-select or self-design these projects. They are supported in the selection process by the service learning office (Volunteer Action Services) which provides a listing of organizations seeking volunteers. In addition, many calls are made to the professor of the course, requesting help in a variety of areas, from individual parents needing a tutor for their child, to local schools and hospitals calling for volunteers. As word of this program has spread

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throughout the community, so have the requests grown. Students from this course are all over the community, doing work they never thought of doing before. Some students find themselves in a radio broadcasting booth reading the newspaper over the air for visually impaired members of the community. Others work in youth homes, the YMCA, local hospitals, nursing homes, and schools. Many choose to work on campus providing services for students with disabilities, typing text onto modified computers or audio taping text and lectures for fellow university students. Other students in the class provide story hours for the local bookstores and library.

In their service learning placements, students work with an age range that spans nursery schools to adult learning centers and nursing homes. Students have the opportunity to work with a great diversity of people who otherwise might have remained invisible members of the community. The service learning placements expose students to a wide-range of cultural, socioeconomic, and racial diversity. The students are respected and their work is requested by community members and organizations. Students grow increasingly committed to their chosen field work as they become involved with their placements. Many students end their response logs or final papers with the commitment to continue what began as a class requirement.

The service learning project is an integral part of the course that does not take away time from an already overloaded curriculum, but in fact, enriches the depth of learning for all of the students. Classroom and professor time devoted specifically to the organizing and arranging the field experience project is fairly minimal. Time is taken in class to introduce the project and its purpose, and help the students brainstorm ideas for their work. Once the students have made selections and begun their work in the field time is taken for discussions on problems, particulars, and pas-

sions they may be discovering in their placements. Discussions cover everything from how what they are doing in the field relates to the class work, to what they are discovering about literacy and services being provided or not provided in their own communities. Students begin to realize that their role as an educator and as a literate member of a community goes far beyond the boundaries of the classroom. In the middle of the term, students are asked to write a reflective in-class essay on their service learning experience, of about fifty minutes or three to five pages in length. Finally, they write a field experience project paper recording what they did for their volunteer field work, what they learned from the experience, how this experience relates to the class discussion and readings, and how this project relates to their feelings about themselves as future educators and citizens.

We now turn to the student voices as heard in the final response papers to illustrate how the service experience impacted them as learners, citizens, and future teachers. Responses from the papers seem to naturally fall into three separate but interdependent categories of academic, philosophical and perhaps even moral gain for the students. They are:

- 1 Demonstrating growth in the passion of their belief in what they are learning about themselves and their education.
- 2 Understanding and bridging the gap between the student posture and that of a professional.
- 3 Personalizing theory and philosophy with their responsibility to the community affirming their belief in democracy.

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## Passion for Teaching and Learning

The notion of the act of teaching as one of the best ways of learning is certainly not a new idea. It has been talked about from Socrates to Ernest Boyer of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Jerome Bruner (1963), a widely respected educational theorist, puts it well

...teaching is a superb way of learning. There is a beautiful story about a distinguished college teacher of physics. He reports introducing an advanced class to the quantum theory: 'I went through the theory once and looked up only to find the class full of blank faces—they had obviously not understood. I went through it a second time, and they still did not understand it. And so I went through it a third time, and that time I understood it.' (p. 88-89)

But we need realistic and meaningful ways of putting Bruner's realization to work for undergraduate students. We make the case for teaching as learning as reflected by student's comments about their volunteer teaching efforts in the community. Jerry's experience clearly illustrates this point.

Jerry is a traditional student and has never been out of Montana. He is respectful and tries to understand the concepts put forth in the course, but he can't quite seem to understand why he, a math major, need take such a course. He chose to fulfill his service learning assignment by tutoring Connie, a student with disabilities who was having difficulty keeping up with her reading material. At the end of the fifteen week assignment, Jerry describes his work with Connie:

Reading is power and should be cherished. Prior to this semester I took for granted the ability to read. I had the opportunity to read to a wonderful young lady named Connie for the field experience. This experience was very gratifying and consisted of more than

just reading text. It was filled with conversation, laughter, and most importantly, learning.

For people who have been teaching for a long time, the notion that student and teacher reading text together should employ laughter as well as conversation may be so simplistic as to be humorous. But in Jerry's response, we clearly see the demonstration of the seeds of this young man's passion about how teaching and learning take place. More specifically, Jerry had the opportunity to discover the impact of applying principles and strategies that we had modeled and discussed in class. He discusses the procedures he used to work with Connie in this way:

As I gained more experience, I improved upon the clarity and fluency of the material I read aloud. The content in some of the subjects was somewhat dry. *MUSIC OF THE WORLD'S PEOPLE* and *GENERAL SCIENCE* both seemed to get a little boring, but I tried to spruce up the readings by adding conversation at various points. The Think Aloud strategy we learned in class really helped me out in this area. Sometimes we would discuss the material, and other times we would make fun of the material. If I felt Connie was not following the material clearly, I used the Muddiest Point literacy strategy to help her out. I would reread any material that was unclear to Connie. I always tried to keep in mind the responsibility that I had as a reader. This material I was reading was vital to how well Connie would perform in these particular subjects.

Joe is another mathematics major in the class who is also struggling to figure out how literacy strategies are applicable for him. For his service learning project, Joe elected to tutor one of the younger mem-

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bers of the football team, at the request of the team's coach. Joe understands math and he understands the particular rigors of being a college football player, so it was the perfect field experience for him. Joe expressed his dawning understanding of teaching and learning in this manner:

One of the major points brought up in class was that of relating our individual expertise to a level applicable to our students. I originally struggled with this notion. I had a real hard time explaining ideas, which I thought were real basic, in a level that he could comprehend. I was speaking in a language foreign to him. The main idea behind teaching is explaining ideas in a manner relative to the individual whom you are teaching. When I grasped this concept and became fluid with speaking at Bob's level, the real teaching and learning process began. I could not believe how much faster he learned after I became a proper educator. I thoroughly believe that in order for your students to learn you need to relate the material to them at a level in which they can understand you.

Joe's continued reflections demonstrate that he really has grasped the relationship between teaching and learning.

I feel very fortunate to have participated in the field experience. I have taken many education classes here at the University, yet I still had problems relating my expertise in math to individuals at a much lower level. This was true until now. My field experience has helped me understand how to use my knowledge to benefit others.

Joe embraced and internalized the understanding that the difference between a mathematics teacher and a mathematician is the teacher's ability to talk about the material in such a way that it can be understood by a variety of learners. This was the begin-

ning of a wonderful interaction between the senior and junior members of the University's football team. As a result of Joe and Bob's tutoring sessions, this practice has become more widespread. This is but a small example of the ripple effects of authentic service learning in action in a community.

## Bridging the Transition Student to Professional

The second area in which the students made major gains is in the adjustment of their posture from that of student to professional. Senior students in education are frequently reminded that upon graduation, they will be welcomed into the field of professional educators. Therefore, they must begin to think like educators. Like many other concepts we attempt to convey to students, this simple statement must be experienced before it is truly understood. Jenny is a lovely young student in the class; slightly older than most of the students, though still in her twenties. She is well travelled and an exceptionally talented student. Jenny is still struggling with deciding upon a career in education or medicine. For her volunteer placement, Jenny decided to go to the Riverside Health Care Nursing Home. Not surprisingly, she found the staff eager to have her help and she was immediately promoted to the position of "Friendship Club Director." The "Friendship Club" is a weekly activities group. Jenny was a bit surprised by her speedy promotion to the director of this somewhat unfocused and directionless group.

Jenny describes her first few days with the Friendship Club:

I was confronted with apparent apathy and indifference in the beginning as we began to read the stories. This was scary, because it seemed to confirm all my fears. I kept at it, however, and was rewarded with a small breakthrough, and then the group began to get more in-

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volved. Then I began to try different strategies, PUTTING CLASSROOM THEORY INTO PRACTICE. When some of them didn't work I discarded them and tried others. In short, I began to teach—I began to think like a teacher. The process I went through with the Friendship Club seems like a preview of what I might go through with a class. I can see the importance of creating a structure that I feel comfortable with, of persevering and getting to know my students, and then beginning to refine and adapt my teaching methods for each situation. This experience has helped give me some confidence about what I will face as teacher.

Sherry, another excellent non-traditional student in secondary education, writes about her experience volunteer tutoring in the schools:

This experience has been very beneficial to me. At first, I complained about having one more outside the class activity that I could barely fit into my already complicated schedule. But after working with these kids, I now feel that this volunteer tutoring is one of the most important aspects of my education. This experience was more than just an additional requirement. I actually became the teacher and enjoyed being a part of the learning process. Before this class or this field experience, I thought literacy education was teaching someone how to read. Now, I know there are many aspects to literacy such as listening and viewing, writing and communicating. As a literate member of society, I think it is important to help others develop and broaden their literacy skills.

Jenny and Sherry's service learning experiences make clear how the transition from student to teacher had begun.

## Personalizing of Theory

Finally, as a result of the service learning project, students evolve a much broader view of the theories and philosophies presented in class and relate these principles to their ultimate role in a democratic society. In other words, no longer were students simply sitting in class taking the word of the instructor for the efficacy of literacy strategies and the right of all Americans to have access to literacy. They were participating in their own chosen work and were using the theories and strategies promoted in class. This service to their community created an urgency and a personal reality for the students, whereby professor and student became co-workers and a support team for the promotion of literacy in a democratic society. This is a richer, more authentic and more compassionate relationship than that of lecturer to passive student. Sally, Jerry, and Scott's comments illustrate the impact the service experience had on their view of their place as literate people in a multicultural democratic society.

Sally is a mother of four and is considered a 'non-traditional' student. She is older than many of the other students in the class and has quite a few responsibilities associated with her family. She chose to do her service learning project at her children's school. She worked with a second grade boy who had just been placed in the Special Education program due to his poor reading ability. She had moderate success with this student, but as Sally says, "nothing miraculous". However, at the end of her paper, Sally reports:

Along with this power [of literacy] comes responsibility. It is the literate members of the community who are responsible for the directions the community, state, and country will take. It is they who vote, who provide information to others, who take stands by writing letters to change injustices, who

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must look out for the needs of those who can't see to them themselves. Literacy skills are the fundamental element for the foundation of success and self-sufficiency and are the greatest gifts a teacher can pass on to a student. I am proud that I have chosen teaching as my career.

Jerry, the mathematician, closes his paper with this observation:

Through this experience I have realized the impact that literate people can have on making a difference in the lives of those people with reading disabilities. Before working with Connie, I was narrow minded enough to think that only teachers and educators can make a difference in improving literacy in America. The feeling of helping someone learn and read is an experience that is worthy of motivating others to do the same. Helping someone learn and read is teaching in the most simplified, but yet the most gratifying form. Those that are willing to volunteer will find, as I did, that they will learn more from the experience than they can ever imagine.

I first thought of this field experience as a requirement for C&I 427. In reflection, however, I look at it as an opportunity to make a difference in the life of someone else. Working with Connie this semester was an invaluable experience that I will always remember. I plan to continue to help Connie out anytime I can, and I will encourage others to offer their time and knowledge to others.

The final quote included here is from a young man named Scott. Scott, a fine arts major, was somewhat of the class clown. He was always funny, energetic, kind, and had an interesting twist on everything we discussed in class. For his volunteer experience project, he elected to play his guitar for a variety of community groups who were interested in having Scott come visit them. He played in nursing homes, schools, and hospitals. This experience led him to consider a new aspect of his musical career in addition to variations in literacy and teaching that he had not considered before. At the end of his service learning project paper, he writes:

On the first day of class, we discussed what literacy was, and what it meant to be literate. The first sentence describing literacy is 'express your thought in writing.' My thought writings are the lyrics that I write for the children. Thought writing is the perfect way to describe writing lyrics, because it definitely requires a lot of thought. Another way of describing literacy is 'share experiences with human beings as human beings.' This is exactly what I did by performing for the children at Head Start and for the residents at the [nursing] manors.

Literacy is community. This sentence says it all. It perfectly describes why we were assigned this task as part of this class. If everyone who was literate became involved in their community, instead of assuming someone else will do it, the world would be a much better place.

What these students' voices demonstrate, is the power of community service to cement their beliefs about their own learning processes, clarify their visions of themselves as educators, and highlight their role as literate people in a democratic society. Service learning as a community practice, necessarily takes education beyond the classroom walls. We now want to expand our metaphor of education beyond the walls to embrace the implications of service learning not only for one class, but also for students, faculty, and universities as a whole.

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"I look at it as an opportunity to make a difference in the life of someone else."

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## Conclusion

Education is clearly at a time of great change and challenge with reduced funding and greater competition for student dollars. The metaphor of student as consumer that is currently in vogue does not necessarily help the mission or position of the university. The university is coming under attack from many different constituencies, both internally and externally. Service learning as a pedagogy of involvement addresses these criticisms on both fronts. Service learning is such a public act, the community is reminded that the presence of college students does not simply translate to beer drinking and football games. Students are contributing members of the larger community, not just the campus community. Service learning provides the bridge between classroom learning and the reality of their work in the community. Simultaneously students have the opportunity to apply theoretical learning while also contributing to community problem-solving which is one of the historical missions of higher education.

As the world becomes more diverse, service learning takes students out of their own context of the “ivory tower” to the problems and solutions in a complex community comprised of many different cultures, races and classes. A clear example of this is the white middle class student who volunteered to teach computer skills at a battered women’s shelter. This young man learned far more than the skills required to teach computer literacy. He realized that he was offering survival skills to a segment of his community that had heretofore been invisible to him. His world was expanded, his mission became more urgent and passionate and his skills were used in a very important community service. The service learning component of his education integrated the classroom learning with the skills and awareness necessary for high functioning in a global and diverse world. No other experience would be able to create this reality for him and students like

him. Likewise, no matter how impassioned a faculty member may be, this kind of active involvement in a real setting can not be replicated within the classroom walls alone.

A consistent concern among faculty across the country is how to engage students in a higher level of theoretical learning while also covering the density of material which they feel responsible to teach. The pedagogy of service learning integrates these concerns by providing a vehicle whereby students depth of understanding of the theoretical models is applied and adapted to real world situations. Instead of the work load of the faculty member being increased, it is in fact lessened as the students discover their own pathways for learning and applying principles learned in class. Service learning is a way for theoretical understanding to move from the pages of books to real world applications. Students are able to test theories and applications rather than passively accept these theories as received truths. The irony here is that for successful classroom learning, students need to actually get out of the classroom.

Further, the increasingly diverse faculty responsibilities of teaching, research, and service are integrated through the strategy of service learning. There is a clear connection between teaching and learning as we have demonstrated above. Faculty members’ responsibility to community service is delivered in line with the true public service mission of higher education, rather than institutional or disciplinary service (i.e. faculty committee work). In addition, faculty members have a vehicle whereby their research has an outlet for testing hypotheses and solving problems in a real rather than a theoretical or clinical setting. In order to have a high level of confidence about what is being taught to students, it is a moral responsibility of faculty to continually test the models they teach in a real world setting (i.e., the local community). Students participating in service learning

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in a sense are advance guards and data collection agents, allowing faculty a larger window into the community than one would otherwise have time for. For example, in discussing early intervention reading programs, a faculty member needs to advocate what works, both to students and to the local education agencies which depend on faculty for such advice and recommendations. Thus research, teaching and service comes together in a natural and organic way. In essence colleges and universities do not have the time to NOT use service learning if faculty are to ever meet the ever increasing demands being placed upon them.

Service learning is an integrated strategy that addresses the needs of students, faculty and the mission of the university. When we think of learning and higher education, we think of collaborative learning, problem solving, communication, a broadening of one's belief systems, the integration of knowledge, and lifelong learning. The list goes on. Service learning transcends and encompasses all of these concerns. It provides a place and time where all students can belong, where the community is served and where research is effective and applicable.

Service learning provides the impetus for the kinds of conversations faculty want to have with their students—conversations that are intellectually stimulating rather than about the format and length of the next paper!

Service learning engages students, faculty, and the community together in a process of mutual problem solving. Education takes place both within and beyond the walls of the classroom. Students are engaged with their communities and are learning in an authentic setting. At the same time, the community is served. The content of the course becomes real and alive as it is used and manipulated in situations of the student's own choosing. Classroom experiences alone can not create for students a depth of learning and a passionate belief in its importance as do community-based field experiences. Teaching, learning, and democracy are intricately linked. By going beyond the classroom walls students move beyond the rhetoric of teaching and learning practices to the reality of the complexity of needs in a democratic society.

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Research, teaching and service comes together in a natural and organic way.

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