SERVICE LEARNING DATA

Azusa Pacific University
Center for Academic Service-learning and Research
“Where the Cornerstones Connect”

2009 - 2010
Service-Learning Student Evaluation Data
Student Self Reporting: Service-learning, Intercultural Competence and Respect

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Introduction

The Center for Academic Service-Learning and Research administers an end-of-semester Student Evaluation survey in each service-learning course. The evaluation tool is composed of ten Likert Scale questions and three open-answer questions. This summary report specifically targets one of the Likert Scale questions: “The service-learning experience helped me better understand the worth of all people.” The open-answer portion of the evaluation provides students an additional opportunity to consider how serving in the community may contribute to an increase in respect for others.

This short report includes data from 2,108 service-learning student evaluations collected from all service-learning courses in the 2009-2010 academic year. Three Schools have been targeted for specific analysis of the spring semester: College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), School of Business and Management (SOBAM), and School of Nursing.

God-Honoring Diversity

2,108 evaluations were collected in the 2009-2010 school year. One Likert Scale question correlates with the university’s pursuit for evidence of God-honoring diversity:

6. The service-learning experience helped me better understand the worth of all people.

Likert Scale values are represented on the charts below with the following indications:

LV4: Likert Scale value 4 (strongly agree)
LV3: Likert Scale value 3 (agree)
LV2: Likert Scale values 2 (disagree)
LV1: Likert Scale values 1 (strongly disagree)
6. The service-learning experience helped me better understand the worth of all people.

- 1140 (50%) strongly agree
- 777 (37%) agree
- 111 (5%) disagree
- 18 (<1%) strongly disagree

**College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS)**

448 CLAS students enrolled in service-learning courses in eight departments responded to the spring 2010 evaluation. Students were engaged in a wide variety of service-oriented activities as part of the service-learning curriculum within their courses. APU students were placed in areas of responsibility within the school district or given the opportunity to serve with local community partners in multiple agencies within the community-at-large as tutors in local school district after-school programs and as classroom teacher assistants teaching a mini-course as pre-teacher training. Other students assisted a high school journalism class with year book editing, while some served as English-language translators in a variety of service centers. Theater Arts students brought drama and theater to local performing arts students. As part of the APU South Africa Semester the evaluation data provides strong and impressive evidence of transformational scholarship as a result of learning deep and lasting community development skills lending support to the South African people in the most difficult of environments. Many of the students responded with descriptions of coming home to the United States with an increased cross-cultural awareness and perspective.
The chart below shows the breakdown of student responses to this Likert Scale question. Of the 448 CLAS students who responded to the end-of-semester evaluation:

- 219 (49%) strongly agree
- 191 (42%) agreed
- 30 (6%) disagree
- 5 (1%) strongly disagree

This second chart (below) shows comparisons between the male and female responses to this Likert Scale question.

Q6: The service-learning experience helped me better understand the worth of all people.

- Female
  - 179 (50%) strongly agreed
  - 147 (41%) agreed
  - 20 (5%) disagree
  - 3 (<1%) strongly disagree

- Male
  - 33 (33%) strongly agreed
  - 34 (44%) agreed
  - 8 (5%) disagree
  - 2 (2%) strongly disagree
In addition to the Likert Scale portion of the evaluation, three open-answer essay questions provide the students an opportunity to reflect upon their service-learning experience.

1. **What was of greatest value to you in this service-learning experience?**

2. **How did your personal faith commitment impact your involvement in this service-learning experience?**

3. **What character trait/aspect of personal character development was strengthened through this service experience?**

The open-answer questions did not ask the students to specifically respond to questions of respect for others or to assess and evaluate their service-learning curricula with an intercultural perspective. However, the student responses to the open-answer questions provide further evidence that students experienced shifts in perspective as they spent time serving in the community. When students reflected upon their experiences many observed an increase in awareness of others and an enlarged capacity to appreciate diverse cultures, beliefs and values.

A small sample of the student responses is included in the following section. Culled from the three open-answer questions, the student responses provide evidence of increased respect and awareness of others, as well as promotion of intercultural competency through civic engagement and service activity tied to the service-learning curriculum. These student learning outcomes provide evidence and support of the more specific goals of the larger God-Honoring Diversity initiative. A complete list of student responses from each course is provided to every service-learning professor at the end of each semester.

**Student Self-Reflections**

A COMM 496 student working with a food distribution effort at Foothill Unity Center said that the greatest value in the service-learning experience was “working with the margins and providing a tangible way to empathize with the struggles of others.” A male student serving at the same facility expressed appreciation for what he learned from the other volunteers. He said, “I enjoyed talking to the older volunteers, especially when they told personal anecdotes from their cultural pasts.”

A first year Psych 290 (Human Growth and Development) student said she valued how the experience extended her learning from the classroom to spending time with the elderly population at an assisted living home. This nursing major stated that the most valuable lessons were learned by “talking to the elderly.” She said, “Everyone should be respected, even if they are hard to understand or talk with.” Other Psych 290 students also appreciated the learning experiences that came through spending time with senior adults. One said, “For me, I realized that my love of people does not need to be concentrated to one age group, and I specifically connected with the older folks more than I thought I would.” Another gained “a better understanding of the different age groups and how to interact with them.” One more shared, “At the assisted living home I really was able to appreciate the older generation. It opened my eyes to trying to love people more.”
A sophomore “Diversity in the Classroom” student said, “I think that my level of compassion for students from diverse backgrounds was heightened. Getting to know and teach them through CHAMP was a great experience.” Students across the disciplines provided statements supporting the value of service-learning opportunities citing evidence that working in a variety of settings with people “different from me,” as so many responded, created a new way of thinking about not just others, but also themselves. A Music Major was paired with mentoring students in a Foothill Middle School “Special Day Class” as part of her Senior Seminar: Education and Professional Ethics. She said, “The greatest value I gained from this service-learning experience was a better sense of who people are and how to love them. There is a great deal of injustice towards these students in the school system. I hope to be a part of a movement to change this.”

A few additional student comments include:

1. Jesus calls us to reach out and love everyone, even those that are different from us. Sometimes it is a challenge, but this experience showed me the necessity of that and that it is possible to do.

2. It challenged me to love and respect individuals who might not be loved and respected in our society.

3. Jesus loves all people and it is our job to do the same. As Christians, we are called to love those who are "difficult" and to advocate for them.

4. Developing a better understanding of the worth of all people

5. By looking at each kid individually and understanding God made them all unique

6. I believe in seeing and valuing every human fully and allowing them to culturally and fully express themselves. Thus while tutoring and playing with the children, I saw Jesus in them and in who they are.

7. Allowing me to understand other cultures more deeply
School of Business and Management (SOBAM)

104 SOBAM students enrolled in four service-learning courses responded to the spring 2010 evaluation. Business students engaged in a variety of service-oriented activities as part of the service-learning curriculum. SOBAM students shared business and marketing strategies with local business leaders. Other students participated in Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE). The SIFE website states that the program supports teams of students competing with business concepts “to develop outreach projects that improve the quality of life and standard of living for people in need” (www.sife.org). Other business students created and implemented a quality business curriculum for Sierra High School, a local continuation school. Business students benefited from hands-on learning while participating in activities designed to enrich the community.

The chart below shows the breakdown of student responses to this Likert Scale question. Of the 104 business students who responded to the end-of-semester evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likert Value (LV)</th>
<th>LV4</th>
<th>LV3</th>
<th>LV2</th>
<th>LV1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q6: The service-learning experience helped me better understand the worth of all people.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 43 (41%) strongly agree
- 45 (43%) agree
- 14 (13%) disagree
- 2 (1%) strongly disagree

In addition to the Likert Scale portion of the evaluation, three open-answer essay questions provide the students an opportunity to reflect upon their service-learning experience.

1. What was of greatest value to you in this service-learning experience?

2. How did your personal faith commitment impact your involvement in this service-learning experience?

3. What character trait/aspect of personal character development was strengthened through this service experience?
The follow responses, taken from the three open-answer questions, provide evidence of increased respect and awareness of others, as well as promotion of intercultural competency through civic engagement and service activity tied to the service-learning curriculum. These student learning outcomes provide evidence and support of the more specific goals of the larger God-Honoring Diversity initiative.

A small sample of the student responses is included in the following section. A complete list of student responses from each course is provided to every service-learning professor at the end of each semester.

**Student Self-Reflections**

The service-learning projects assigned to SOBAM students focus on team building skills and creating business and marketing plans in support of local business. Time spent with community partners gives students an opportunity to work closely with people with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Some of the business students were paired with younger local school children teaching basic business and personal finance principles. Service-learning opportunities extend the classroom learning into the wider community context and frequently the APU students openly reflect upon their engagement with people who they define as “different” from themselves. One student said, “I was able to build on my communication skills by participating with the students, and in addition, I was able to develop patience when working with individuals that have a different value and belief system from me.”

Some students showed sensitivity towards younger students noting that the local school district did not have the many advantages they had received in their schools. APU students noted changes and shifts in their perspectives as they encountered the limits in educational resources due to socio-economic disparity. One student said the experience “expanded knowledge about others and their needs.” Another SOBAM student said the service opportunity “deepened my commitment to serving others who cannot serve themselves.” Other students commented that “helping kids with needs” was a “life changing experiences.”

Many of the APU students tutored in the Options program, a continuation high school. The high school students were diverse in cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, most often dissimilar from the APU students’ personal frame of reference. One APU student said that the experience provided new “understanding of other races and cultures.” The SOBAM students remarked that they found it valuable to “befriend” these younger students, and as one student said, “It was valuable talking to kids and getting to know them on a personal level and building friendships.”

While teaching business principles to younger students in the community some of the APU students experienced shifts in their perceptions. One student said “I was able to get to know kids who grew up with much less than I did.” Another student said that the progression had moved from “having no connection or commonalities at the start” to “being able to relate and help others” after getting to know them. And yet another APU student tied personal
faith commitment to valuing others. She said, “My personal faith commitment teaches me that everyone has value and worth” and should be treated as a “friend.”

School of Nursing

243 Nursing students enrolled in eight service-learning courses responded to the spring 2010 evaluation. Nursing students gained skill and added to future career competencies while working in a variety of clinical settings. As part of the service-learning requirement students were asked to reflect upon their experiences and participate in classroom discussion sharing observations connected to their experience working in hospitals, senior centers, and creating health assessments for community members. Significant aspects of individual and personal reflection processes were candidly shared in the open-answer portion of the student evaluation.

The chart below shows the breakdown of student responses to this Likert Scale question. Of the 243 nursing students who responded to the end-of-semester evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likert Value (LV)</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LV4</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LV3</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LV2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LV1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. The service-learning experience helped me better understand the worth of all people.

- 154 (63%) strongly agree
- 82 (34%) agree
- 4 (1%) disagree
- 2 (<1%) strongly disagree

In addition to the Likert Scale portion of the evaluation, three open-answer essay questions provide the students an opportunity to reflect upon their service-learning experience.

1. What was of greatest value to you in this service-learning experience?
2. How did your personal faith commitment impact your involvement in this service-learning experience?

3. What character trait/aspect of personal character development was strengthened through this service experience?

When students reflected upon their service-learning experiences many observed an increase in awareness of others and an enlarged capacity to appreciate diverse cultures, beliefs and values. The follow responses, culled from the three open-answer questions, provide evidence of increased respect and awareness of others, as well as promotion of intercultural competency through civic engagement and service activity tied to the service-learning curriculum. These student learning outcomes provide evidence and support of the more specific goals of the larger God-Honoring Diversity initiative.

Student Self-Reflections

Students in UNRS 310 interviewed clergy to provide analysis and recommendations regarding handicap accessibility in local churches. For some nursing students this was an introduction to the physical challenges experienced by some members of their own churches. One student referred to valuing a “role for advocating for the socially marginalized.” Another student commented on her experience, “Having to pay attention to the handicap accommodations of my church was something I have never done. It is amazing what I have never taken the time to notice.” Another nursing student found that her faith commitment was challenged as she moved through this service experience. She said, “God says to help the least of these. It is our duty as the church to help/assist them and make church a place of acceptance.”

A student in UNRS 410 referenced her commitment as “working with a vulnerable population of children in LAUSD.” Another student said of the same experience, “It made me appreciate culture and diversity, and I was able to serve God's children with an open heart and mind. “Another student succinctly said, “I was able to see the worth of all people.”

A student in UNRS 313 stated, “All people deserve to be treated equally, despite the physical or mental disabilities an individual may have.” Another shared, “Just the opportunity to actually be able to help out in the very diverse community I was in, and to be able to experience worlds outside of my own was valuable to me.” One student stated very clearly, “I was able to interact with people of different beliefs and values. I also found how to treat others regardless of their beliefs, socioeconomic status, or any other difference.”

A few additional student comments include:

1. It made me realize how much more we need to think about disabled individuals' needs.

2. I was able to start conversations with the staff at my church. Through conversation they saw the need to address the needs of the disabled. I will be meeting with them again to discuss options and interventions. I will start working in the nursery to assist with the mentally handicapped children.
3. The church I talked to did not have any services available for handicapped/disabled people- I pray that through our conversation, the eyes of the church's leaders and the congregation will be open to how to help.

4. As a Christian, I need to value ALL, especially the overlooked and underprivileged.

5. I realized the barriers that people with disabilities face every day.

6. I was an advocate for vulnerable populations.

7. I valued being able to experience different cultures within the city that was serviced.

8. I was able to help in a community vastly different from my own.

9. I was impacted by getting to know a different population.

10. It enabled me to love and see all people as valuable.

11. I enjoyed the diversity of people in my experience.

12. It helped me value each person's worth, whether they were disabled, or had learning issues, etc.

13. I enjoyed connecting with the Hispanic culture.

14. I enjoyed working with individuals from all types of backgrounds and beliefs.

Summary Observations

We believe that our evaluation processes provide support evidence that students themselves understand and appreciate the value of God Honoring Diversity. It is important to remember that the open-answer questions do not specifically ask the students to relate their service-learning experience to intercultural competency or diversity awareness; however, while addressing the faith integration aspect of their service many of the students considered respect and care for others as a major component of their spiritual development. Although the service-learning sites and opportunities varied across the disciplines the majority of students replied similarly when responding to questions about service-learning, intercultural competency and respect.

APU students enjoyed working with people in the community. Many were candid to discuss that previous life experience had not provided opportunities to engage with people from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Students commented on experiencing shifts in their awareness of others and a desire to be more active in their communities in support of all people groups.

We in the Center for Academic Service-Learning and Research are committed to supporting faculty, students and community partners, together creating a mutually beneficial service-learning experience leading to successful student learning outcomes. We are pleased to support the university in this important area.

Data provided by: Center for Academic Service-Learning and Research