Qualitative and Quantitative Evaluation of a Service Learning Program

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Outline

Introduction: GCC Service Learning Center

Qualitative Evaluation
- Community Feedback
- Faculty & Student Feedback

Quantitative Evaluation
- Astin & Sax (1998)
- Local Evaluations
Glendale Community College’s Service Learning Program

**HOW WE STARTED**

- Began in 1994 with a grant from the Corporation for National Service

**WHO WE ARE**

- The Service Learning Center (SLC)
- The SLC serves as a resource and placement center for faculty who want to incorporate service into their curriculum and for students seeking volunteer opportunities in the Glendale area
What We Do:

- **Support and encourage faculty to incorporate service into their courses**

- **Recruit, orient, and place over 500 GCC students each semester in the community to do service.** Ninety percent of them do service tied to their course work. Ten percent have their own personal reasons for doing service, e.g., job experience, career exploration, or a sense of civic responsibility.

- **Organize and implement specialized service learning projects** in the community such as Read Aloud, Community Service Writing Project, Physical Science and Health presentations, and more.

- **Sponsor many presentations** both on and off campus to foster an awareness of sensitive social issues, e.g., diversity, AIDS education, women’s issues, etc.
Our Objectives

• **To create a valuable learning experience for students** that meets their personal or course objectives.

• **To assist college faculty to incorporate service** into their courses in the easiest, most effective manner

• **To assist the college in its outreach goals** to the community at large

• **To encourage a sense of civic responsibility and awareness in GCC students**
GCC Statistics (Each Semester)

- 500+ students are placed in various service opportunities
- 200+ students do their service in K-12 schools
- 7500 hours of service are completed by GCC students
- 40-50 faculty members participate
- 60 courses offer service at Glendale across the curriculum
- 200 non-profit organizations are included in our database
Service Learning Crosses Boundaries

Service Learning affects not only student learning, but also:

- Schools, non-profit agencies, and individuals in the community
- College image in community
- Faculty and teaching methods
Faculty Feedback

• Chemistry: “I want my students to be able to communicate and to write—these are skills that most scientists don’t have.”

• Physiological Psychology: “PP can be a really dry class—it is vital for students to see how the things discussed in class will impact their lives and the lives of those around them.”
More Faculty Feedback

• Sociology: “I see service learning as a reaction of one generation to correct its excesses—the experience generally empowers them and makes them more aware of what is going on around them.”
More Faculty Feedback

- Business: “I see service learning as a public relations tool for the college and it helps the students learn how to develop interpersonal relationships in the workplace, which is what my course is all about.”
## Qualitative Evaluation

### Student Feedback

**Spring 1999 Evaluation**  
Psychology, Political Science, and History Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Very Much/ Somewhat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Do you feel you made a significant contribution to your community?”</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Do you think your service project helped you to understand your course work better?”</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Were you impressed by the services your agency provided to the community?”</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualitative Evaluation

What students have to say about their service…

• This tutor is a shy young man in an advanced Math course:

“Being a Math tutor, it’s not just that I can help other students, but I can also help myself as well. I can review my Math knowledge in previous courses; nevertheless, the most important benefit I got from it is to improve my communication skills and to make more friends. I got respect from students that I helped; they always say ‘Hi’ to me when they see me. Some girls even say to their friends, ‘He is my man.’ I feel extremely happy since I have been using my knowledge to help people.”
What students have to say about their service...

- This student was assigned to tutor his sister, who attended high school. He had the following comments:

  “I asked her why she never asked me to help her at home and she told me that she thought that I would not help her at home because we always argue. I told her that it was not like that and that I would be willing to help her at home. I then helped her in her Math homework. She was working on factoring polynomials. She really got it this time and I noticed that she had been trying harder because it did not take her so long to understand like it did last time.”
What students have to say about their service…

• This student is trying to explain how to multiply positive and negative numbers:

“I thought really hard and this is how I explained this to her that she will never forget, hopefully. I told her: ‘Consider the minus sign a boy and look at the plus sign as a girl. Now you are multiplying boys and girls together. Think about how the outcome of that would be. If you multiply a boy and a boy, it is cool, everything is positive. If you leave them along in a house there is not much to worry [about]. The same goes for a girl and another girl. But the problem occurs when you leave a girl and a boy alone. That is not a good idea, negative results.’”
What students have to say about their service…

• “At first when I tried helping her she was really struggling with the material but after a half an hour of explanation, I could see a smile on her face.”

• “The problem with tutoring her was that she did not really speak any English. I had a hard time communicating with her but I got my point across because the mathematical language is universal.”

• “After the class I realized that I was going through the same thing at their age, and I got more enthusiastic about the service learning, and promised myself to do better in my Math 107 class.”
Community Feedback

• “The best part was when we added the shoogar and it was dasking [dancing].”

• “We had been hoping to have science project programming for many years. Thank you and the students for being so expert at doing what we couldn’t.”
Where Are We Going?

- Governor Davis’ proposed mandate that service be a graduation requirement

- State Service Learning Task Force

- SB919 - Service Learning Master Plan and grant money to start service learning centers
Quantitative Evaluation

• Astin & Sax (1998)
  • Self-report measures of civic responsibility and academic development

• Local Evaluation
  • Objective measures of semester GPA, units earned, course success, and course retention
Quantitative Evaluation


- Survey of 3,450 students from 42 institutions with service learning programs
- Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey
Quantitative Evaluation


• Reasons Students Participate

  • “To help other people” (91%)
  • “To feel personal satisfaction” (67%)
  • “To improve my community” (63%)
  • “To improve society as a whole” (61%)

  • “To enhance my academic learning” (38%)
  • “To fulfill my civic or social responsibility” (30%)
  • “To enhance my résumé” (13%)
Quantitative Evaluation


- Effects on Civic Responsibility Scale
  - (Small) Positive correlations with student commitment to help others who are in difficulty, help promote racial understanding, influence social values, and serve community

- Effects on Academic Development
  - (Very small) Positive correlations with academic self-concept, amount of contact with faculty, GPA, and aspirations for educational degrees
  - Correlations were strongest for students doing service in educational environments
## SEMESTER OUTCOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Mean Term GPA</th>
<th>Mean Units Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SLC</td>
<td>Non-SLC</td>
<td>SLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1997</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>12,929</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 1997</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>13,567</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1998</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>13,751</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 1998</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>14,460</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 Semesters</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,360</strong></td>
<td><strong>81,972</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.60</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quantitative Evaluation

COURSE OUTCOMES: CS/IS 101

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Success</th>
<th>Retention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SLC</td>
<td>Non-SLC</td>
<td>SLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1997</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 1997</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1998</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 1998</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 Semesters</strong></td>
<td><strong>354</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,165</strong></td>
<td><strong>77.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Service Learning associated with higher retention but similar success rates (CS/IS 101, Psych 103, Chem 101)
## Quantitative Evaluation

### COURSE OUTCOMES: Child Development 135

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Success</th>
<th>Retention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SLC</td>
<td>Non-SLC</td>
<td>SLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1997</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 1997</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1998</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 1998</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 Semesters</strong></td>
<td><strong>130</strong></td>
<td><strong>778</strong></td>
<td><strong>77.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Service Learning associated with higher retention and higher success rates (CHLDV 135)—35 hours of service required per semester (17 hours required for other classes)
Summary

Qualitative Evaluation Advantages

- Richer understanding of student experiences and perceptions
- More effective ways to communicate results to stakeholders
- Methodological concerns (e.g., random selection) are less of an issue

Qualitative Evaluation Disadvantages

- Time-consuming
- Potential biases
- Generalizability
Summary

Quantitative Evaluation Advantages

• Statistical significance
• Greater generalizability

Quantitative Evaluation Disadvantages

• Selection effects make causal conclusions difficult
• Danger of mistaking correlation for causation
• Meaningful quantitative data are not always available