

Qualitative and Quantitative Evaluation of a Service Learning Program



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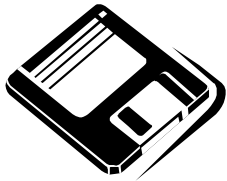


Introduction: GCC Service Learning Center



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.”



Student Feedback

Spring 1999 Evaluation

Psychology, Political Science, and History Courses

Question	Very Much/ Somewhat
“Do you feel you made a significant contribution to your community?”	90%
“Do you think your service project helped you to understand your course work better?”	90%
“Were you impressed by the services your agency provided to the community?”	90%



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.”



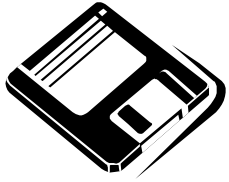
Community Feedback

- “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



Astin, A. W., & Sax, L. J. (1998). How undergraduates are affected by service participation. *Journal of College Student Development*, 39 (3), 251-262.

- Survey of 3,450 students from 42 institutions with service learning programs
- Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey
- Self-Report Measures: Civic Responsibility, Academic Development, and Life Skills



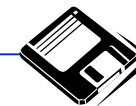
Astin, A. W., & Sax, L. J. (1998)

- 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%)



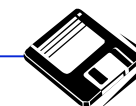
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- Effects on Civic Responsibility Scale
 - (Small) Positive correlations with student commitment to help others who are in difficulty, help promote racial understanding, influence social values, and serve community
- Effects on Academic Development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

Semester	Number of Students		Mean Term GPA		Mean Units Earned	
	SLC	Non-SLC	SLC	Non-SLC	SLC	Non-SLC
Spring 1997	490	12,929	2.61	2.07	8.72	5.69
Fall 1997	426	13,567	2.72	2.00	9.66	5.76
Spring 1998	532	13,751	2.57	2.03	9.61	5.70
Fall 1998	572	14,460	2.58	1.99	9.15	5.62
6 Semesters	2,360	81,972	2.60	2.02	9.33	5.75



COURSE OUTCOMES: CS/IS 101

Semester	Number of Students		Success		Retention	
	SLC	Non-SLC	SLC	Non-SLC	SLC	Non-SLC
Spring 1997	87	512	87.7%	79.0%	93.1%	90.0%
Fall 1997	67	539	70.1%	75.6%	100.0%	89.1%
Spring 1998	80	502	72.4%	75.7%	95.0%	90.2%
Fall 1998	58	517	74.1%	74.1%	93.1%	88.2%
6 Semesters	354	3,165	77.5%	76.5%	94.1%	89.9%

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



COURSE OUTCOMES: Child Development 135

Semester	Number of Students		Success		Retention	
	SLC	Non-SLC	SLC	Non-SLC	SLC	Non-SLC
Spring 1997	22	111	75.0%	66.7%	90.9%	79.3%
Fall 1997	10	156	90.0%	69.1%	100.0%	89.1%
Spring 1998	38	121	77.1%	58.8%	92.1%	80.2%
Fall 1998	35	123	81.3%	60.6%	91.4%	88.6%
6 Semesters	130	778	77.5%	65.5%	92.3%	82.0%

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)



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



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