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COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING AT DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY

MISSION: *COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING* assists DU students and faculty in realizing and advancing the mission. In particular:

“to give compassionate service and to participate in the creation of a more just and humane world.”

COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING VISION STATEMENT

Community-based Learning is a distinct pedagogy where **there is collaboration between the university and community** through which students experience community engagement in relationship to course content, develop skills in critical thinking, cross cultural communication, and social analysis, all of which contribute to the university mission to graduate ethical global citizens.



COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The following are the general learning objectives for all Community-based Learning classes:

1. Students will articulate the connection between Community-based Learning and the University Mission.
2. Students will reflect on the impact of the agency on the community and evaluate their contribution to the agency's mission.
3. Students will identify connections between Community-based Learning experiences and course content.
4. Students will synthesize course content with Community-based Learning activities through personal and group reflections.
5. Students will be able to describe similarities and differences between themselves and the culture and community served by their agency.
6. Students will be able to explain how their course material may be used to engage with and demonstrate commitment to the broader community.

To see CBL Courses, visit the Community-based Learning website:

<https://www.dom.edu/academics/civic-learning/community-based-learning-courses>

WHAT IS COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING?

According to John Dewey, the core of the learning experience must be a project or experience from which the student can draw conclusions about the world. He proposed four criteria that were necessary for projects to be truly educative; they must: 1. generate interest; 2. be worthwhile intrinsically; 3. present problems that awaken new curiosity and create a demand for information; and 4. cover a considerable time span and be capable of fostering development over time (Dewey, 1933).

Community-based Community based learning courses are ones where “students learn and develop experientially derived knowledge through active participation in organized service that: is conducted and meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an institution of higher education and the community; helps foster civic responsibility; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the student; and includes structured time for the students to reflect on the service experience.” (Corporation for National and Community Service).

Community based Learning at Dominican:

Community based Learning is a method of teaching which combines community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility.

Community based learning involves students in organized community service that is directly linked to the curriculum and addresses local community needs. This learning experience provides multiple benefits to the students, including the enhancement of course-related academic skills, further development of critical thinking and social analysis skills, and opportunities for meaningful commitment to and civic engagement with the broader community.

Community based learning can be a part of the course requirements, or can be self-initiated through a 299 agreement between the professor, the student and the Community based Learning Office.

(Community based Learning Committee: December 2003)

Community based learning is a Teaching and Learning method which envisions the broad pedagogy of experiential learning. Related teaching methods are: field experiences, clinical experiences, practicum, student teaching and field projects. All these methods share the belief that learning with concurrent experience enhances the synthesis of theoretical concepts. **This integration of academic and experiential learning requires guided reflection to clarify academic, personal and civic learning.**

Community based learning teaches problem-solving skills, helps students learn more about themselves, promotes collaborative learning and enhances the relationships between the university and the community. Community based learning can also be a way to teach students a sense of community, a sense of responsibility to others, sensitivity, a desire to help resolve the society’s problems, a commitment to become more involved in the community and concern with one’s society.

In Community based learning, the community agency, in conjunction with the faculty member, identifies the service need. Both the student and recipient of the service benefit and have their needs met. Community based learning occurs when there is a balance between learning goals and service outcomes (Signon, 1994).

Community based learning is different from volunteering or community service. Co-curricular activities are generally not integrated into course content. Community based learning refers to those Community based activities that will promote the learning of academic concepts, have specific learning objectives and engage students in meaningful synthesis of the service and the learning.

KEY ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING

The critical elements of academic Community based learning are:

1. Meaningful service to the community. The services provided must meet a need identified by the community agency, not the instructor or students. The instructor does not tell the community agency what problems need to be solved or what work needs to be done, instead the instructor listens to the issues identified by the community agency.

Use the resources of the Office of Community based Learning to locate appropriate CBL sites?

2. Clear connection between course objectives and service activities. The service provided must enhance course content. Students should not do service without a clear connection to course content. Learning is much more meaningful when these connections are made and when students can experience the information first-hand.

What course content or objectives could be enhanced or met through a Community based learning assignment?

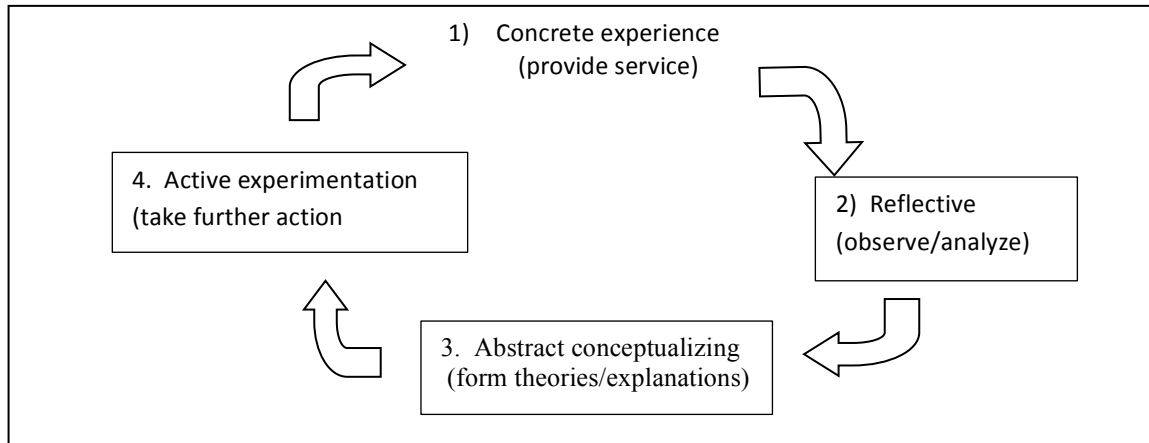
How might you link those objectives to the service activities that you previously identified?

3. Structured opportunities for students to synthesize and derive new meaning from their experiences as they relate those experiences to course objectives. Students must be engaged in structured synthesis/ reflection activities in which they relate their Community based experience to course content. In the integration process, the students should be able to articulate how the service they performed clarified, reinforced, or illustrated course concepts.

What types of structured synthesis/ reflection could you use in your course?

WHY DO COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING?

Community based learning is a way of learning through experience in which students gain and apply academic skills by addressing community needs and social problems. Kolb defines learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.” Kolb’s “Experiential Learning Model” provides a useful framework for integrating the experience and synthesizing elements of Community based learning.



Kolb's Experiential Learning Model

1. Concrete experience = doing something for someone in a community agency.
2. Reflective observation = observing and analyzing. (What happened? What did we see, hear smell, think, and feel as we helped others?)
3. Abstract conceptualizing = forming theories or explanations for why events happened as they did. (How do our Community based experiences fit with what we have learned in class? What can we learn from this experience?)
4. Active experimentation = take further action. (How will this experience and our understanding of it affect our future actions?)

Given Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, Community based learning provides a concrete experience that, paired with critical synthesis of how the service relates to key course ideas, can stimulate conceptual growth and learning in college students.

Benefits to Students

The research on the effects of Community based learning on college students indicates many positive benefits. One study reported that students in Community based learning sections of a political science course were significantly more likely than those in the traditional discussion sections to report that they:

- Had performed up to their potential in the course;
- Had learned to apply principles from the course to new situations;
- Had developed a greater willingness to work toward the resolution of societal problems.

It is important to note that in this study, classroom learning and course grades also increased significantly for the college students involved in Community based learning when compared with students taking the same course without a service component (Markus, Howard & King, 1994).

Several studies demonstrate the following outcomes for students involved in Community based learning:

Personal Growth:	Increased self-esteem and confidence Increased personal responsibility Increased sense of personal efficacy
Career Development:	Active exploration of career interests Understanding of the world of work Specific job skill Hiring advantage over others Greater confidence in career choice
Social Development:	Increased interpersonal skills Increased tolerance/support for diversity Engagement in other volunteer activities Indication of future community participation
Academic/Cognitive:	Belief that service is a positive learning experience Better grades Persistence to graduation

(Cairn & Kielsmeier, 1991; Kraft & Swadener, 1994)

What benefits do you think your students would experience from completing a service learning component in your course?

Benefits to Faculty

The benefits to faculty are realized along with student success. Faculty role in the classroom is expanded from a provider of knowledge to a facilitator of critical synthesis and learning. In addition, students are more motivated when involved in activities relevant to the world around them. The faculty member also makes valuable links with members in the community. Community based learning engages all learners. It helps students structure and act on knowledge. *What benefits do you think you would experience from implementing a service learning component in your course?*

Benefits to Community Agency and University

For years, communities have invited their local colleges to become more actively involved in the everyday activities of the community. Community based learning automatically provides this link and commitment.

Some benefits for community agencies and the University are:

- Students contribute to community development and renewal.
- Agencies receive an infusion of creativity and enthusiasm from college students.
- Students become more invested in the community.
- Students see the range and depth of services performed.
- Students benefit from interaction with the complexity of issues that challenge local, state, national and global communities. These communities feel hope from the tangible investment of youth.

The community and university build links. The “town-gown” relationship is strengthened.

ACADEMIC CRITERIA FOR COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING

Campus Compact has developed principles of good practice in combining service and learning for an effective program: Community based Learning

- Engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good.
- Provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their Community based learning experience.
- Articulates clear Community based and learning goals for everyone involved.
- Allows for those with needs to define those needs.
- Clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved.
- Matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances.
- Expects genuine, active and sustained organizational commitment.
- Includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition and evaluation to meet Community based learning goals.
- Insures that the time commitment for service and learning are flexible and appropriate.
- Is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations.

Criteria and Standards

The Community based learning experience must include supervision, monitoring, support, recognition and evaluation to meet Community based learning goals. The criteria for courses should reflect the following characteristics:

1. There must be a non-classroom component to the Community based learning experience that provides a needed service to individuals, organizations, schools, or other entities in a designated community.
2. The service provided through the course must reflect the values and commitments contained in the Community-based Learning Mission Statement and objectives.
3. The Community based experience needs to be related to the subject matter of the course and knowledge from the discipline(s) should inform the Community based experience and be drawn upon throughout the experience.
4. The instructor needs to specify the basic expectations for the amount of service students are asked to engage in, as well as academic standards for the integration of knowledge and experience in the context of the particular course.
5. Activities in the class need to provide methods and occasions for students to reflect critically on their Community based experience and to relate their experiences to the subject matter of the course. Formative and process evaluation of such activities and the reflective and analytic work of students

need to take place. The course needs to offer a method to assess the learning derived from the service. **Credit is given for the learning** derived from the Community based experience and its relation to the course content and goals, and **not for the service alone**. The Community based learning should conclude in an agreed upon final product or products incorporating course content with the Community based experience (paper/project/activity/outcome) that can be evaluated for academic credit.

6. The service must recognize the needs of the service recipients, and there must be an opportunity for the organization and its constituents/recipients to participate in the evaluation of the service rendered.
7. The Community based opportunities are aimed at the development of the civic responsibility of citizens even though they may also be focused on career preparation.
8. Students will use their Community based-learning experience to develop or enhance general knowledge and understanding from concrete Community based experiences. They will learn to analyze the value of their social involvement from both their own and other's perspectives.

Desired Learning Outcomes

Community based learning courses, in addition to their specific content-based learning goals, should include some of the following learning outcomes. Students should be able to:

- Come to an appreciation of the socio-political and historical context of the community agency in which they have provided service;
- Relate course-based theories and conceptual frameworks to the community work in which they have been engaged;
- Appreciate and have respect for the role of diversity within the community; and
- Reflect upon Community based learning and its relationship to career and their own lives;

Howard (1993) identified ten principles of good practice concerning academic Community based learning pedagogy. These principles can serve as a worthwhile checklist for an instructor who is considering implementing Community based learning in a course.

Community based Learning Pedagogy: Principles of Good Practice

Principle 1: Academic credit is for learning, not for service.

Principle 2: Do not compromise academic rigor.

Principle 3: Set learning goals for students.

Principle 4: Establish criteria for the selection of community placements.

Principle 5: Provide educationally-sound mechanisms to harvest the community learning.

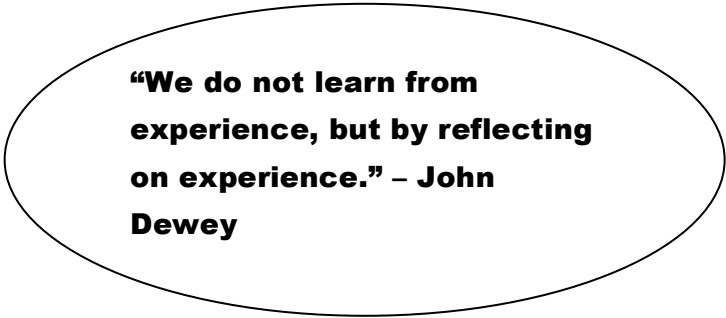
Principle 6: Provide supports for students to learn how to harvest the community learning.

Principle 7: Minimize the distinction between the student's community learning role and the classroom learning role.

Principle 8: Re-think the faculty instructional role.

Principle 9: Be prepared for uncertainty and variation in student learning outcomes.

Principle 10: Maximize the community responsibility orientation of the course.



**“We do not learn from
experience, but by reflecting
on experience.” – John
Dewey**

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING COURSES

I. Guiding Questions:

The following questions may help stimulate some ideas for Community based learning experiences in your course:

- Could your students teach what they have learned to others (elderly, younger children, those with special needs, etc.)?
- Could the results of your students' effort be a contribution to someone (community, an organization, a school, etc.)?
- Could the classroom instruction be used to address a real concern? (Could we use what we're learning to address an environmental, educational, or social concern; or develop some materials that would be helpful to people in the community?)
- Could the skills learned be used to help people in another setting (reading to others, writing letters for someone, helping make a playground safer, providing services, or addressing hunger)?

It's easier to make decisions about how to include a Community based learning component in your course when you have identified and partnered with a community agency.

II. CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING AN ACADEMIC CBL PARTNER/ SITE

(Choosing an appropriate site will be done in consultation with the Director of Community based Learning)

- The agency must be doing work that is connected to the course in ways that will be obvious to students.
- Whenever possible, students should have direct contact with client populations or constituency groups with which the organization regularly interacts.
- The work students do should have some clear connection to the main purposes of the organization. While some of the work may be generally clerical in nature, it should not be consistently repetitious or boring for long periods.
- The site supervisor should be willing to conduct or assist with the orientation, supervision and training activities.
- The site should be accessible to all students (i.e., disability accessible).

III. CONCEPTUALIZING A COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING COURSE:

The following form will help you begin to conceptualize the type of Community based learning experience you want your students to have.

Title of Course: _____

Course Learning Objectives:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Number of students: _____

Hours of service per week required of students: _____

Types of Community Agencies that might “fit” Course Learning Objectives:

Activities you might want your students to perform:

Reflective/ Synthesizing Activities that will connect the CBL experience to learning:

IV. REVISING COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Will the Community based learning component be required?

When a course has been described in the schedule book or catalogue as including a Community based learning component, then you should expect that all students will complete that requirement.

An advantage of requiring a Community based learning experience is that it provides a common ground for classroom assignments and discussion. If a student is unable to manage a Community based learning experience into his/her schedule, you may want to provide alternative assignments or activities, of equal weight and responsibility.

2. How many hours of Community based learning will be required?

When determining the required time commitment, it is useful to keep in mind the agency’s needs and your student population. Does the agency need a lot of student hours in a short period of time or does it need a few hours each week on a continuous basis? Do your students have a number of other obligations (work and family)? In most cases 10 hours is too short and does not provide adequate time for the student or the agency. A good rule of thumb for determining required hours is 2 – 3 hours per week x 12 weeks of the semester. This gives the class time at the beginning and the end of the course to prepare and evaluate.

It is important to remember that if you are going to require a Community based experience, you will need to reduce or eliminate a project, assignment, reading, or class time that are usually required. It is important to *resist the temptation to just add the Community based experience on top of everything else*. Doing so will only create frustration for the students and the agency and possibly strain your and/or the university's relationship with the agency.

How much time will you require per week of your students?

What is your rationale? _____

Does the agency have a minimal volunteer time requirement? _____

How will you connect the Community based activity to course content in class?

When a Community based learning component is integrated into a course, there must be a commitment to allocate class time to discuss what students are seeing, feeling, and thinking about that experience – in short, to synthesize their experience.

How much class time will you devote to Community based learning? Why?

How will you evaluate the Community based learning component?

A general rule is not to evaluate the Community based learning experience itself, but to evaluate what learning students take away from the experience. Thus, you would not give credit for merely accumulating hours performing the service (although it is important to verify the student service hours). You would construct an assignment(s) that allow the student to demonstrate what s/he learned from the hours spent doing Community based work. This assignment could include written or oral analysis of how the course concepts relate to the experiences gained working for the agency.

For example, in a marketing class, students could keep weekly journals of the impact their marketing strategies had upon the community agency. Toward the end of the course, the students could present a written and oral summary of their findings along with a personal assessment of their attitudes toward the people served by public agencies before and after this assignment.

How will you grade the academic Community based learning activity? Why?

What deletions or adjustments will you make in your course?

Something must go when you add Community based learning – perhaps one of your favorite 30-minute lectures or activities? Students will feel overburdened if you simply add Community based learning requirements without adjusting your course requirements and how you spend time in the classroom. You cannot add on community service and never mention it in class. So, give careful consideration to how you will spend class time and what you will require your students to do.

What lecture, activity, or assignments will you delete from your current syllabus to make room for a Community based learning experience?

How will you adapt your course syllabus?

It is important to provide students with a clear picture of the place Community based learning has in the course. Consider the following.

1. **Incorporate community based learning into the course's goals and objectives.** Be sure that your list of learning objectives includes those that will be promoted through the Community based learning experience and related assignments. Remember, if you are trying to convey the message to students that the Community based learning component is relevant to learning concepts, it should be evident in your course goals and objectives.
2. **Describe in detail the Community based learning requirements and related classroom activities and assignments.** You may want to have handouts describing
 - (1) Classroom-based activities and assignments.
 - (2) Activities at the community site including student, instructor, and agency responsibilities and anticipated time commitment.
3. **Describe how the Community based learning experience will be evaluated.** Remember that just performing a community service may not constitute learning.
 - (1) Students must generate some product or documentation that illustrates what meaning they have gained from the experience and its connection to course content.
 - (2) It is important to clarify with students early in the semester the grading criteria.
4. **Specify the contribution of the Community based learning component to the course grade.** To be seen by students as an integral part of the course, rather than as an add-on, the learning generated by service should contribute significantly (20 percent or more) to the overall course grade.
5. **Include a calendar of Community based learning events.** A calendar that specifies the Community based learning experience and due dates is a useful tool for students. You may also wish to include these activities on your reading/ assignment list or calendar.

How will you adapt your course syllabus? _____

Remember, the syllabus is a formal contract with students. It is a valuable tool for the agency site supervisor as well.

V. ENGAGING STUDENTS IN CRITICAL SYNTHESIS: REFLECTION

Reflection is the intentional consideration of an experience in light of particular learning objectives (Hatcher and Bringle, 1997). One of the purposes of Community based learning is to bring life and relevance to key course concepts. Many students do not immediately see the tie between the vivid, complex experiences in their Community based and the important ideas in a course. They need help in making the link through structured critical synthesis.

Dewey felt that reflective thinking was the key to making experience educative – it provides the link between the world of observed and experienced facts with ideas. Dewey saw reflective activity as having five phases:

1. **Suggestion:** The inhibition of tendency to act, to pursue whatever suggestion arises from the situation by stopping to consider more than one course of action.
2. **Intellectualization:** The definition of a problem and the raising of questions about the nature of the problem and possible solutions.

3. **Hypothesis:** The development of the guiding idea based on observation and previous knowledge.
4. **Reasoning:** The development of the hypothesis by applying knowledge and by developing the linkages in the sequence of ideas.
5. **Testing the Hypothesis in Action:** The verification through further observation or experimentation in which the problem is solved or a new problem is presented.

Reflection leads to understanding, which in turn leads to more informed action. Effective reflection leads to a better understanding of social problems and to the quest for better solutions. Dewey also pointed out that critical reflection leads to the synthesis of old and new knowledge – including new ways of understanding and solving problems.

There are a number of ways to provide students an opportunity to process their Community based experience and the material in the course. In choosing reflection methods, be creative and include a variety of activities keeping in mind different learning styles. Don't take on more than you can do thoroughly.

Howard Gardner has identified seven intelligences – linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, interpersonal, intra-personal, and bodily-kinetic. Educators in Community based learning have found it helpful to address these domains in reflection exercises, thus allowing students to process their experiences in ways that address their strongest intelligence and in a variety of ways.

**REFLECTION ACTIVITIES ENGAGE STUDENTS IN THE INTENTIONAL
CONSIDERATION OF THEIR EXPERIENCES IN LIGHT OF PARTICULAR
LEARNING OBJECTIVES,
AND PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO:**

- Gain further understanding of the course content and discipline
- Gain further understanding of the Community based experience.
- Develop self-assessment skills as a life-long learner
- Explore and clarify values that can lead to civic responsibility

EFFECTIVE REFLECTION ACTIVITIES:

- Link experience to learning
- Are guided
- Occur regularly
- Are Shared
- Allow feedback and assessment
- Foster the exploration and clarification of values

4 C's of REFLECTION

- Continuous reflection
- Connected reflection
- Challenging reflection
- Contextualized reflection

Examples of Reflection Activities

- ❖ Personal Journals
 - 3-part journal; double entry journal; highlighted journal;
 - Critical incident journal; free write journal; key word journal;

- Activity log journal; dialogue journal
- ❖ Directed Writings
- ❖ Directed Readings
- ❖ Classroom Techniques
- ❖ Ethical Case Studies
- ❖ Student Portfolios
- ❖ Personal Narratives
- ❖ Experiential research paper
- ❖ Quotation Application

**NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL,
COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD:
INDEED, IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS. – Margaret Mead**

Sample Guided Journal Writing Methods:

1. See/ Judge / Act Reflection:

- a. WHAT DO YOU SEE? (Encompasses physical, spiritual, emotional and existential seeing.)
- b. HOW DO YOU JUDGE WHAT YOU SEE? (Judging is something most normal people do all the time. But this judging demands critical openness to the spiritual or trying to get to the “heart of the matter.” Judging helps us interpret the experiences before us.)
- c. HOW SHOULD I ACT? (Our behavior is a direct and concrete expression of what we value. Our reflection of values joined with what we see and judge is the “heart of the matter.” This question can lead to: what am I being *called* to do with the gifts that I’ve been given and insights I’ve gained?)

2. Head/ Heart/ Hands Reflection

- a. HEAD: what have I learned intellectually from my reading and my experience?
- b. HEART: What have I learned about myself emotionally? How do I feel about my experience in light of my learning?
- c. HANDS: What am I learning about helping others? About the needs of my community? About the needs of my world? How does my learning inform my actions?

3. 2 or 3-part Journal:

- a. DESCRIPTION: A narrative of events, experiences, situations, interactions, problems encountered, thoughts and feelings.
- b. ANALYSIS: The analysis should establish connections between the Community based experience and material from textbook (s) and lectures. Students should identify material found useful in analyzing and understanding the events of their Community based experience.
- c. APPLICATION: How does the course material and the Community based experience relate to your personal life (e.g. goals, values, attitudes, philosophy).

4. WHAT? SO WHAT? NOW WHAT?

- a. WHAT?: asks where have you been, what did you do, what happened, what did you experience? Who has been involved? What were the actions and reactions? What processes were involved? What were the relationships? What were the feelings brought on by the Community based experience?

- b. **SO WHAT?:** asks about the meaning and what impact the experience had on you. How are you different? How has this changed your attitudes or beliefs? How are other different because of the service? What is the relationship between my “community agency world” and “my other worlds”?
- c. **NOW WHAT?** (*this step aims at preventing the experience from becoming an isolated experience, unrelated to a students learning, life goals, etc.*) Looks to the future. Where do you go from here? What do you do now? How does this experience move you towards your vision for the future? What knowledge, resources or skills must you have to move to the next step?

Other Projects that promote critical synthesis

In addition to the above activities, students should be asked to create a product that illustrates, summarizes, or demonstrates their learning. The product for on-site Community based learning projects may be a report, a case study (ethnography), a demonstration, a play, a video or multimedia presentation, or a panel discussion.

For both on-site and in-class projects, you will want to think about whether to have students work in groups or alone to create a product. If students work in groups, the product is often more creative and complete. Since this is how many products are created in real work settings, it is a good idea to help students learn to work in groups. If groups are used, you will have to think about how to deal with the problems – some students work harder than others.

- Exit cards – brief notecard reflections turned in at the end of each class period.
- Thought Papers – a number of short papers due throughout the semester in which students discuss situations and experiences that have challenged or changed their way of thinking.
- Three-minute Updates – During one class period each month, each group gives a 3-minute update of progress, problems, goals, etc.
- Final Updates – Final 30-minute updates at end of semester where students present their final analysis of the project.
- First Five Minutes – First 5 minutes of every class are used for students to report anything happening at a site that they want to talk about.
- Essay Question on Exams – A question asking students to consider a dominant issue from class materials and relate it to their Community based work.

Tips for critical synthesis

Here are some ideas for promoting critical synthesis (*Cairn, 1993*).

- Schedule regular time periods for discussion and other reflection activities.
- Integrate times for reflective techniques throughout the experience.
- Allow for spontaneous reflection at the time that issues arise. These “teachable moments” often create the most profound learning.
- Offer students options for responding.

- Link reflection with other reading, writing, discussion, and assignments so students can relate Community based experience to academic skills.

VI. ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING

Any innovation provides a significant learning opportunity for those involved, including you! As a professor, you will automatically begin to question the effectiveness of this new strategy you are trying in your course(s). Did students learn what you wanted?

The following offers helpful hints about how to assess student learning when students have completed projects, journals, or essay exams.

Grading student projects (oral and written)

Assessing students' learning from Community based learning projects is a bit more complex than giving a multiple-choice test. However, the payoff of increased student motivation and increased quality of work when students know they will present their work to their classmates and/or to the agency is worth the effort. Projects offer an opportunity for students to create products or presentations that are much closer to the kinds of products created in work settings. Such products can be a valuable addition to students' portfolios of professional expertise. The process of grading a project is similar to grading an essay exam: you decide what criteria (characteristics) you are looking for in the product submitted and assign points or a grade accordingly.

The important question becomes how you communicate the criteria to your students. One of the most frustrating issues to encounter when grading is the sense that the students' answers may be weak not because of a lack of knowledge or motivation, but because of unclear directions and a poor understanding of the instructor's expectations. One way to avoid this dilemma is to explain the grading criteria before the project begins and to revisit those criteria before the project is completed.

The list might include criteria such as:

- Uses theories and practical ideas from the course and textbook to give meaning to the experiences they had while engaged in Community based learning.
- Demonstrates a sensitivity and willingness to communicate with those different from his/her self.

As the students engage in Community based learning and proceed through the course, they may begin to have more questions about what should be included in the project. It is a good idea to have a second discussion to clarify the criteria. At this time, it may be appropriate to modify the grading criteria, if students agree. It is worthwhile to develop a handout of the agreed-upon criteria so that all the students have a copy in writing. Another advantage to this system is that it is easier to explain and support the grades given if there is a challenge.

Grading journals

Journals are usually very personal and should represent honest impressions and feelings about the student's Community based learning experience. Therefore, some professors do not grade them. When it seems unreasonable or without pedagogical justification to give a grade, a standard number of points may be given for completing the journal (unless it is obviously weak and does not follow any of the suggested format guidelines).

If they are graded, one might look for the student's attempt to link key course concepts with their experience as they complete their Community based learning activities whether on-site or during the development of their product for an agency.

As always, students should be given a clear format and an explanation of how credit will be awarded for the journals. It is an excellent idea to give students a written example of a good journal entry and point out to the students what makes it a good entry. Because journals are turned in more than once during the semester, you may want to afford students the opportunity to re-do their journal if it does not meet your specific standards. In this way, you can "coach" some students to dig more deeply into their experience to produce more thoughtful and reflective journals.

VII. PLANNING LOGISTICS

1. Conduct Orientation.

The agency/ site supervisor or community representative should conduct the orientation and training either in class or on-site. This is where students find out what they will be doing or where they will be going and when. It is also where issues of confidentiality and professional ethics should be discussed.

2. Set a deadline for the Community based activity to begin.

Students need to know that they must fulfill their commitment to the agency. It is helpful to provide structure to the students' Community based learning experience such as a deadline for having started the Community based and an early "accountability assignment" (a journal or contract signed by the site supervisor) to be turned in to the instructor. Also, students should be reminded often of the contract they signed with the agency.

3. During the Semester:

➤ Conduct reflection activities and give feedback on journals and other assignments.

Research on Community based learning is clear that learning is facilitated by frequent structured opportunities to tie Community based activities to course concepts and theories. Reflection activities and critical synthesis assignments should occur *often* and can be tied to other class assignments.

➤ Mid-semester monitoring.

All instructors should conduct a mid-semester course evaluation to see how their students are doing in the course and to obtain information about any changes that should be made to facilitate student learning. Part of a mid-semester course evaluation should be devoted to the Community based learning experience. The results can be useful in modifying requirements and procedures and making mid-course corrections. At this time, it is a good idea to collect and check the time record form kept by the students. Also, think about giving the site supervisor or Director of Community based Learning a call or visit to see how things are going.

➤ Clarify Community based learning final projects and grading criteria.

Students will want to have clear guidelines for any graded projects or assignments. They also have a right to know the grading criteria for those projects or assignments. Including the guidelines and grading criteria in writing makes these expectations clear for everyone.

At Semester's End

➤ Final Projects Due.

Classroom display, reports, power point/ Prezi presentations, panels, and other means may be used to help students share with one another what they have learned. For in-class Community based projects, this is the time for the class to present their products to the agency representatives either in class or at the agency itself.

➤ Collect Community based-learning time record forms.

This is the time to make sure that each student has indeed fulfilled his or her commitment to the agency or project. It is also useful to see how many hours of Community based your students actually performed. You may find out that many students exceeded the number required.

➤ Celebrate the students' accomplishments with a party, press release, photo sessions, or a letter from the agency.

Involve the agency representatives in these celebrations. These types of celebrations provide a valuable sense of closure for students, the agency and you.

After the Course

➤ Send thank-you letter to agency.

It's nice to send thank-you letters to those at the agency that assisted your students. Students could send thank-you notes with information about what their experience with the agency has given them.

➤ Talk with CBL director (and site supervisors?) to share evaluation results and plan needed revisions.

It is beneficial to build ongoing relationships with your agencies. So, it is wise to get together after the "dust has settled" and to reflect on what went well and what did not. This is the time to make revisions that will improve the partnership next time around. The CBL office is an excellent source of information about how to improve the CBL experience for your students in the future.

Provide feedback to the Community based Learning office.

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING

While Community based learning has the potential to promote learning that is multicultural, gender-fair, disability-aware, etc. it also has the potential to reinforce stereotypes and biases. It is the responsibility of the instructor, the Director of Community based Learning and community agency staff to help the students prepare for and process the Community based learning experience so that the experience promotes diversity and not stereotypes.

Difficulties of Cross-Cultural Communication

- Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view people of other cultures through one's own cultural perspective. We tend to view and judge people from our own view of how the world should operate. When another's behavior is not consistent with our expectations, we assume there is something wrong with that person. This perspective may be particularly true of those who have had limited exposure to people different from themselves, because of age, upbringing, etc.
- A language barrier can result from speaking different languages but it can also occur between people who have the same language but use the words differently.
- Rules and norms are different for different groups. Difficulties arise when we or others violate the expected cultural rules and customs. These rules or customs can include communication protocol.

Meeting the Challenges

The following are helpful attitudes and behaviors to reinforce with students in your class, especially when their experience, discussion or writing reinforces stereotypes, prejudice or ethnocentrism.

- Learn rules of culture or group. Show respect for the traditions; avoid imposing your culture and value system on others.
- Observe carefully. There is no substitute for observing the culture you are attempting to understand.
- Tolerate differences. Each of us carries an image of the world in our heads, and an image of how we believe the world is supposed to be. Accept others and allow them to have their own views without judging those views as unacceptable.
- Develop flexibility. Don't feel threatened by others or become defensive.
- Convey a genuine interest in understanding the other culture.
- In short, encourage your students to be curious versus judgmental. In a city like Chicago, it is impossible to have students involved in service without discussing issues of race. Students may approach people and/or neighborhoods of different ethnicities with pre-judgments or fears reinforced by parental fears or prejudices. These need to be acknowledged and challenged through learning. As difficult as it may be, plan for these discussions. Think about what readings you want to assign before you introduce these topics. Provide opportunities for structured reflection so the students can question and gain insights into their experiences.

RESPONSIBILITIES IN COMMUNITY-BASED COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING

Overall supervision of students' Community based learning experiences is the responsibility of faculty. However, the community service agency and the Director for Community based Learning will help facilitate many of the details of the project. The following is a suggested division of responsibilities:

FACULTY:

- ➔ Identify academic and course learning goals and objectives for including Community based learning.
- ➔ Help identify options for Community based learning projects with support of CBL director.
- ➔ Insure that students are adequately prepared for the overall Community based experience. Spend class time orienting students to Community based learning and its requirements. Utilize the expertise of the Office of Community based Learning.
- ➔ Include Community based learning objectives, requirements, grading procedures, expectations, etc. in course syllabus.
- ➔ Guide students' reflections and synthesizing activities, incorporating student experiences into classroom discussion and learning.
- ➔ Evaluate students' learning through the Community based experience in relation to course objectives.
- ➔ Incorporate evaluation and celebration of Community based learning into course.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- ➔ Identify needs for volunteers and develop appropriate responsibilities for students.
- ➔ Provide on-site orientation, training, placement and supervision of student volunteers.
- ➔ Provide appropriate materials and assistance for student volunteers: volunteer application, clearances, background checks, interviews, etc.
- ➔ Provide feedback on student performance, attendance, and success in meeting identified community need.
- ➔ Where appropriate, participate in and/or support recognition efforts.
- ➔ Maintain communication with the Director of Community based Learning, the student coordinator and/or the course instructor as needed.

COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING OFFICE:

- ➔ Provide information on potential Community based sites and current community partners to faculty (EXPO).
- ➔ Assist faculty in development of quality Community based learning projects.
- ➔ Assist student in contacting agency and working out logistics of Community based projects.
- ➔ Develop and provide resources and examples for reflection, synthesizing activities.
- ➔ Develop and provide contracts, time records, and evaluation tools for faculty, community partner and students.
- ➔ Document and disseminate information on Community based learning to appropriate people or offices.
- ➔ Maintain contact with community partners. Assist in addressing problems as they arise.
- ➔ Provide opportunities for community partners to meet and interact with interested students and faculty.

MaDonna Thelen, Director of Community based Learning
Dominican University LL 101
(708-524-6425) mthelen@dom.edu

COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING GOES DIGITAL!

- The CBL Expo is a great opportunity to meet some of our many community partners. Everyone is encouraged and welcomed to come, especially if you are unsure of where to complete your service.
- To **SIGN-UP** for an agency, you must access Community-based Learning online:
 1. Login to **myDU**.
 2. Click on the **Students** tab.
 3. **Community-based Learning** will be on the left side, towards the bottom.
- All of our Community-based Learning agencies are under the **Community Partners** tab. A table will appear with the agency name, a description of the agency, and a details tab. If you are looking to work with a certain population, ethnicity, or do a specific type of service, then you can use the **Filters** tool, which is also under the same tab.
- To sign up with a Community Partner, you must:
 1. Click on **Details**, *which will display the contact information and agency information.*
 2. Scroll to the bottom and click on **Choose this Community Partner**.
- **You can only choose ONE Community Partner** and once you have chosen your Community Partner, **it cannot be changed!** Sign up week: one week following the EXPO. Problems? Contact the CBL office.
- The Community-based Learning manual, contract, and evaluations are all under the **Forms** tab. **You are required to turn in your contract and evaluations** to the Office of Community-based Learning, which is located in the Lewis Link 101.
- To ensure you are fulfilling all your course requirements and the Community-based Learning requirements, use the checklist on the next page as a guide to help you stay on the right track.

If you have any trouble with the anything, please contact the CBL Office to assist you.

REQUIRED FORMS

The following forms are required forms you will need in order to complete your Community-based Learning. All forms are to be completed and turned in on time.

☐ 1. Community-based Learning Contract

-This form needs to be filled in and signed by you, your agency supervisor, and your professor.

-Return the completed form to the Office of Community-based Learning.

-Contracts are due by the 1st week of October.

☐ 2. Community-based Learning Time Record

-This form goes with you to your service site. Please keep track of your hours and have your supervisor verify this with his/her signature, once you have completed all of your required hours.

-Return the completed form to your professor - **due before the end of the semester.**

☐ 3. Agency Evaluation of Community-based Learning Students

-This form needs to be given to your agency supervisor when you are near the end of completing your service hours, so they can evaluate your performance at the beginning and end of your service.

-Return the completed form to the Office of Community-based Learning.

-Agency Evaluations are due before the end of the semester.

☐ 4. Community-based Learning Student Evaluation

- Student Evaluations of Community-based Learning are completed online.
- At the end of your semester, you need to complete the Student Evaluation, which can be found under the Resources tab on the Community-based Learning website.
- The survey only takes 5-10 minutes to complete and provides feedback your professor and to the Community-based Learning Office about your experience.
- Print the last page of the Student Evaluation and write your name.
- Return the printed page to your professor as proof of your completion of the survey.
- Student Evaluation Link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AY14_15_CBL_Evaluation.

-Student Evaluations are due before the end of the semester

COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING: CONTRACT AGREEMENT DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY

Student Name	Student ID Number
Address	Agency
Telephone (Cell)	Email Address
Course Title & Number	Instructor Name

Required Approval Signatures

1. Agency Supervisor		Date	
2. Instructor		Date	
3. Instructor		Date	

I, _____ (name of student), hereby acknowledge that I am enrolled in a Community-based Learning class at Dominican University. I understand that to participate in this program, I am required to travel to and from my agency. I further understand and agree that Dominican University is neither responsible nor liable for any injury, damage, or loss incurred while traveling to or from the agency, or while at the agency, and that I am solely responsible for my actions, inactions, and/or behavior while participating in this program, and agree to and shall save and hold harmless Dominican University.

I certify that I have no physical condition or disability that I have not disclosed which might affect my participation in this program. Should I develop a condition or injury, which limits my participation in the program I will immediately notify the Community-based Learning office and provide medical documentation as required.

Additionally, with my signature below, I acknowledge my permission for any quotation of my comments, video, or still photography made with my image and any sound recording of my voice to be applied to a variety of uses by Dominican University.

Student declares and also agrees to the following:

1. I will comply with agency policies, standards and regulations and serve in a professional manner with respect for others, especially with regard to **confidentiality**. I understand that all activities, in which I am involved as a service-learner are strictly confidential. I will not release any type of personal information concerning clients of the agency listed above, without written authorization from appropriate persons.
2. I will complete the Community-based Learning assignment/ contract that I have made a commitment to and will be on time or call the agency if I cannot attend due to illness or emergency.
3. I will contact MaDonna Thelen, Director for Community-based Learning (**708-524-6425; mthelen@dom.edu**) if I have concerns, or difficulties with this agency AFTER I have spoken to the agency supervisor.

I hereby affirm that I have read and understand the terms and conditions of this Liability Waiver and Release Form and agree to accept the terms and conditions. I further agree and acknowledge that I will abide by all responsibilities as outlined in this document.

Student Signature

Date

AGENCY EVALUATION of COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING STUDENTS

Assessment Tool for Community Agencies

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Course: _____

Agency Supervisor: _____ Agency Name and Address:

(Person Filling Out This Evaluation)

Type of Volunteer Service Completed: _____ Number of
Hours Completed with the Agency: _____

Using the scale below, please rate the student volunteer on each of the following competencies within your agency.

1 = the volunteer has no prior experience and/or little ability - significant improvement is needed in this skill or competency.

2 = the volunteer has some limited ability, but further development is needed with this skill or competency.

3 = the volunteer can consistently perform this skill or competency adequately.

4 = the volunteer has demonstrated significant ability with this skill or competency.

5 = the volunteer has nearly maximized their potential with this skill or competency.

NA = not applicable

Competency	<u>Where Student Volunteer is early in Service experience</u>	<u>.. at the end of service experience</u>	COMMENTS
TEAM WORK			
Ability to work with and build relationships with a diverse group of people.			
Knows the names of some other members of the organization, including clients.			
Actively provides motivation and encouragement to clients.			
Understands the ways in which diversity enhances the agency.			
Develops and accomplishes personal goals.			
Consistently tries to connect with members of the agency.			
Works cooperatively with clients and supervisor.			
SELF MANAGEMENT			
Demonstrates responsibility, respect, and maturity.			

Takes care of paperwork including contract and time log.			
Is on time for scheduled volunteer hours and days.			
Able to follow directions.			
Able to do tasks and projects assigned by the agency.			
Dresses appropriately for service.			
Exhibits respect for self and for clients.			
Takes initiative or is a self-starter.			
COMMUNICATION			
Ability to communicate information, ideas, and contrasting points of view in an effective and professional manner.			
Can effectively communicate verbally with supervisor and clients.			
Exhibits good non-verbal communication patterns.			
Works well at communicating in group activities.			
Respects confidentiality.			
Solicits supervisor's help when problems arise.			
Seeks feedback from others.			
Informs the agency of changes in schedule.			
AGENCY MISSION			
Demonstrates an understanding of and willingness to participate in the mission of the agency.			
Understands the purpose and the mission of the agency.			
Participates in the fulfillment of the agency's goals.			
Works toward the organization's best interests.			
Actively participates in an Agency Orientation.			

Please feel free to add any other comments about the CBL student who worked with you:

RETURN TO: Office of Community-based Learning – Lewis Link 101

Dominican University
7900 W. Division St.
River Forest, IL 60305
(mthelen@dom.edu)

Phone: (708)524-6425

Fax: (708)524-5990



COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING: TIME RECORD

Date:	Time In:	Time Out:	Total Time:	Activities:	Reflections: (What I Learned)

Name: _____

Course: _____

Date: _____

Agency: _____

Total Hours Served: _____

Supervisor: _____

Student's Signature

Date

Agency Supervisor's Signature

Date

(RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR PROFESSOR!)