Considerations and Strategies for Evaluating Service-Learning Impact

ANDREW FURCO
Professor of Education
University of Minnesota, United States

IMPACT OF SERVICE-LEARNING

S T U D E N T S

Academic
(content learning, higher order thinking persistent, retention)

Career
(readiness, skills development, awareness, transferable skills)

Civic
(service commitment, civic engagement)

Ethical/Moral
(ethical decision making; capacity to address moral dilemmas)

Personal
(self-esteem, self-efficacy, empowerment, leadership)

Social
(relationship with peers, adults, engagement with difference)

T E A C H E R S
Instructional efficacy, relationship with students, relationship with external community, awareness of local societal issues, student-centered pedagogies, teaching satisfaction

I N S T I T U T I O N S
Campus climate, town gown relationships, interdisciplinary activities, external visibility and image, mission fulfillment
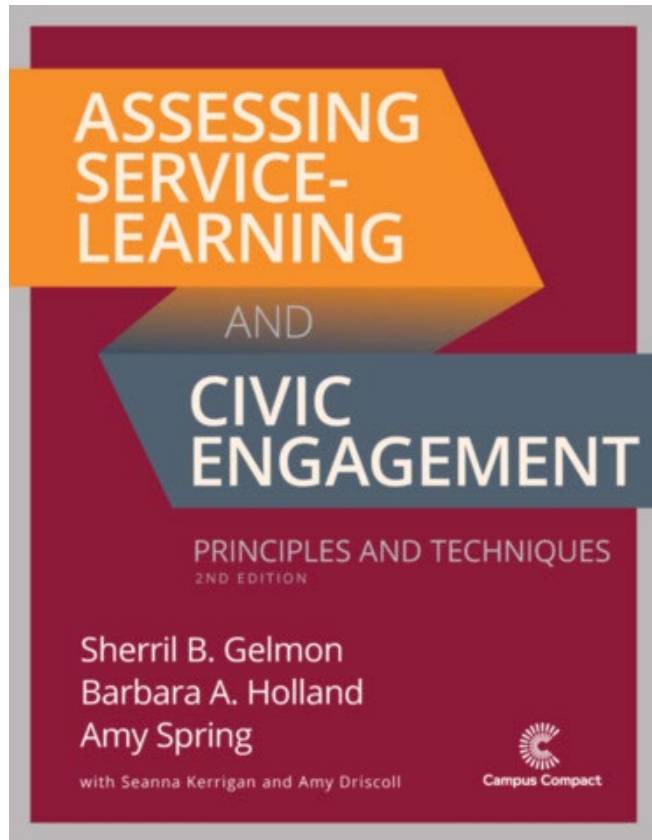
C O M M U N I T Y
resident empowerment, community coalition building, intersectoral collaboration, societal issues awareness and attention

Social Entrepreneurship: Accommodations for Disabilities

School of Business and Management

ASSESSING SERVICE-LEARNING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES
2ND EDITION

Sherril B. Gelmon
Barbara A. Holland
Amy Spring

with Seanna Kerrigan and Amy Driscoll

Campus Compact

Includes assessment instruments for each stakeholder group.

Table of Contents:

Preface

Acknowledgments

Service-Learning Generic Instruments

CHARACTERISTICS

1. Designed specifically for higher education service-learning
2. Can be applied across programs
3. Measure a broad range of outcomes (breadth rather than depth)
4. Contain some psychometric properties
5. Can be used as post-only, or pre-post

1. Diaz, Furco, & Yamada (1999). *Higher Education Service-Learning Pre-Post Survey* (Academic, Career, Civic, Empowerment)

2. Moely et al. (2002). *Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire* (Civic attitudes, behaviors, and skills)

3. Toncar et al. (2006). *Service-learning Benefits Scale (SELEB)* (Personal, Social, Career, Civic, Academic)

4. Lopez de Arano Prado et al. (2024). *Questionnaire for the Self-Assessment of Service-Learning Experiences in Higher Education* (QaSLu-27) (implementers of service-learning)
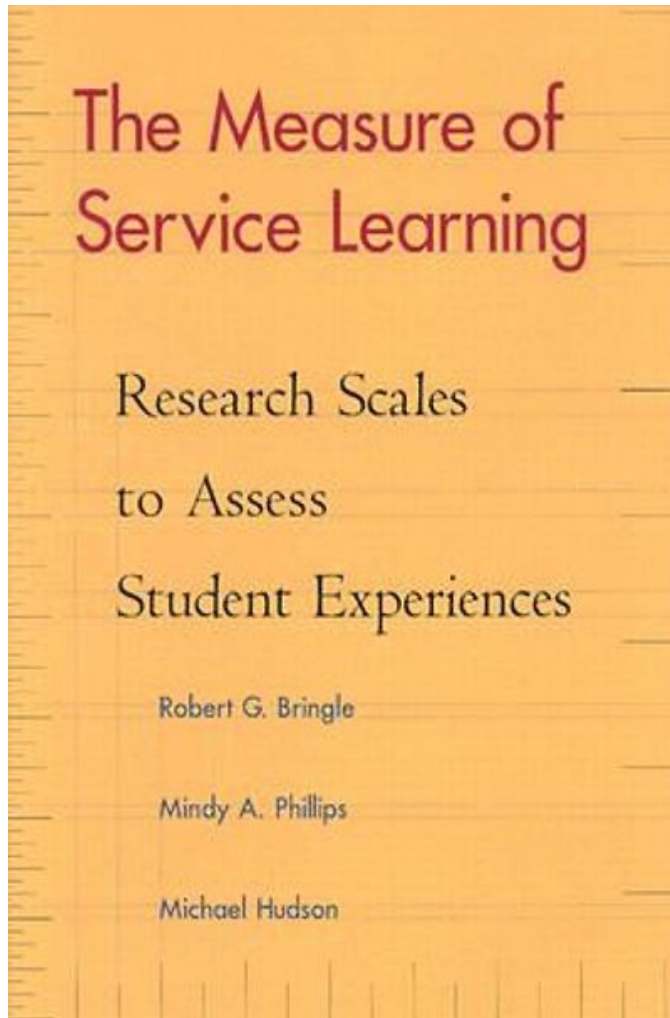
Service-learning Benefits Scale

APPENDIX A
The 20-Item SELEB Scale

Please indicate how well your class project has provided you with the following educational experience with 1 being not at all and 7 being very much so.

Personal Growth	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to Work with Others	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Leadership Skills	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Communication Skills	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Understanding Cultural and Racial Differences	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Social Responsibility and Citizenship Skills	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Community Involvement	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Applying Knowledge to the "Real World"	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Problem Analysis and Critical Thinking	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Social Self-Confidence	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Conflict Resolution	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to Assume Personal Responsibility	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Development of Caring Relationships	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Gaining the Trust of Others	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Empathy and Sensitivity to the Plight of Others	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Workplace Skills	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to Make a Difference in the Community	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Skills in Learning from Experience	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Organization Skills	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Connecting Theory with Practice	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Notes: The instructions above were used to assess the benefits of service learning among the two classes in the study. When developing the scale, the instructions were: "Please indicate how important each of the following are to you in your educational experience with one being not at all and seven being very much so."

Toncar et al., 2006

Using and Adapting Existing Validated Instruments

The Measure of Service Learning

Research Scales to Assess Student Experiences

Robert G. Bringle

Mindy A. Phillips

Michael Hudson

- Psychometrics for validity and reliability

- Provide depth of understanding of specific impacts

Qualitative Instruments and Protocols

Problem-Solving Interview Protocol *(Eyler & Giles, 2002),* pre-post interviews that ask students about causes, solutions and strategies for action in response to a specific social problem.

Community Partner Interview Protocol *(McReynolds, 2014), questions for semi-structured interviews; questions focus on community partners' perspectives, such as their experience working with university service-learners and the impact of students' work on the community partner.*

CAUTIONS

1. On which population(s) was the instrument normed?
2. Adaption and translation may affect validity and reliability of the protocol or instrument.

Reflection to Evaluate Impact:
Impact on Student Learning

DEAL Model
(Ash, Clayton, and Atkinson, 2005)

• Use of creative reflective writings *("articulated learnings")*

• Students explore individual learning in context of *academic enhancement, personal development and civic engagement*

• Mechanism to guide and quantitatively evaluate **critical reflection** in SL courses using external ratings for depth of learning and critical thinking.

3-step process in which students engage:

✓ **D**escribing SL experience

✓ **E**xamining SL experience in light of <u>specified</u> learning objectives for *academic achievement, personal growth, and civic engagement*

✓ **A**rticulating **L**earning in reflections

Reflection to Evaluate Impact:
Impact on Student Learning

Now that you have engaged with the neighborhood agency on homelessness, reflect on what you consider to be the causes of homelessness, the challenges of homelessness, and the services you believe are most important for homeless individuals and families?

Reflection to Evaluate Impact:
Impact on Community

COMMUNITY GROUP REFLECTION:

My students have engaged with you to work through issues you are facing.

- As a results of my students' involvement, have conditions changed for you. If so, how?

- Is there any benefit that you believe my students have provided? Please share.

- What would be the circumstances for you today if my students had not worked with you?

- Would you want my students to join you in the future? Why or why not?

High Quality Service-Learning Base Standards

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION
Meaningful Service	Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.
Integration with the Curriculum	Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.
Duration and Intensity	Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.
Reflection	Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society.
Student Voice	Service-learning provides students with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from teachers.
Progressing Monitoring	Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals and uses results for improvement and sustainability.
Diversity	Service-learning promotes understanding of diverse perspectives and mutual respect among all participants.
Partnerships	Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.

Dimensions & Elements of the SLQAT

Dimension I:	Element #1: Articulation of Service-Learning in Syllabus
Course Design	Element #2: Reflection
	Element #3: Diverse Perspectives
	Element #4: Assessment of Student Performance
	Element #5: Flexibility in Course Design / Implementation
	Element #6: Mutual Benefit
	Element #7: Feedback
	Element #8: Risk Management
	Element #9: Use of Resources & Support for Service Learning
	Element #10: Planning and Articulation of Service Activity

FIPSE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Dimensions & Elements of the SLQAT

Dimension II: *Learning*	Element #11: Academic Content Learning from Service-Learning
	Element #12: Societal Issues Learning from Service-Learning
	Element #13: Personal/Professional Learning from SL
	Element #14: Appropriateness of Service Activities for Students
	Element #15: Connection between Service and Learning
	Element #16: Authentic Community-Based Need
	Element #17: Appropriate Duration/Intensity of Service

FIPSE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Dimensions & Elements of the SLQAT

Dimension III: *Student*	<u>Element #18</u>: Student Preparedness for Service-Learning <u>Element #19</u>: Relevance of Service Activity <u>Element #20</u>: Student Voice
Dimension IV *Instructor*	<u>Element #21</u>: Instructor's Knowledge of SL Pedagogy <u>Element #22</u>: Instructor's Knowledge of Community <u>Element #23</u>: Instructor's Knowledge of Societal Issues
Dimension V: *Community Partner & Partnership*	<u>Element #24</u>: Site/Partner Appropriateness <u>Element #25</u>: Supervision & Guidance of Students <u>Element #26</u>: Community Partner Co-Educator Role <u>Element #27</u>: Community Capacity for Service-Learning <u>Element #28</u>: Instructor & Community Partner Connection

Distribution of Weights Based on Experts' Feedback

Table 2. Distribution of Baseline SLQAT Element Weights

Baseline Weight	Number of Elements (n = 28)	Elements With This Weight
6.0	1	#9
6.5	1	#8
7.0	5	#4, #7, #18, #19, #20,
7.5	10	#1, #5, #10, #13, #14, #17, #21, #23, #25, #26
8.0	8	#3, #6, #11, #12, #22, #24, #27, #28
8.5	2	#15, #16
9.0	1	#2

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Service-Learning Quality Assessment Tool

ELEMENT #2: Reflection
The course includes relevant critical reflection activities intended to foster connections between course content and service activities

Element #2: Reflection				
The course includes relevant critical reflection activities intended to foster connections between course content and service activities				
Is there evidence of activities that engage students in reflection on the service-learning experience?	Element is absent based on existing evidence.	While at least one REFLECTION activity is present, reflection is minimal, superficial, or does not connect the service activity with course content or learning goals/ objectives.	The course provides more than one substantive REFLECTION activity (whether through writing, arts-based, electronic, oral, or other modalities) that links the service activity with at least one course goal/learning objective.	The course provides ongoing, challenging, critical REFLECTION activities throughout the course that foster connections between the service activity and one or more course learning goal/objective.
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL:	Absent	Below Baseline	Baseline	Above Baseline
WEIGHTED SCORE:	0	6.8	9.0	11.3

EVIDENCE/NOTES:

Dimension I: Course Design Dimension (10 Elements)

Element #1: Articulation of Service-Learning in Syllabus *Service-learning is articulated and integrated in the course design and syllabus*				
Is there evidence in the syllabus of a service-learning experience within the course design and/or the course expectations?	Element is absent based on existing evidence.	While the SYLLABUS or ancillary documents mention a service-learning experience, this is underdeveloped, unclear, not relevant, or not integrated into the rest of the course.	The SYLLABUS articulates and describes a relevant service-learning experience as part of the course.	The SYLLABUS clearly explains the scope, relevance and purpose of the service-learning experience, and how it is integrated into the course, with appropriate details.
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL:	Absent	Below Baseline	Baseline	Above Baseline
WEIGHTED SCORE:	0	5.6	7.5	9.4
Element #2: Reflection *The course includes relevant critical reflection activities intended to foster connections between course content and service activities*				
Is there evidence of activities that engage students in reflection on the service-learning experience?	Element is absent based on existing evidence.	While at least one REFLECTION activity is present, reflection is minimal, superficial, or does not connect the service activity with course content or learning goals/objectives.	The course provides more than one substantive REFLECTION activity (whether through writing, arts-based, electronic, oral, or other modalities) that links the service activity with at least one course goal/learning objective.	The course provides ongoing, challenging, critical REFLECTION activities throughout the course that foster connections between the service activity and one or more course learning goal/objective.
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL:	Absent	Below Baseline	Baseline	Above Baseline
WEIGHTED SCORE:	0	6.8	9.0	11.3

EVIDENCE/NOTES:

Interpreting SLQAT Scores

- Courses with all 28 elements **below** baseline: Score = **159.5**

- Courses with all 28 elements **at** baseline: Score = **215.5**

- Courses with all 28 elements **above** baseline: Score = **266.1**

- Overall quality scores at or above **212** indicate that the course has incorporated the essential elements of quality practice to a satisfactory degree.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
1785

Common Mistakes and Tips

1. Expected outcomes are too lofty.

2. We set outcomes and impact that are not easily measured.

3. We misapply evaluation instruments and measures.

4. We misattribute outcomes and impact to service-learning.

5. Less is more.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Thank you!

afurco@umn.edu

Status of Evaluation of SL Impacts

98 Service-learning in Engineering Articles reviewed:

- 68.13% (out of 91 articles) used surveys
  - 75% focused on evaluating student outcomes
    - 8% on academic outcomes.
    - Student knowledge, technical and non-technical skills, attitudes, recruiting/retention/diversity, and post-educational professional performance
  - 15% focused on evaluating community outcomes

From Queiruga-Dios et al, 2021