

Service-Learning and Student Development: Implications for Course/Program Design

This simplified model is intended as a guide and catalyst for conversation rather than a prescription.

First Year -----> Senior Year				
Instructor Role Learner's Stage	Authority/ Structure Dependent	Motivator/ Guide Interested	Facilitator/ Coach Involved	Consultant/ Support Self-directed
	Learners early in their development may need an instructor to provide a high level of project structure and management, but as you challenge them to gain confidence in their skills they can move toward more involvement in their own learning, eventually being able to be self-directed. Adjust your role accordingly as they develop, eventually becoming more of a "coach" to help them succeed.			
Extent of Teamwork Learner's Stage	Class Project	Individual Project	Small Group Project	
	Dependence	Autonomy	Interdependence	
	Learners move from dependence on authority figures for direction, through a desire to be autonomous, to recognition of the value of collaboration. Start with full class, instructor-facilitated projects that occasionally require work with others; move to independent projects next; then challenge students to form effective, self-organizing groups in upper-level or capstone settings.			
Intensity/ Duration of S-L Project Learner's Needs	One-time/ Discrete	Extended Course Unit	Course-based	Long-term Commitment
	Content	Content/ Experience	Experience/ Content	Experience
	Early courses may lean heavily toward academic content and skill development with exposure to application; projects can grow in scope as students have mastered more of the content. Eventually, when students have become "relative experts" in their field, the focus can shift – engaging students in long-term, "deep" service-learning projects (capstones, etc.).			
Level of Responsibility Learner's Position	Exposure	Contribution	Full Responsibility	
	Dualism	Multiplicity	Commitment	
	Early learners may be overwhelmed with the complexity of social issues and seek easy "right and wrong" answers; help them to deal with complexity and move to an ability to commit to solutions by offering gradual responsibility. Start by exposing them to problems, and then ask them to contribute to ongoing solutions, and then challenge them to be responsible for defining problems and seeking solutions.			
Community Contact Learner's Stage/ Competence	Hypothetical	Non-direct	Indirect	Direct
	Self-focused/ Unaware Novice	* ↔ Responsibility for Others/ Aware Novice	Universal Justice/ Aware Skilled	
	Maintaining mutually-beneficial partnerships can be challenging for students who are having trouble balancing self-interest with needs of others or don't yet possess professional skills. In early courses, consider managing the partnership yourself and involving students hypothetically or indirectly. As they develop skills and self-other balance, engage them more in working directly with partners.			
	<i>* Gilligan has documented variability in early moral development stages based on gender.</i>			

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Key Concepts as you Use this Tool:

1. **Scaffolding** = challenging AND supporting students to develop by taking one step up (not three!)
2. **Unit-level considerations** = consider developing curriculum across a unit that builds student capacity as they progress (service-learning classes at each level within a major, for example)

CAUTION!

Remember, no student is just like another and many developmental theories were originally based on select groups of privileged white males. Think about ways to accommodate various developmental levels within your classroom. Here are some ideas:

- Create formal or informal leadership opportunities for students of higher level of maturity or development (serving as primary community partner contact, facilitating reflection sessions); provide opportunities for these students to share their skills or experiences with others;
- Think about how you create groups or assign projects; groups can either be mixed ability or like ability, and projects can range from those that are pre-determined by you to those which require more self-direction on the part of students. Consider offering options, and try to steer students in the direction of projects that are appropriate to their level.

References

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