

This article explores innovative ways an institution can support faculty efforts to integrate service and traditional academic instruction. Practical strategies for curriculum design, faculty development, and administrative support are outlined, using the service initiative launched at Loyola College in Maryland as a case study.

Making the Paradigm Shift: *Service Learning in Higher Education*

Introduction

Service learning pedagogy is an idea whose time has come. As our economy becomes more complex, natural resources more limited, and social problems more acute, the importance of educating our youth to a life of responsible citizenship cannot be ignored.

However, meeting this challenge is no easy matter. It involves a certain rethinking of the goals and methods of higher education. University teaching becomes not simply a value-free exploration of abstract theories, but a forum for connecting the students' academic work and professional aspirations to the social concerns of the greater world. This requires designing a curriculum that moves both faculty and students out into the community for purposes of study, research, and practical experience.

This article explores ways by which an institution can support and enhance service-learning pedagogy. Guidance is often necessary because such a mode of teaching makes special demands upon the faculty. Most faculty members received graduate training in traditional disciplinary methods and texts. They may thus be uncertain about how to incorporate experiential components into the classroom. They have neither been told how to do so, nor witnessed it in prac-

tice. Moreover, most soon discover that, to be done right, service learning is not a simple add-on ("oh yes, and spend a morning in the soup-kitchen"); rather, it challenges one to rethink the texts read, as well as the modes of discussion, writing, and testing employed in the classroom. In addition, faculty may encounter increased personal burdens. Suddenly, there are demands to help students liaison with service sites, and to address the practical or emotional problems that arise there. How much easier to simply teach a text! It is no wonder that many faculty balk at making the paradigm shift that service learning can entail. To really catch fire at an institution, service-learning pedagogy needs to be encouraged by a structure of institutional support, recognition, and reward, or risk remaining an isolated anomaly. It is just such a structure that we are attempting to build at Loyola College in Maryland.

Background

Founded in 1852 and located in Baltimore, Loyola College is a Jesuit/Mercy institution with a strong liberal arts core curriculum. In harmony with its goal of preparing students for a life of leadership and service, in 1989 the college established an office to coordinate student service activities and support service learning pedagogy. Enthusiastic campus response soon led the administration to expand the office into Loyola's Center for Values and Service.

By 1995, the number of students performing regular weekly community service had increased by over 400 percent. Indeed, two-thirds of the student-body engaged in some form of service, with some 68,000 service hours logged that year alone. Loyola now works with 80 community agencies in the Baltimore region and has long-term partnerships with certain programs such as The Learning Bank, St. Frances Academy, the Beans and Bread Meal Program, and Habitat for Humanity. In addition, student outreach programs, run during winter and spring vacations, serve such diverse areas as Jackson, Mississippi; Tecate and Tijuana, Mexico; and several sites in Appalachia.

This growth in volunteerism has been paralleled by an ever-increasing number of classes incorporating a service component. To date there are forty-two such courses at the graduate and undergraduate level. Twenty-five additional courses offer the fourth credit option for specially-motivated students, which requires the completion of an extra academic project using a service experience as field research.

However, this high level of success in introducing service-learning courses has not been without its attendant problems. It has proved difficult to keep track of and assist all the new teachers and classes and the multiple service sites they employ. Moreover, many of the faculty are inevitably winging it—that is, experimenting with different modes of service learning pedagogy to see what works and what doesn't. When we speak with one another, we share frustrations as well as successes. Then, too, there remain faculty members, even entire departments, who might be interested in service learning but have not had sufficient exposure yet. For example, while there are many such humanities courses, so far few have developed in our large business school. From a student-centered view, all this adds up to a rich potpourri whose ingredients haven't quite melded. Whether students find themselves in a service learning or regular course section can be a hit-or-miss proposition. Moreover, a specially motivated student who seeks out a series of service learning courses, might find them all introductory and somewhat repetitive, rather than building upon one another in a progressive and coherent sequence.

Five Service Learning Initiatives

In an attempt to address such problems and build upon strengths, Loyola is in the process of pioneering a series of initiatives. These fall broadly into five categories, discussed below:

- Service-Leadership Track;
- Evergreen Service-Learning Colloquium;
- Departmental Associates Program;
- Course Administration Support; and
- Faculty Development.

Service-Leadership Track

The Service-Leadership Track is a program of study designed to develop students into lifelong leaders in service, no matter what their chosen professions. Planned for full implementation in 1997-98, students who apply for admission to the program will be required to take a progressive sequence of service learning courses, including those in the liberal arts core, electives, the student's major (when possible), and special capstone seminars. During their college years, the students will function as service leaders, positively contributing to both the wider Baltimore community and the life of Loyola's cam-

pus. At the same time, the program will support faculty development and pedagogical innovations. Once fully established, the program is designed to enroll some 120 students. About half will enter directly from high school or in first year. The other half (having developed their service interest during college) will join a modified track starting junior year.

Students will first be introduced to service learning through two courses, one in freshman, and one in sophomore year, rotating among departments that teach in the required core curriculum—for example, psychology, English, philosophy, theology, and sociology. The students will reflect on discipline-based issues using their service experience to understand theory, and vice-versa. In junior year, all Track students will participate in a seminar addressing service leadership on Loyola's campus. Students and professors will focus on one or more specific issues related to student life, such as problems of discrimination, substance abuse, or social alienation. After a didactic component, the course will culminate in a student-designed project of practical benefit to the Loyola community. The track will then be capstoned by a senior-year practicum in service leadership in the outside world. In association with the course, each student will develop a major service internship according to personal and professional goals. Using an interdisciplinary approach, students will write and present a synthesizing term paper about their experiences.

A number of other components will deepen the students' intellectual, emotional, and civic involvements. They will be asked to take two service-learning electives of their choice, and to engage in an on-site "immersion experience," for example, in Mexico or Appalachia. They will attend or help design co-curricular events, such as a leadership retreat or a speakers' panel. Moreover, the students will be mentored both by older students and a faculty advisor, who will assist them in choosing appropriate courses and sites, will process their service experiences, and engage in long-term career planning.

We anticipate that having such a coordinated program will not only assist motivated students, but faculty as well. All too often, faculty members can feel as if they are operating in a vacuum with service learning. The campus administration may not recognize their efforts, and departmental colleagues seem uninterested or suspicious. Traditional disciplinary divisions make it difficult to locate and talk to sympathetic faculty in other departments.

The Service-Leadership Track, we believe, can help overcome these obstacles. As an accepted curricular program, it demonstrates an administra-

tive and college-wide recognition of the importance of service learning. Of necessity, it involves the cooperation of department chairs and faculty of many disciplines, and will enhance cross-disciplinary dialogue and pedagogical innovation. Courses once developed for the special track can later move into Loyola's general curriculum. The presence of this program thus serves to legitimize and enhance service learning across the institution.

Or so we hope. The track is still in the planning and funding stage, as opposed to the other programs to which we now turn, whose implementation has begun.

Evergreen Service-Learning Colloquium

While the Service-Leadership Track may have broad institutional benefits, it tends to focus on an elite corps of students and faculty unusually committed to service learning. But what of other students who may take the occasional class, or of faculty newer to the game? With some forty-two service-learning courses now in existence, the challenge at Loyola is to support a consistently high level of pedagogy across the board and pool resources in a way that will assist the individual instructor.

One solution has been the introduction of the Evergreen Service-Learning Colloquium (named after Loyola's Evergreen campus). The Colloquium will sponsor four events each semester:

- a panel discussion to orient students to the value and the logistics of service learning;
- an interdisciplinary discussion of a relevant text read by faculty and students from a number of courses;
- a film and/or speaker to illuminate an aspect of the service-learning experience (e.g., issues of justice, compassion, or race relations); and
- a wrap-up reflection to help students synthesize their academic and service experiences.

Each year the colloquium presentations will be organized around a specific theme. For example, this year's topic is, "Who is My Neighbor?" The texts usually chosen for the two semesters were, respectively, "Individualism and Commitment in American Life," from *Habits of the Heart*, and "The Gospel of Luke."

The colloquium series is available for service-learning classes to plug into at whatever level of involvement is chosen. For example, one faculty member might require her students to attend each of the four sessions, taught

during an activities period when all students are free, instead of, or in addition to, regular class time. Another faculty member might make the sessions an extra-credit option. A third might pick selectively from the menu of options, for example, bringing students to the first orientation session and the text discussion, but bypassing the other events as less useful to the course.

While thus preserving academic freedom, the Colloquium series is designed to assist both students and faculty. Students are exposed to a series of events that can help them become oriented to and process service-learning experiences, drawing on resources beyond those available to the individual instructor. For example, our first orientation session involved service providers, experienced students, and an ex-homeless client, all bringing to bear their diverse perspectives. At the same time that the colloquium enhances student experience, it can relieve the problem of instructor overload. Instead of each faculty member having to reinvent the wheel—that is, mastering the arts of preparing students for their onsite experience, engaging in end-of-semester reflections, conducting text discussions, and the like—some of this dialogue can take place in the colloquium setting. Faculty members can thus be unburdened, but also educated and enlivened, by participating in such sessions. Moreover, the Colloquium Series can help to weave a sense of intellectual community among participating service-learning students and faculty gathering across the disciplines.

This is the intended ideal—it is too soon to say how it will ultimately function in practice. The program is now in its first full year of implementation and has met with mixed results. Some sessions have been powerful and received enthusiastic response. But attendance has fluctuated, with fewer instructors sending students than one might wish. This can be attributed in part to the innovative nature of the program, challenging the traditional insular classroom. Faculty can be loath to give up their class time to ask students to attend extra events, or to tackle interdisciplinary themes. However, we hope that the program will build with time as faculty awareness heightens, and the sessions are adjusted to best meet their pedagogical needs.

Departmental Associates Program

Although Loyola College has been highly successful in involving faculty in the service-learning initiative, as mentioned above, there remains a large untapped reservoir of potential. Some academic departments, such as psychology or computer science, make very little use of service-learning teach-

ing at present. In others, history or sociology, for example, only one or two faculty members currently use service-learning techniques. Their departmental colleagues may not be philosophically opposed to service learning; more likely, they simply have not considered it in depth, do not feel trained in its methods, or feel intimidated by the work of switching over and implementing the format. In the belief that the most effective force for change comes from within, we have instituted The Departmental Associates Program, which enlists experienced service-learning faculty to guide the kind of campus-wide discussion of service-learning methods we believe is essential to the development and maintenance of a strong curriculum.

As a pilot project, four associates, one from each division of the college (business, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences) have been given modest stipends to act as peer mentors during the 1995-96 academic year. Over the next three years, we plan to expand this group to include sixteen associates representing four departments from each of these academic divisions. Associates currently sponsor one informal faculty development session each semester in which new and seasoned service-learning professors trade teaching tips and explore ways to use the Evergreen Service-Learning Colloquium. Associates also present formal departmental and cross-disciplinary workshops designed to address specific disciplinary concerns. It is not enough to say that service-learning pedagogy is a good thing in general. A faculty member must be persuaded it is useful in teaching his or her subject, and here the departmental associates can play a crucial role. For example, an associate from the psychology department can most effectively address his or her own colleagues because of a shared familiarity with the courses offered, methods applied, and texts used in that particular discipline.

Associates also work with faculty on an individual basis. They remain available as consultants to colleagues wishing to introduce service learning into their courses or to refine their pedagogy. This support can range from sharing previous syllabi and providing informal suggestions, to acting as a liaison between faculty members and the Center for Values and Service.

The ultimate goal of The Departmental Associates Program is the development of new and well-designed service-learning courses throughout the entire curriculum. To this end, the associates are collaborating to produce a teaching manual, *Service-Learning Across the Disciplines*, which will be made available to all Loyola faculty. Each Associate will contribute a chapter exploring the possible uses of service learning in his or her own department,

along with relevant syllabi and bibliographies. This manual will help individual faculty determine how best to integrate field experience with classroom learning in ways appropriate to their own courses, to the philosophies of their departments, and to the Jesuit/Mercy mission of our college.

There are multiple benefits to a departmental associates program. First, it builds on existing successes. The growing pool of faculty already involved in service learning are recruited to become ambassadors and educators concerning its use. They will not only introduce its methods to colleagues, but also deepen the investment in and thoughtfulness of their own pedagogy. Moreover, on the touchy matter of curriculum development, professors are often loath to broach interference from staff and administrators: this problem is bypassed by an approach wherein faculty talk with colleagues. By keeping service-learning course development in the hands of the teaching faculty, our service-learning curriculum has a greater chance of success than one orchestrated by outsiders.

Course Administration Support

Service learning can be an effective teaching technique, but it entails a good deal of extra administrative work. Appropriate service sites must be found, working relationships with community service providers established, field work schedules made and monitored, transportation arranged—the list continues. Because they have service and publication obligations over and above their teaching responsibilities, faculty may feel overwhelmed by the logistics of setting up a service-learning experience for an entire class. It is helpful for all parties involved—teachers students, and service-providers—if a campus consolidates the logistical work in one office.

At Loyola, the Center for Values and Service acts not only as a clearing house for service projects but also as a support to the teaching faculty. Our Community Service Coordinator helps students find, arrange, and organize service opportunities. Her familiarity with the work done by the various participating agencies helps faculty decide which sites best suit their pedagogical needs. Because the coordinator monitors scheduling, she understands where student help is needed and where it is not. Thus, faculty know to contact only agencies in search of student help. This saves time and work for everyone. Other practical matters, from transportation to record keeping, are also handled by the center. Freed from these clerical duties, faculty can concentrate on their teaching and protect their research and service time.

The center also hires coordinators to help facilitate service-learning courses. These coordinators assist the instructors in many ways, most importantly as role models and as troubleshooters. Coordinators work with individual classes, orienting students to service-learning from a peer's perspective; they participate in class discussions and in Evergreen Service-Learning Colloquium events; they remain on call in case unforeseen problems arise—after all, much service work takes place during evenings or on weekends when faculty may not be on campus. Student coordinators thus ease the complexities of service learning for faculty and students alike.

Project evaluation is another important aspect of service learning. The need for institutional accountability demands that students, service providers, and faculty assess the projects and courses involved. Here again the Center offers essential help. Students are called upon to evaluate the service site as well as the service-learning course; service providers are asked for records of student participation and assessments of the overall effectiveness of the project; and faculty are required to assess the field experience, student learning, and center services. The data gathered on all these fronts assures quality control and provides valuable information for future program development.

The assistance offered by our well-organized and well-staffed Center for Values and Service helps Loyola College project a professional image to the public, and makes a deep commitment to service learning among the faculty a more realistic possibility.

Faculty Development

Because most professors at Loyola College are unfamiliar with the principles of experiential education that underlie service-learning pedagogy, and because few have engaged in the kind of applied scholarship that puts the theory of their disciplines to use in the world outside the classroom, ongoing faculty development is essential. In addition to initiatives discussed above, direct funding can assist faculty to innovate. At Loyola College, professors who wish to explore the relationship between their disciplinary expertise and social concerns are encouraged to apply for course development and summer research grants to help further such work. As the service-learning initiative at Loyola College matures, it is hoped that faculty will design sabbatical projects leading to long-term community development, improved service-learning pedagogy, and significant scholarly research and publication.

Conclusion

In *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, the late Dr. Ernest L. Boyer wrote, "The human community is increasingly interdependent, and higher education must focus with special urgency on questions that affect profoundly the destiny of all" (p. 77).

Boyer challenged higher education to create what he called "The New American College," a place where the needs of higher education and the needs of society become one. The service-learning initiative at Loyola College was launched with that goal in mind. It seeks to educate students to a life of responsible citizenship; offer scholars a new arena in which to conduct research; and, as a result, to effect measurable differences in quality of life for the surrounding community.

Suggested Readings

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