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Developing a Service Learning Course for IEP Students

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DEVELOPING A SERVICE-LEARNING COURSE FOR IEP STUDENTS

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**University of South Florida
English Language Program / INTO USF**

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WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

union of community service

formal learning

reciprocal

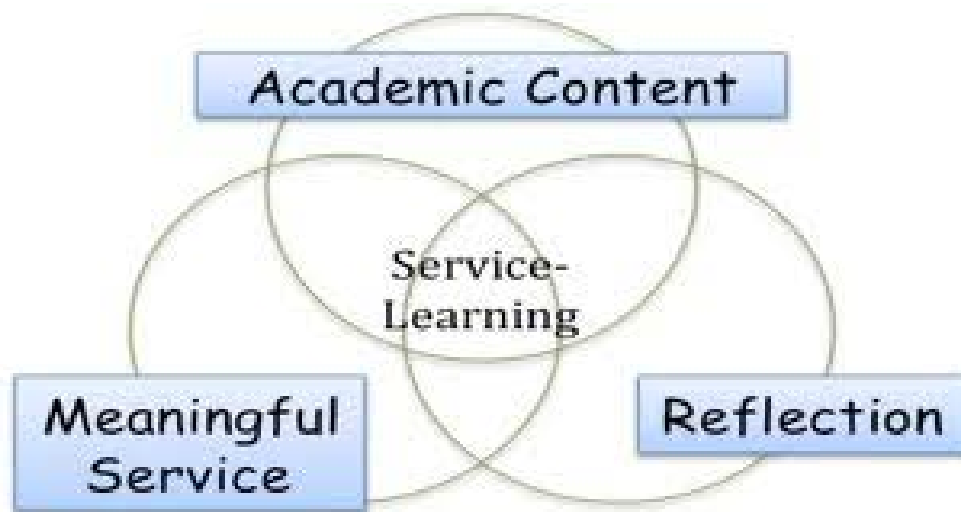
bring what they learned in the community back



SERVICE-LEARNING

specific learning outcomes

- achieved both in the classroom
- and in service
- different from volunteering



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- Meaningful contexts
- Build knowledge & language
- Awareness
- Civic responsibility
- Opportunities
- Communication
- Learn to adapt and integrate
- Personal and professional growth
- Critical thinking and reflection



ABOUT INTO USF & USF'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAM

○ INTO USF

- bridge program: the Pathway Program
- IEP: the English Language Program
 - General English Program (4 week modules)
 - Academic English Program (semester schedule)

○ Academic English:

- Beginner – advanced levels (1-5)
- 14 wk semester
- 18 hrs/wk
- 4 classes, 3 core and an elective



CREATIVE TEAM – SUMMER 2012

- Leader: Kristen McGreger, adjunct instructor
- Members: senior instructors, adjuncts, and faculty administrators

Goals:

- Develop ideas on how service learning can be made accessible to INTO USF students
- Explore options in the form of classes, clubs, activities
- Survey students on interest in service-learning and the possible formats.

Target: Come up with a proposal detailing the most recommended option for us to proceed developing that will make service learning available to INTO USF students.



SURVEY

Student Interest Survey

Service Learning: work (*usually volunteering*) that is done to help the community.

volunteer: (verb) to do some kind of helpful work without getting paid.

community service: (noun) work that is done without pay to help people in a community

1. Are you familiar with **Service Learning** Courses?

Yes No

2. Have you ever....
 Volunteered time with an organization

3. Are you interested in learning about ways to help local groups that provide a **community service**?

Yes! Possible unsure, need more info not likely No!

4. Would be interested in taking a course in which you were able to participate in a **community service** event during the semester?

Yes! Possible unsure, need more info not likely No!

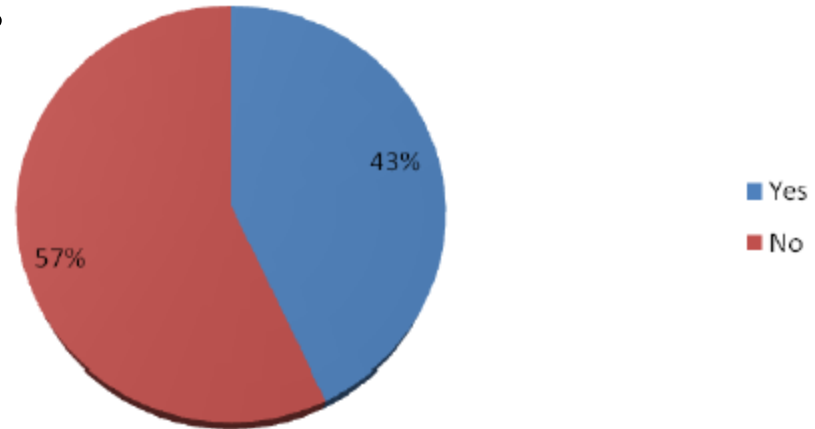
5. Which types of community service interest you the most?
(check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> helping with elderly patients | <input type="checkbox"/> plan a fundraiser |
| <input type="checkbox"/> helping on a recycling program | <input type="checkbox"/> helping children/youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> helping at a local animal shelter or a park | <input type="checkbox"/> plan an event |
| <input type="checkbox"/> helping serve food to the poor | <input type="checkbox"/> helping at a museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> help work in a garden | |

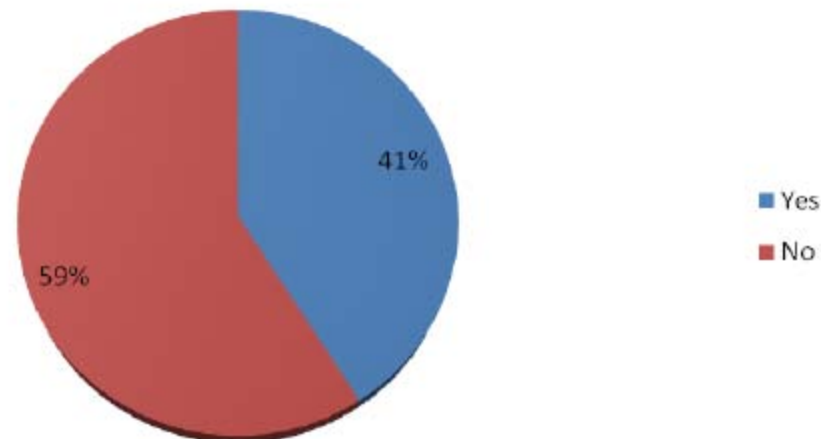


SURVEY RESULTS – FAMILIARITY & EXPERIENCE

Familiarity with Service-Learning

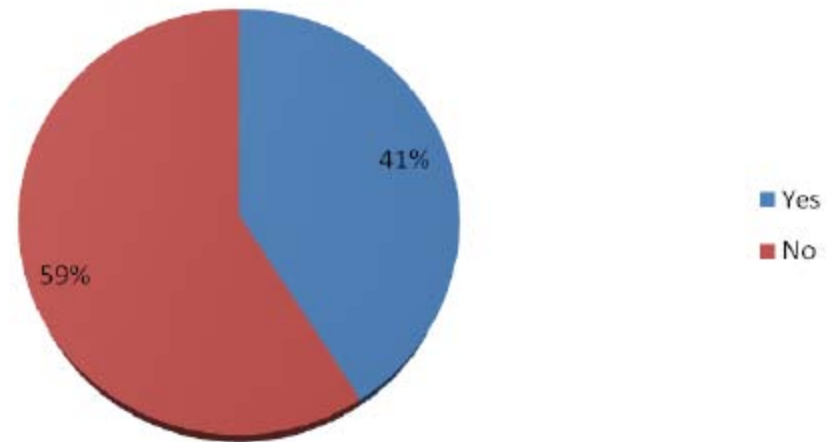


Experience with Volunteering

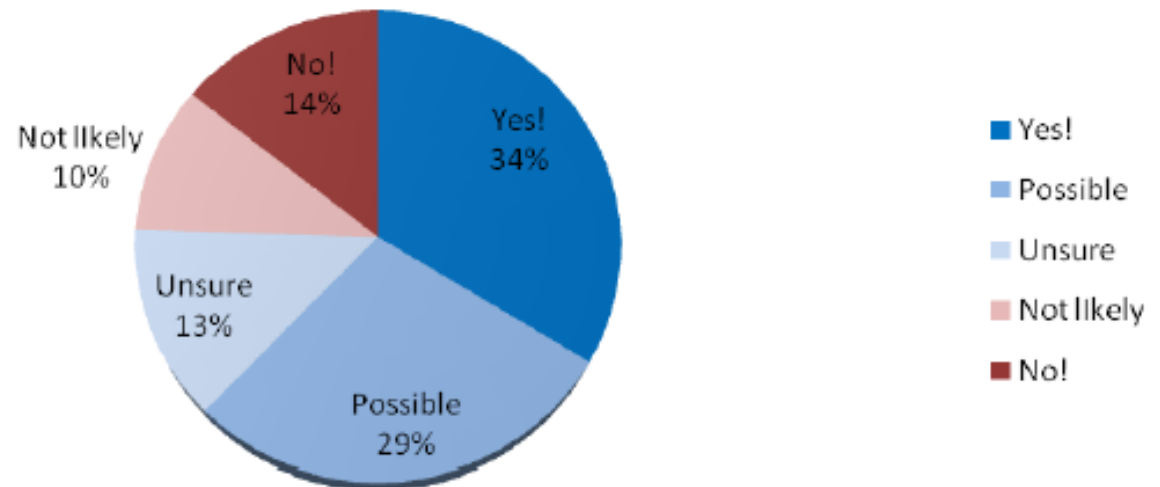


SURVEY RESULTS - INTEREST

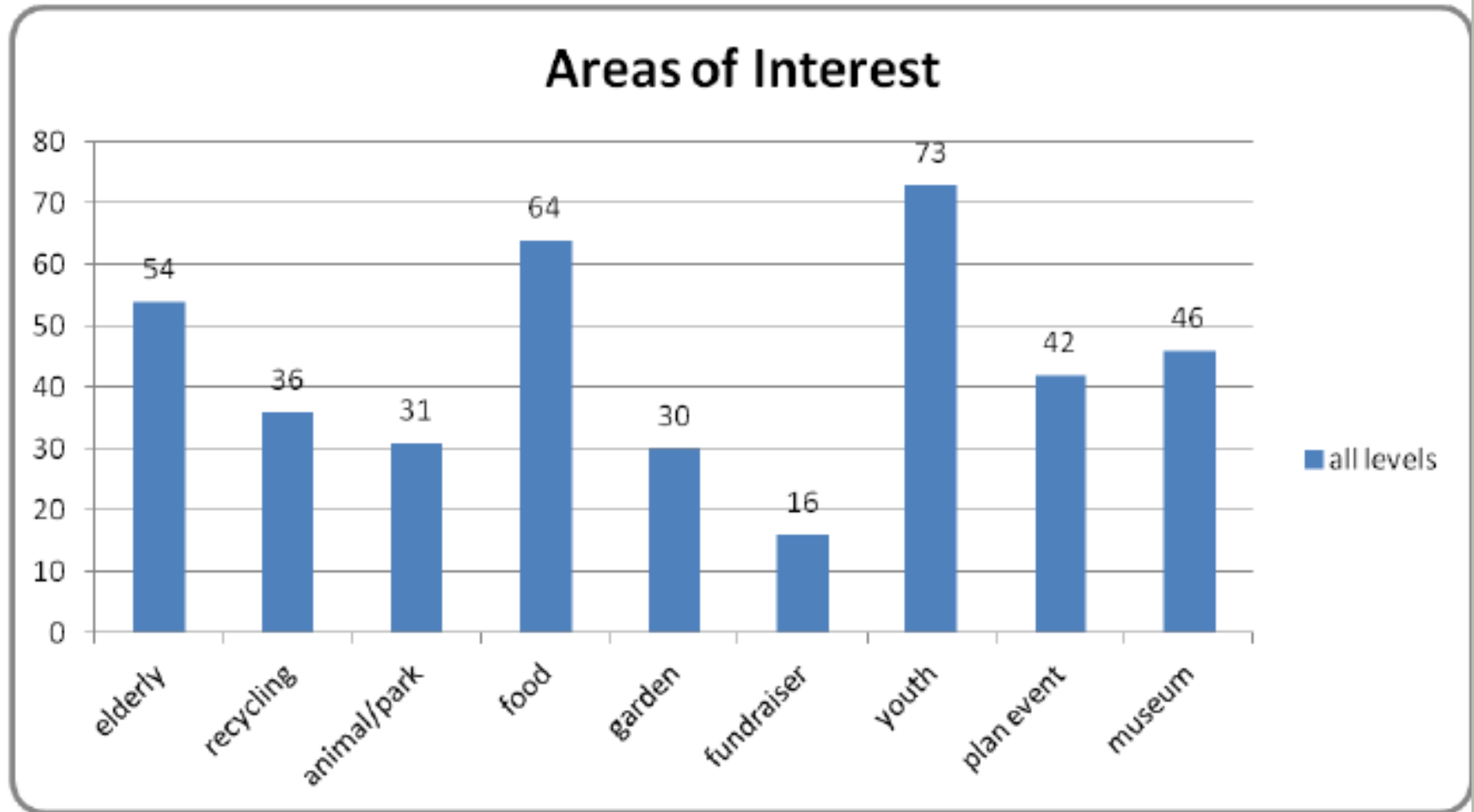
Interested in Learning More



Interested in Taking a Course in Service-Learning



SURVEY RESULTS – AREAS OF SERVICE



NEXT STEPS

- Looked at our school's existing partnerships
- Looked at additional partnership possibilities in community
- Made contact to check volunteer requirements at different sites such as background checks, immigration rules, etc...
- Developed a list of most suitable organizations to work with
- Examined different models and decided which was most appropriate for our context



CREATIVE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a course for the Academic English Program (AE)
 - Academic component of service-learning better suited to a course than a club
 - Longer AE term allows students to have a deeper experience
 - AE focuses on content-based language teaching & project-based courses
 - With the AE course fully developed, a piece could be re-worked for General English at later date
- Use a model in which students each select one organization and visit the site multiple times throughout the semester
 - Easier logistics regarding transportation



FOLLOW-UP COURSE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- Fall 2012
- AE Curriculum Coordinator & interested members of the creative team (faculty and admin)
- Met to develop the course guide, discuss class components and projects, and work on general course weekly plan
- Developed course guide & schedule
- New course launched as an elective for Spring 2013



COURSE DESCRIPTION

- The goal of this **high-intermediate to advanced elective** course is to **introduce students to the concept of civic engagement and build knowledge on social issues** through a service learning experience. During the course students will **think critically about problems and solutions for social issues affecting the local community**. Through the completion of **site visits and a service-learning project** students will experience community engagement and will **reflect on the real solutions** they see in action as a volunteer.



COURSE GUIDE: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND SLOs (SEE HANDOUT)

University of South Florida - English Language Program
Academic English

SERVICE LEARNING 4+ Course Guide

Course Description

The goal of this high-intermediate to advanced elective course is to introduce students to the concept of civic engagement and build knowledge on social issues through a service learning experience. During the course students will think critically about problems and solutions for social issues affecting the local community. Through the completion of site visits and a service learning project students will experience community engagement and will reflect on the real solutions they see in action as a volunteer.

Textbook/Materials

No Textbook

Course Goals

The course focuses on developing a student's ability to:

1. learn about what service learning is, social issues affecting community welfare and how volunteering addresses those issues.
2. gain an awareness of civic responsibility and the opportunities available for civic engagement
3. research a social issue or community welfare problem to find out the main issues and solutions surrounding the problem
4. learn the language and conversation strategies needed in order to contact and arrange to be a volunteer at a service learning site
5. become familiar with cultural guidelines and expected norms when working as a volunteer with different segments of the population to include the elderly, homeless, and children
6. complete multiple ongoing reflective journal entries detailing expectations, thoughts and reactions to the service learning experience.
7. complete a service learning project which includes volunteering at a site multiple times over six weeks for a minimum of six hours and producing a reflective report which is communicated both orally and in writing.

Course Objectives

To achieve the course goals, students will learn:

1. Knowledge and vocabulary related to social issues as selected by the teacher and students' interests
2. The meaning of civic engagement will be explored and students will become familiar with the local organizations whose purpose is to aid social issues. Students will also become familiar

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Academic English

with resources available to them to get contact information for local service learning opportunities (i.e. Bulls Serve, local chapters of organizations).

3. How to use the internet and USF library resources to find information on service learning organizations and social issues.
4. Language needed to make polite requests, how to write an email asking about a service learning opportunity, language used to communicate on the phone to get information on a service learning opportunity
5. Behavioral expectations when working with the elderly, homeless, and children to include what you can/can't do, how to talk, what information/topics are OK or not OK
6. To write reflective journal entries focusing on the service learning experience on various topics such as expectations, reactions, thoughts and applications for the future.
7. How to complete a project describing the service learning experience in detail and expressing your feelings and thoughts about the experience, making connections between what you experience and what you already know from your own culture.

Student Learning Outcomes

During the course, students will need to perform the following integrated tasks and projects to demonstrate significant progress in learning the course objectives:

1. complete activities that demonstrate the use of content knowledge, new vocabulary, listening and reading strategies about social issues
2. complete homework assignments that involve researching and reporting on the missions of local community agencies
3. complete in-class activities that practice role-playing activities for developing conversation strategies useful for site visits
4. complete homework assignments that involve emailing and calling to inquire about volunteer opportunities
5. complete multiple one to two page written reflective journal entries including your expectations, a description of the volunteer experience and your feeling or reactions
6. create an individual or group project that involves relating the background of a social issue, informing the audience about your chosen organization(s), describing your expectations and experiences during the site visits and reflecting on what you have learned throughout the process.

GENERAL COURSE SCHEDULE (SEE HANDOUT)

Dates / Week of...	Class Week	Class Days	Class Content / Focus	Assignments Due
Jan 14	<i>Orientation</i>	-		
Jan 21	Wk 1	Wed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is Service Learning? - Course Overview & Class Introductions - Intro to the Kick off Project Organization and Issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student Information/ Interest Form due
		Fri		
Jan 28	Wk 2	Wed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Service Learning Process - The Reflective Process and Journal Expectations - Information about Recommended Sites and Organizations - Guest Speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Journal 1 due - Reflecting on service learning in general and discussing pre-service thoughts
		Fri	No Class – Kick off Class Service Project Friday - 10:30-2:30	
Feb 4	Wk 3	Wed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a reflective practice - USF CLCE Services & How to use them (e.g., Bull SERVE, blast, Service Pro) - Guest Speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Journal 2 due – Reaction to class kick off project
		Fri		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General background research on select potential sites due
Feb 11	Wk 4	Wed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student mini presentations: Sharing background research on organization - In-class peer-review of emails - Sample Project Plans - Developing a service learning project plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Journal 3 due - Top 3 site preferences with reasons
		Fri		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft of email to contact organizations due
Feb 18	Wk 5	Wed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The impact of volunteering - Communicating with community partners – Dos & Don'ts - Behavioral expectations for volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of appt for first site visit due - Journal 4 due – Expectations (Pre Site Visit)
		Fri		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service Learning Project Plan due
Feb 25	Wk 6	Wed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student mini presentations: Sharing Project Plans - Introduction to "Peer Coaching" - Dealing with obstacles - Conducting Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do a site visit: First site visit must be completed by Sunday Mar 3.
		Fri		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Journal 5 due – Post Site Visit
Mar 4	Wk 7	Wed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dealing with obstacles - Conducting Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep doing your site visits!
		Fri		
Mar 11	<i>Spring Break</i>	-	No classes; USF closed	



PILOTED COURSE SPRING 2013

- Taught by Ms. Sangita Victor
- Class ran Jan 23 & through Apr 24
- Class met Weds/Fri
 - 2 hours each class
- 17 students enrolled
 - both continuing and new students
 - males and females



CLASS ACTIVITIES

- The class wrote 8 reflections including:
 - List of questions to keep in mind before writing the reflections
 - How to write an effective reflection
 - Reflections using quotes or lyrics from a song
 - Video recordings



OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Ss **research** for different organizations and **present** on their top choice
- Ss **email** these organizations
- Ss **follow** a checklist of Do's and Don'ts
- What do I bring to this organization?
- Ss **discuss** different topics
 - *Ex: homelessness, addiction, diseases, handicapped, animals rights, environment*
- Ss **design** presentations on their projects



STUDENT PROJECT SITES

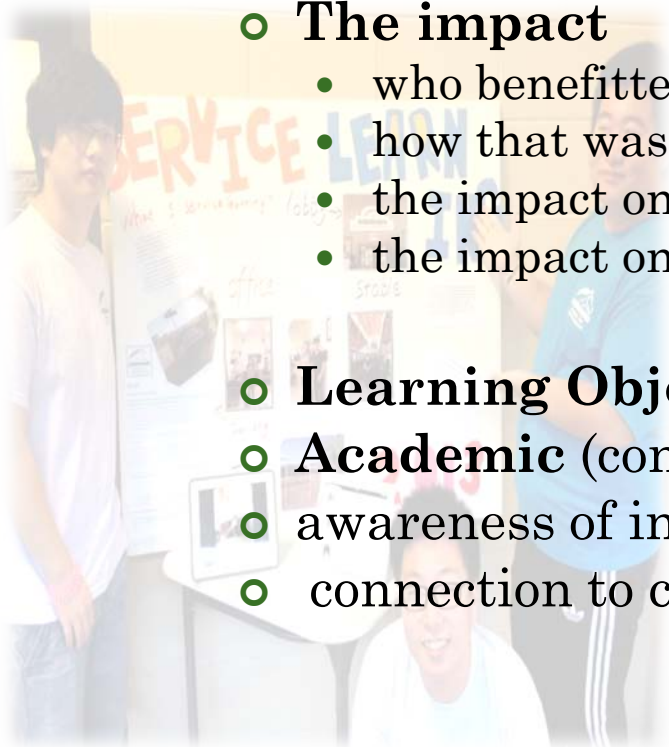
- Students worked in groups:
 - BAKAS Riding Center – “Horses for Handicapped”
 - Metropolitan Ministries – homeless and hunger services
 - USF Patel Elementary School
 - SPCA Tampa Bay



FINAL PROJECT: POSTER PRESENTATION

Poster Guidelines:

- **Mission statement** of their organization they partnered with
- **Background**
 - Information about the community partner with whom the Ss worked
 - the issues addressed by the community partner
 - the work performed by the Ss
- **The impact**
 - who benefitted from the service
 - how that was evidenced
 - the impact on the Ss
 - the impact on the community
- **Learning Objectives:**
- **Academic** (connection to course content)
- awareness of individual change
- connection to career/professional goals)



SERVICE LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTIONS OF SS

1. What did you **expect** the service learning class to be about?

- helping people in need
- a teaching method that combines formal instruction with a service in a community
- social responsibility
- giving a chance to be a volunteer, improving English skills outside the campus, getting practical information about volunteering in the USA, interacting with native speakers



SERVICE LEARNING

EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTIONS OF Ss

2. What are the biggest lessons you have **learned from this class?**

- small things can make a big difference in people's hearts
- the value and the importance of volunteering and giving back to the community
- you don't need money to help others
- we are all humans we need each other
- responsibility for others
- helping others is helping ourselves
- communication with different people
- humanitarian work
- how social issues affect our communities' welfare



3. What was the **most surprising or shocking information you have learned in this class?**

- hundreds of people do not have homes, food or clothes
- a lot of refugees and people in need
- you can work with horses and disabled children
- volunteering can make you a better man and make you feel happy
- taking responsibility for choosing and working with an organization
- how much American society cares about volunteering

4. What has taking this class **given you personally and professionally?**

- improved my self-esteem, my English skills, and my social skills
- taught me responsibility for others who are less fortunate
- taught me how to prepare a poster presentation
- taught me about Educational system in the USA
- taught me compassion



5. What are the **benefits** of taking this class?

- improving English skills and social skills
- learning how to be a productive member of a society
- helping the poor and improving people's lives
- learning how to become a volunteer
- learning about American culture
- changing one's mind set and broadening horizons (I will continue to volunteer in the future)
- having fun

6. Would you **recommend** this class to other students and why?

- without hesitation, very valuable in many ways
- Yes, it helps students get ready to join and live in a society
- Yes, you can change someone's future
- Yes, I will call my friends and together we will help the poor



NEXT TIME: STUDENT SUGGESTIONS

- more hours to volunteer / more outside activities, but with less other work
 - Response: Immigration issues constrain the ability to cancel classes; with more hours (desirable) balance other classwork
- make connections with all organization that would welcome students so that it is easier for students to find a place to work with
 - Response: Develop a better short list with approved partners; want students to practice communicative skills
- taking students to [all the] places where they could volunteer first as a group so they can understand the concept better
- provide transportation so students can volunteer together as a group
 - Response: Great suggestions, logistically (and financially) challenging



DO'S AND DON'TS

- Do frequent check-ins with your students to avoid end-of-semester rush
- Do require reflection to relate to specific course content and course goals
- Do start out small with one or two community partners

- Don't create work for your community partners
- Don't let your student develop “savior” attitude
- Don't reinvent the wheel if existing resources already exist

Adapted from Preston-Sidler USF's Service Learning Day, 2013



SUGGESTED MATERIALS: BEST PICKS

- **USF's Office of Community Partnerships & Engagement:** <http://engagement.rc.usf.edu>
- **Campus Compact:** <http://compact.org>
- **National Service-Learning Clearinghouse:** <http://www.servicelearning.org>
- See Handout for more and for book suggestions



THANK YOU

- Questions?
- For additional information contact
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