

Service-Learning NOT Volunteerism

Combining the Powers of Community Service and Academic Rigor

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It is a common misconception that Service-Learning is a form of volunteerism. This is a falsehood that must be deconstructed in order to truly understand the academic rigor and comprehensive structure that surrounds a good Service-Learning program.

It is important to first understand the language of such a program. Service-Learning utilizes a new vernacular, that transcends the traditional understanding of volunteering. There is meant to be a strong connection and balance between the concepts of service and learning which is embodied in the hyphen that connects them. Separately, these two nouns are used to emphasize different things, but once united they encompass an equal emphasis on meeting community needs and structured learning objectives. Independent volunteerism is defined as a charitable dedication of time, talent, and resources which generally lacks structured

reflection activities. Traditional experiential education (i.e. internships and fieldwork) concentrate on learning and experience geared toward the immediate benefit of the student, generally observational and always career related. When these two forces are united with a small hyphen they represent an interdependent relationship of academic edification and communal enrichment.

The key is reflection, one of the core components of a good Service-Learning program. Reflection allows students to think critically, and to make the connection between their service experience and the goals of the course through exercises directed by the professor. In many cases, service-learning can enhance a course by connecting the students with a real client that will benefit from their hard work. Faculty have the ability to develop innovative ways to meet course objectives that

provide support for a diversity of student learning outcomes. In the end students are learning from their professor, their experience in the community, and from each other.

Service-Learners out in the community are not merely volunteering, they are also acquiring knowledge and experience along with several other more measurable benefits (i.e. a grade!). They are able to build a special set of skills that will help relate what they are learning to the real world. Service-Learning strives to encourage and instill a sense of civic engagement within each student who participates by encapsulating this delicate balance of service AND learning, it's not simply volunteering it is so much more.



Damon Campus 4-020



Marketing the Sustainability Certificate



Professor Carmen Powers, from the business

administration department, has enlisted the hard-work of her five sections of marketing students in an effort to promote MCC's new sustainability certificate. This project is emblematic of the types of service-learning projects that directly effect the College. This

semester students in Professor Power's classes are developing marketing techniques to mobilize the MCC faculty and get them excited about this new offering. Last semester Professor Power's students created branding schemes to increase awareness throughout the student body.

Bethany Gizzi is on the sustainability committee and will be helping to implement and make use of the

service-learners ideas. This semester she is looking for a way to get faculty on board with the concept of cross-curricular sustainability. "This certificate is meant to be geared toward students who are not necessarily in environmental fields. Environmental issues are impacting all issues of life, no matter what profession or path a student takes" says Gizzi.

Students in Power's classes are

excited about this project. "This project is great... it helps the environment, and the community" says Angilee Thom, a student in MAR 204. Service-Learners in Power's classes are able to fulfill this need within the campus community while simultaneously developing their own understanding of the concept, and importance, of sustainability.

HED 115: Death and Dying; Reflections in Hospice Care

In every Service-Learning course students are required to write a reflection of their service experience. In HED 115: Death and Dying students have the option of spending 10 hours serving at one of five local hospice care facilities. To make this project possible MCC partners with the following hospice care providers: St. John's Home Foundation, Serenity House, Isaiah House, Webster Comfort Care, and Benincasa, Inc. The following

are some excerpts from HED 115 students reflecting on their hospice care experiences.

"This experience greatly opened my eyes to another part of life. Death. Before this I never really thought about death as a real thing. I would deny it most every time it came into my thoughts. Overall this was an excellent learning experience. Books and stories can tell you a two dimensional experience, but nothing can top the three

dimensional view of being right there with the people."

"At first I was a little iffy about everything but now I am really happy that I went. This was truly a wonderful learning experience and I am so thankful for ever being given the opportunity to do such a thing. I think that this is a great way for anyone who is willing to volunteer their time to [serve] and I think that they should offer this in more than

just death and dying."

"This experience is a huge eye opener. Without this Death and Dying class I would have never stepped out of my comfort zone and even thought about [serving] at a hospice home. To those who may be indecisive about [serving] at a hospice home I would say put all your worries behind you. The hospice home is a place of solidarity and peace."

Congratulations Corner

Service-Learning Diploma Distinction A.K.A. "The Service-Learning Option"

Each semester MCC sends hundreds of students out into the community to serve and learn. Course specific service-learning projects range, in required commitment, from 5 hours to 135 hours. Many students participate in more than one service-learning course, thus accruing a great number of service hours over the span of their academic

career at MCC. Those students who accumulate more than 200 hours of service-learning through their dedication to the community and to MCC are awarded with a gold seal on their diploma signifying their great accomplishment. The following are the students from last semester who have gone above and beyond the commitment to serving in one

single class. They are December 2008 graduates who have received this Service-Learning diploma distinction due to their engagement in the community and their exceptional grade point averages. Please join us in congratulating these outstanding students: →

S-L Option Recipients Fall 2008



| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Laura Bunce..... | 300 hrs |
| Jessica Fertitta..... | 230 hrs |
| Kathleen Jackura..... | 205 hrs |
| Jamal Marshall..... | 245 hrs |
| Melissa Meritt..... | 235 hrs |
| Nereida Santana..... | 265 hrs |

Projects at the Park

The Center for Service-Learning totes a long list of invaluable community partners, ranging from business organizations to non-for-profit agencies, to local schools to neighborhood associations. Each community partner is connected with a course specific service project that fulfills a pre-determined need directly affecting their target constituency. Every once and a while there comes a community partner who undertakes more than one project and serves as the nerve center for a variety of MCC service-learners.

This semester (Spring 2009) Wilson Commencement Park has stepped up to the challenge of harboring several different service-learning initiatives. Wilson Commencement Park (WCP) is a transitional housing program that strives to empower low-income, single parent families to attain long-term goals of self-sufficiency and sustained employment. The park provides family support services, life-skills training, and mentoring to all of its residents. With over 68 affordable two to three bedroom apartments

WCP is able to serve a great number of people in Rochester.

Currently, there are four different service projects occurring at Wilson, two of which are under the supervision of professor Donna Haeger from the business administration department. In conjunction with her course 'BUS 135: Supervision for the 21st Century' Professor Haeger's students are conducting mock interviews and collecting professional articles of clothing for the residents of WCP. "It's inspiring, the students really get charged up about it" says Professor Haeger. The students have a lot of freedom with each project and they have been doing a phenomenal job at preparing things in a very professional manner. Students conducting the mock interviews have been developing their own process for interviewing in which they conduct the interview, evaluate the interviewee, and then leave time for questions and feedback from the WCP resident. With the clothing drive, students from Haeger's class are creating a campaign to set up collections



all over the MCC campus collecting interview clothes to develop a sustainable Working Women's Wardrobe. Professor Haeger says that her students have been amazing her with their independence and skills in project management. "So far this project has been very fulfilling" says Haeger. Her students will be submitting service journals that document their experiences along with a comprehensive self-assessment upon their completion of the project.

In the Art department, Professor Jason Smith leads his students in a project to create personalized artwork for WCP promotional and informational mailing material. Smith's students visited WCP to brainstorm ideas for their artwork. Currently, they are creating drafts that will end up being used to represent the

Park, their residents, and their mission. These art students will gain valuable experience in what it is like to develop a piece of artwork for an outside client.

The fourth and final project is for future educators enrolled in EDU 200: Foundations of Education. These service-learners provide tutoring assistance to "Rafiki," an afterschool homework help program. Tutors in EDU 200 must complete 20 hours of service throughout the semester where they are able to get a taste for developing lesson plans and working one on one with students.

Wilson Commencement Park has raised the bar for future community partners. Also enforcing the concept that MCC's Service-Learning program can provide a variety of different services to just one organization.

Curriculum Update:

SVL 106 Topics in Service-Learning- 1 credit

This new course is designed to cover service-learning topics of special interest. Offerings will vary each semester, but each course is intended to increase students awareness of social issues within our community related to the course topic. Students will participate in

service projects that meet the needs of the community and are integrated into the curriculum of the course (45 service hours). Students will participate in structured critical reflection seminars where they will analyze and evaluate their service experiences and make

essential connections between civic engagement and course curriculum.

For more information and updates on this course please visit our website:

www.monroccc.edu/go/servicelearning

New Course!
SVL 106

Snowball Scholarship

Thanks to Mary and John Seebach of the MCC Foundation the Center for Service-Learning is proud to be able to offer a scholarship to recognize good character and promote community engagement within exceptional MCC students.

This scholarship is known as the Snowball Scholarship, it is an annual award of \$1,500 with the potential of being awarded to one or more service-learners for the

purpose of continuing academic studies at Monroe Community College. The scholarship is awarded to second year MCC students who are on track to receiving the Service-Learning Option, having a minimum required commitment of 200 hours of service. Students must also demonstrate financial need and have a minimum grade point average of 2.5. Preference, for the Snowball Scholarship, is given to those MCC service-learners who

have graduated from Joseph C. Wilson Magnet School, but is available to all those who graduated from the Rochester City School District.

An application for the Snowball Scholarship is available on the Service-Learning website. On the main page there is a brief explanation and link to more details about this award. If you have any questions or want to know if a certain

student is eligible to apply please e-mail Susan Bender at sbender@monroecc.edu. Please promote this scholarship to MCC Service-Learning students as it is only a valuable resource if it gets used!

**Promote the
Snowball
Scholarship!!!**

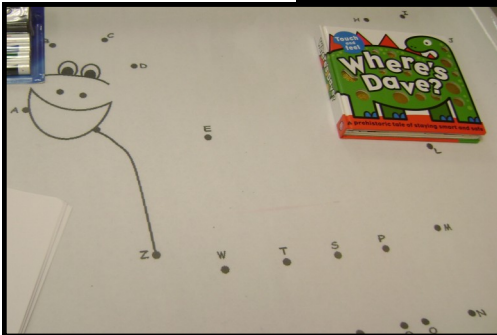
~Literacy Kits: Promoting Reading at Childcare Centers~

These are photos of literacy kits created by Tracy Wyant's EDU 100 students. Literacy kits consist of themed educational activities that promote reading. A typical literacy kit includes anywhere from 2 to 5 books plus activities (extensions for literacy, math, and/or science). A

lesson plan is created and included in the kit that gives instructions on how to use all of the items in the kit. The kit is considered an entire unit for

the subject matter or theme. This Spring there are three sections of EDU 100 and six sections of EDU 200 with a total of 250 students that all

have the option of creating literacy kits to be presented to one of ten local childcare centers. To make this project possible MCC partners with childcare centers from all across the Greater Rochester area, including MCC's own childcare center located at the Brighton Campus.



The Center for Service-Learning would like to thank all those who made this newsletter possible, and continue to show support for MCC's Service-Learning program. Thank you.

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MCC

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” - Mahatma Gandhi