

The Community as Classroom: Multiple Perspectives on Student Learning

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Abstract

This paper reports on the multiple perspectives of students, community members, and faculty to document the impact of student participation in service-learning courses. A unique aspect of this paper is the large sample size and the use of multiple qualitative and quantitative methods over several years. The results indicate that service-learning affects students across multiple variables. The authors also discuss the teaching methods that create these effects and the related assessment practices.

As metropolitan universities strive to address complex community issues through the process of engaging students in service-learning, it is imperative to assess the student learning outcomes that result from this educational strategy. This paper describes a synthesis of five years of research on service-learning at Portland State University. The research process began in 1996 as a study team developed a systematic process to gather insights from students, faculty, institutional representatives, and community partners regarding the effect of service-learning on these various constituencies. A unique contribution of this paper is the scope of the research, which includes data from nearly 3,000 students over a five-year period, and the utilization of multiple methods to gain the perspectives of students, community members, and faculty to assess the impact that service-learning has on students. This offered breadth in data collection and use of multiple data collection methods to confirm findings.

This ongoing research was developed around two central philosophies, each of which communicated our values regarding assessment of service-learning. The first philosophy was to ensure that the research findings would lead directly to improvement in the quality of service-learning courses. Our intent was to learn as much as possible about the ways that, and the conditions under which, this pedagogy contributes to enhanced student learning. The second philosophy was to achieve breadth of discovery by blending qualitative and quantitative measures and incorporating cognitive, affective, and behavioral student impact variables. Our objective was to build upon our earlier research (Driscoll, Holland, et al. 1996) and then study impact through the lenses of three constituents: students, community partners, and faculty.

Literature Review

When the process of assessing the impact of service-learning was begun in 1996, there was a scarcity of published research, undefined student variables, and few demonstrated student outcomes in the literature. We identified 10 student variables (see Table 1) based upon our experiences in service-learning and our initial pilot data collection efforts.

Table 1: Student Variables

Communication	Self-awareness
Awareness of Community	Roles as Learners
Involvement in Community	Academic Achievement
Commitment to Service	Critical Thinking
Career Development	Diversity

Since then, many of these variables have been confirmed through other studies, examples of which are cited here: *communication* (Astin, et al. 2000; Battistoni 1997; Jordan 1994), *awareness of community* (Gelmon, et al. 1998), *commitment to service* (Astin, et al. 2000; Battistoni 1997; Buchanan 1997; Gilbert, Holdt, and Christopherson 1998), *career development* (Eyler and Giles 1999; Sax and Astin 1997), *involvement in community* (Gelmon, et al. 1998; Lisman 1998), *self-awareness* (Astin and Sax 1998; Eyler and Giles 1999), *role as learners* (Eyler and Giles 1999; Gelmon, et al. 2001), *academic achievement* (Astin and Sax 1998; Eyler and Giles 1999; Markus, Howard, and King 1993), *critical thinking skills* (Batchelder and Root 1999; Berson 1998; Gilbert, Holdt, and Christopherson 1998; Wechsler and Fogel 1995), *appreciation of diversity* (Astin, et al. 2000; Jordan 1994; Myers-Lipton 1996). A number of these variables are also highlighted in the extensive resources available in the Campus Compact *Service-Learning Toolkit* (Campus Compact 2000). This present research contributes to the field by considering all of these student variables, and by involving almost 3,000 students.

Methodology

The work reported here derives from ongoing research at Portland State University to develop perspectives on student learning through service-learning experiences. These efforts include an initial set of comprehensive case studies (Driscoll, Holland, et al. 1996) in which a number of measurement methods were developed, tested, and refined; subsequent targeted interviews and focus groups to further articulate selected concepts; and development of revised survey instruments for students, faculty, and community partners to complete at the end of service-learning courses. Detailed discussion of the methodology and the development of the evaluation matrix for assessing impact on students may be found elsewhere (Gelmon et al. 2001).

One of the challenges in assessing the impact of service-learning on students is the lack of proven effective methods available to evaluate this form of learning. Eyler and Giles (1994) claimed that the lack of assessment instruments was due to the fact that the purpose of service-learning is not always delineated, resulting in ambiguous student variables, indicators, and outcomes. Universities define their service-learning programs with very different goals. Some are curriculum-based while others are strictly co-curricular; some are concerned with social justice and citizenship development; and others are focused on using service-learning as a pedagogy of teaching to assist students in understanding course content. This diversity of programmatic goals makes the uniform assessment of service-learning outcomes very difficult, if not impossible. As a result, educators have produced a paucity of instruments that measure the impact that service has on students.

Phase I of the research reported here (1995–1998) was focused on the impact of service-learning on students. We wanted to understand the impact of curriculum-based service-learning that focuses on enhancing classroom learning. A set of concepts that described potential impacts on students was developed, and relevant indicators were identified to measure this impact on students involved in service-learning projects. A variety of data-gathering methods were employed to understand the multiple kinds of information each of the methods uncovered about the impact on students. At the same time, information was collected about the impact of service-learning on faculty members, the community, and the institution (see Gelmon, et al. 2001 for a complete description of the methodology). The qualitative data was collected from assessments of students, faculty, and community partners between Fall quarter 1995 and Winter quarter 1997.

Table 2 presents information about the courses that were studied extensively in Phase I. They represent a range of disciplines, as well as undergraduate (300 and 400 level) and graduate (500 level) courses.

Table 2: Phase I Courses

Courses	Discipline	Number of Students
Linguistics 4: TESL Methods	Applied Linguistics (LING 477/577)	35
Technical Writing	English (ENG 410/510)	20
Health Promotion Programs for Children and Youth	Public Health Education (PHE 365)	60
Performance Appraisal	Psychology (PSY 436/536)	10
Graphic Design 2	Art (ART 321)	28
Urban Housing and Development	Urban Studies and Planning (USP 312)	30
Contemporary Literature	English (ENG 385)	33
Fourth Year Russian	Foreign Languages and Literature (FLL 410)	5
Introduction to Education	Education (ED 410/510)	34
TOTAL		255

Through these courses, multiple sources of data were accessed as listed below:

- 48 Student Interviews
- 14 Student Focus Groups
- 9 Faculty Interviews
- 9 Course Syllabi
- 8 Faculty Journals
- 12 Community Partner Interviews
- 1 Community Partner Focus Group
- 16 Observations of Students at the Community Partner Sites
- 36 Observations of University Courses

The pilot case studies provided incredibly rich data, but we discovered that the continued use of multiple methods of data collection, requiring extensive time for analysis, could not be continued due to resource limitations. A refined set of surveys was developed, to be administered at the end of service-learning courses for completion by students, community partners, and faculty. Much of the detailed data previously obtained through qualitative methods would no longer be collected, since resource constraints did not allow for extended analysis. Regardless, the newly developed surveys allowed the researchers to analyze quantitative data illustrating impact.

Phase II of data collection involved data collected from each identified service-learning course offered at Portland State University during 1999–2001 using the revised surveys. At the beginning of each identified service-learning course, the faculty of record was contacted and asked to administer the survey to students in one of the final class sessions. Table 3 presents the population of courses for data collection in Phase II; these courses included undergraduate courses, senior level capstones, and graduate courses.

Table 3: Phase II Data Collection

Time Period	Number of Courses	Number of Students
1999–2000:	N = 89	1,371
Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer Quarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 undergraduate (100/200) • 9 undergraduate (300/400) • 53 senior capstones • 20 undergraduate/graduate (400/500) • 6 graduate courses 	
2000–2001:	N = 143	1,567
Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer Quarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 undergraduate (100/200) • 27 undergraduate (300/400) • 64 senior capstones • 18 undergraduate/graduate (400/500) • 14 graduate courses 	
TOTAL	232	2,938

The qualitative data in this study were derived primarily during Phase I, and the quantitative data were primarily collected during Phase II. While there were some qualitative data collected in the Phase II surveys, they were not systematically reviewed for this paper. However, informal review of these data by the authors appears to confirm other qualitative findings reported here. The findings are organized to illustrate how students, community partners, and faculty described student learning in service-learning courses. Within each section findings are organized into key themes reflecting the ten variables previously outlined.

Students' Perspectives

Students consistently reported gaining a greater *awareness of community* issues. They demonstrated increased learning about both community assets and challenges. Students articulated learning about individuals and organizations promoting positive change in the community. They also described learning about social issues that they were had not been aware existed in such close proximity to the university. These issues spanned a range of social factors including poverty, domestic violence, challenges faced by non-native English speakers, high school dropout rates, and other issues particular to disenfranchised groups.

In addition, students reported a positive attitude toward *involvement in their community*, a *commitment to service*, and the concept of social responsibility. One student expressed this attitude and commitment toward service when he stated, "I am going to help them even when the course is finished...doing some files in Excel...and writing a web page for them." Students communicated satisfaction with being able to "make a difference and provide solutions." They also stated that their continued involvement was based upon the relationships they had developed in the community. In the words of one college student, "I have just started connecting to the students and they count on me being here." Thus, a theme that emerged was the importance of direct contact with the community partner. Students were less inclined to comment on a commitment to future service if they did not have direct contact with the community partner. The survey data collected also confirmed students' *commitment to future service*. Only 38 percent of the students reported that they were engaged in volunteer activities before the course, but after the course the number increased to 68 percent who reported plans to continue volunteering after the completion of the course. Students who were not planning on continuing their involvement cited time as the major barrier.

Throughout the interviews and focus groups, students articulated how service-learning courses affected their *self-awareness* and *personal development* as they became more knowledgeable about their own strengths, skills, and interests. Overall, 72 percent of students responded that their service-learning course enhanced their "understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses." Students experienced this self-awareness as leading to a better sense of direction in their *career development*. They reported learning more about the nature of the work, expectations within a profession, and their own style. Students discussed using this as an opportunity to make meaning out of

their career choices: "I learned that this is not what I want to do. I really like writing and I like preparing documents, but I do not like editing. For me that was a real important thing to learn."

Students also reported achieving a greater *self-awareness* as professionals; for some students this was reflected in learning about their weaknesses, while others discovered they had tangible skills such as writing, presentation, or design. Others discovered more intangible assets, such as patience, working well with children, ability to lead a group, and confidence. As one student stated, "I've always been scared that what if I get out of school and I get a job with a company and...I guess I thought that I couldn't do it yet, but I can." Students were consistent in their comments that service-learning gave them confidence in professional areas of their lives in which they had previously experienced insecurities.

Students detailed how service-learning courses strengthened their *communication* skills. Students reported greater confidence in their interpersonal skills, their ability to communicate in professional settings, and their capacity to interact effectively in collaborative team settings. Students also talked about enhancing their listening skills and their ability to provide critical feedback. As students worked with community organizations, they reported, "the hardest part was listening...you really have to listen well to what they want." The quantitative data supported this theme as well, with 68 percent of respondents reporting that the work they performed in the community enhanced their ability to communicate more effectively in organizational settings.

Students also reported on the teaching and learning dynamics embedded in service-learning courses. They articulated that they found new and more empowered *role(s) as learners* and a sense of ownership in these educational experiences. One student contrasted her service-learning course with prior experiences stating that, "[m]y number one complaint about the education system is that I felt like I was sitting in a box, learning about the world and not part of the world and experiencing it. This is different." Students reported enthusiastically on the variable of sense of ownership in the outcomes of the class; one stated that "I can't even compare [this service-learning course] to last year. [The traditional course] had an assignment, turn it in. I went through the motions. This [service-learning course] is with you. People are involved now. You have a responsibility. You don't want to let people down." For this student, the connection with the community and the responsibility to serve the community has taken her out of the spectator role, mundanely completing assignments, and transformed her role into a participant with a responsibility. This is consistent with the survey data, which showed that 76 percent of students felt a responsibility to meet the needs of the community partner.

Students described that this new active role as learner positively affected their growth in terms of *academic achievement* in two significant ways. The first was articulated as a sense of relevance of the academic content. Students reported a high level of motivation to learn in these courses through mastering course content in relation to the course's service project. A student expressed this concept by saying, "I was excited

about doing a performance appraisal (in this course) and developing an instrument. When I read about it in my...psychology textbook, it sounded interesting. I was excited to go out and actually do one and see what it was like.” In another class, a student reported that “the most benefit I’ve been getting [from the class] so far is that I get Russian practice, in a real situation.” In the courses studied, students reported academic gains through applying academic knowledge to address a community issue. Sixty-one percent of students reported enhanced understanding of theoretical course content as a result of the applied community component in the course.

The second aspect of academic achievement that students described was an enhanced ability to *think critically* and address real community issues. Sixty-two percent of students indicated that the service-learning course enhanced their ability to solve problems, and 78 percent felt that the service-learning course helped them connect what they learned in “real life situations.” Students consistently reported a greater ability to critically evaluate community issues. For example, a student in an urban housing course stated that as a result of the community work involved in the course he was better prepared to determine “what the consequences of that action [housing policy] might be as far as the surrounding communities, or infrastructure, or transportation.” Students reported enhanced learning when they were encouraged to make clear connections that explicitly linked the theory and the experience.

Finally, students provided evidence that these service-learning courses engaged them in ethnically and economically diverse communities, which many had never encountered before. A majority of the students in service-learning courses reported interacting with different cultures, enhancing their *appreciation of diversity*.

In the early phases of our research, most of the student comments focused on their fears. As one student stated, “I didn’t know that area—I wasn’t use [sic] to it. There was some fear of that area. I was really nervous about the whole thing...the minority group...I had little exposure to it, but I was looking forward to it—both the exposure and the work experience.” Even after a ten-week service-learning experience, students expressed concern for their “personal safety,” “survival,” and their personal belongings. It was disheartening to find that after an entire quarter of service, individual students had not questioned deeply held stereotypes. Only a few students were able to reflect on these assumptions in deep and meaningful ways. One student who did reflect upon her fears was able to discover that “the danger is not necessarily in the community, the fear is in me.” She was able to see that her own stereotypes formed a fear of a community that may be unwarranted.

As a result of these findings, the University employed a qualified academic professional to help faculty address this issue in their classes. Since 1997, we have seen a decline in the number and nature of statements about fear at the end of the courses. Currently, 50 percent of all service-learning students report that their service-learning course made them more aware of their own biases and prejudices. This decline can be viewed as a positive result of diversity training. Future investigation is needed to better understand this complex variable.

Community Partners' Perspectives

Community partners are frequently an underutilized source of assessment data. Researchers tend to seek feedback from students regarding the impact of these types of experiences, view the faculty member as a source for evaluation and grading, and not involve community partners in the formal assessment program. We conducted interviews and focus groups with our partners, surveyed them, and observed students interacting with community partners on-site to gain their perspective.

Community partners were insightful regarding the attitudes of students, knowledge areas demonstrated by students, and the actual performance or product created by the students. They were able to articulate the quality of the student work and the interpersonal communication processes students engaged in to accomplish the service goal.

Community partners reported that students demonstrated *awareness of community*, in terms of both the needs of the community and the resources in the community. Community partners reported that students gained this awareness through direct service to clients and through engagement in organizational development efforts (such as logo design). Students learned the missions of the organizations, how to communicate these missions, and how to help the organizations themselves become more effective in communicating and achieving their missions.

A consistent theme found in the community partner interviews and focus groups was the high level of student *involvement in community* and *commitment to service*. The community saw this involvement and commitment in the performance of the students. Partners' statements echoed the theme that students became involved in positive ways in the community, as one partner stated: "[the college students] helped to improve the [younger] students' academics, helping their grades go up, helping their self-confidence...I really feel that everyone has successfully done their part...the more PSU students come here and help with the [other] students, it makes success." Another partner communicated: "I don't think I realized the wonderful quality we were going to get...but frankly we were just blown away."

Community partners were additionally informative about what skills they observed students demonstrating while putting theory into practice. The community tended to frame these in terms of "real-life" *career development* skills. Community partners reported that students demonstrated communication skills through formal presentations to executive boards and through informal interactions with clients and *critical thinking* skills through the process of "making important decisions."

A community educator added that through the service-learning experience, the college students gained experience addressing several of the student variables, particularly *communication*, *appreciation of diversity*, and skills for *career development*. Several community partners identified that they observed students gaining a deeper understanding about the course content (*academic achievement*) while learning about the complexity of problems that exist within communities. Students in a fourth-year

Russian course partnered with a social service agency to assist recent immigrants with language acquisition and job location in the community. The community partner reported that students who otherwise are highly proficient in the use of the Russian language were presented with translation difficulties that they would never encounter in the classroom setting. For example, students were challenged to explain in Russian the qualifications and skills for a job as a hairdresser. The community partner reported that students quickly understood the difficulties the clients (persons who were qualified for employment but lacked certain job-specific nomenclature) faced finding employment.

There is always the potential for bias in community partner feedback, as partners are sometimes so grateful to work with the university that they do not wish to jeopardize their relationship through negative feedback. Community partners tended to report high levels of satisfaction with student work and student involvement with the community. When negative feedback was given, it tended to relate to the quarter system or time constraints of the university, rather than to student performance or student commitment. These issues raised by the community regarding time and logistics should be taken seriously, but are outside of the scope of this article.

In summary, community partners shed light on the students' performance, contributions to the community, and the skills developed as a result of participation in service-learning. They also confirmed the students' statements regarding the relevance of learning that takes place in the community and the workplace skills developed.

Faculty Perspectives

Faculty members provided insights regarding student learning through interviews, focus groups, surveys, syllabi analysis, collection of faculty journals, and classroom observations (See Gelmon, et al. 2001) Faculty reported their observations of student learning, and commented on what teaching and learning dynamics facilitated student learning in service-learning courses. Analysis of faculty journals and interviews with faculty confirmed the outcomes reported by students. Throughout their journals faculty reflected on students' enhanced *awareness of community issues*. These faculty reflections were most frequently reported after a powerful community speaker came to class. Faculty reported that community members expanded students' knowledge of community issues, and stated that students were "enthralled" with community partners' presentations on issues such as children and poverty in the local community.

Faculty also commented on students' *involvement in the community organization and commitment to service*. Faculty reported observing students move from questioning why they were required to perform community work, to a deeper understanding of and commitment to the community work. Frequently, faculty journals included statements such as "student interest is high," reflecting students' attitude toward the service component. When faculty reported negative student attitudes, it was primarily attributed to frustrating logistics preventing the students from the opportunity to do the community work planned. Faculty statements pertaining to students' *commitment to service* were consistently about commitment to the project within their course. Faculty

reflected on their goals to engage students in broad social issues such as education, but in terms of outcomes primarily spoke of the commitment in terms of their own course.

Faculty discussed their observations of the lessons learned by the students, which centered on *academic achievement* (mastering of course content), *critical thinking*, *career development*, *self-awareness*, and *communication*. For example, one faculty member commented on how students were learning the nuances of graphic design, both as knowledge of course content and as emerging professionals in the field. Students were reported to be developing *critical thinking* skills around the choices involved in the design process. In addition, growth in *self-awareness* was noted, such as graphic design students learning how to develop the “instinct” of how to create designs, and emotionally moving through the vulnerable process of sharing designs and receiving critical feedback. Faculty also reported that they observed students gaining more sophisticated *communication* skills as they learned how to give peers critical feedback about the community project. Faculty discussed how students furthered these skills through listening and responding to the community partners’ requests.

One of the faculty journals included student quotes from student reflections and mid-term examinations. Students commented on mastering course content (*academic achievement*), *critical thinking*, *appreciation of diversity* issues they were encountering, and spoke of their own *self-awareness* as teachers and as individuals. One student wrote, “The class has helped show me the realities of how difficult it is to apply knowledge learned in coursework into reality. It has shown me ways to deal with challenging students that have a background different than my own and how to build connection between us.” Some students spoke about how they had previously avoided people different from themselves and that they had grown personally through the process of service-learning.

Interviews with faculty members revealed some of the pedagogical issues that may have contributed to the student learning results. Faculty reported a shift away from a “banking” method of education in which the aim is to deposit knowledge into students, toward a “constructivist” philosophy that encourages students to construct new knowledge and apply that knowledge in meaningful ways. Faculty stressed that the key learning in these courses was the empowerment of students in taking on new *roles as learners* and community problem-solvers. Although the personalities and teaching styles of the faculty involved varied greatly, in each case the faculty who incorporated service-learning into their courses changed their own roles in the classroom. As one faculty member stated, teaching a service-learning course was about “reevaluating the role of the teacher. Not as someone who has all the answers and the students have to guess what the answer is...which I think is a much better way of thinking of a teacher *versus* this powerful, all-knowing person. It was really a liberating experience for students not to have me have all the answers that they had to grasp. The other benefit was the redefining of not just my role, but their role.” Most faculty members saw their role as “coaches” or “mentors” and actively sought a shift of power in the classroom.

This new *role as learner* was also documented in classroom observations. Observers noted that students moved from the narrow roles of “spectator, learner, and absorber of facts” to roles including “active participant, expert, and teacher.” This role of the learner was confirmed throughout faculty journals as they struggled with how to support students in these new roles. Faculty questioned the level of control they wanted and needed to have both in the classroom and in the creation of public final products for the community partners.

Faculty interviews and classroom observations demonstrated that faculty intentionally sought to enhance students’ *critical thinking* skills by introducing community issues and solutions as complex processes rather than as clear-cut, right-and-wrong conclusions. One urban housing course was especially effective in illustrating the complexity of interrelated issues. In this course, community experts with opposing viewpoints visited class and held interactive discussions with the students on controversial issues such as limiting growth and the role of government intervention in controlling housing markets. The students were presented with two different perspectives from experts in the field, forcing them to acknowledge that there was no absolute “right” answer to the issues. Students were encouraged to connect their academic learning with their personal knowledge of housing in order to respond to the speakers, and then to draw upon these insights in their community-based projects.

Classroom observations confirmed faculty members’ reports on effects of service-learning on students. Thematic analysis of classroom observations documented that the themes of *awareness of community issues*, *involvement in community*, *academic achievement*, and *communication* were present in classroom discussions. Observers noted students’ *awareness of community issues*, discussion of articles on community issues, and comments on their involvement in the community.

Lessons Learned

This analysis leads to a number of lessons learned for dissemination to others. These relate primarily to improvement and assessment of service-learning.

In an effort to improve course quality, the data suggest that there are three key factors: adequate preparation of students, ample opportunities for reflection to reinforce the connection between the course content and the service experience, and a focus on collaborative learning. High-quality service-learning begins with a clear syllabus and a coherent orientation and training element in the course. Faculty must provide a comprehensive syllabus that explains to students why they are performing service, what service they will be performing, the relationship of that service to the academic course content, and the logistics of how service will be performed. Students also must be offered the time, opportunity, and environment to develop the skills required for project completion. Practicing useful skills and role-playing in the safe environment of the classroom are encouraged before students begin community work. For example, in many of our courses students perform mock interviews or tutoring interactions before they practice them in the community.

The second improvement factor is strengthening the connection between course content and the service experience. Faculty must respond to statements such as “I wish we could have had a little more connection between the service and the content of the class.” Students should not have to wish for this integration but should be constantly experiencing this synthesis.

Clearly, the connection between course theory and service experience was made by some students and not by others. It appears that the connection was based on at least two factors. First, this synthesis was catalyzed through the use of a syllabus that outlined precisely the connection between the learning objectives of the course and the service work to be performed. We have developed a syllabus guide that helps faculty to format their syllabus (Gelmon, et al. 2001). Secondly, students made the connection themselves when the service they were performing mirrored the content they were reading and the discussions held in class. Faculty should facilitate student engagement in readings, discussions, and writing opportunities that clarify the relationship between course content and service experience.

Structured student reflections also assisted in improving the quality of student learning by encouraging the deconstruction of stereotypes and addressing issues of diversity. If faculty intend for service-learning to enhance students' *appreciation of diversity*, they must engage in a process of challenging previously-held assumptions and feelings, including fear. Successes were perceived when faculty facilitated processes whereby students addressed issues of diversity in reflective classroom discussions, readings, assignments, and journals.

When faculty used a collaborative learning approach that valued the expertise of multiple teachers, high quality of student learning was documented. In these courses, faculty facilitated student sharing of community experiences and created opportunities for students to participate as co-educators within the classroom. Students serving as educators aided in building community within the classroom and gave fellow students access to key pieces of knowledge that they otherwise would not have had. Courses where students envisioned themselves as resource persons charged with co-educating their peers were seen as successful from both faculty and student points of view. Community partners were also often engaged as co-teachers, both in the community and in the classroom.

Finally, the benefit of using multiple methods to assess student learning with all three constituencies (students, community partners, and faculty) was demonstrated throughout our work. The classroom observations, faculty journals, and syllabus analyses also strengthened our understanding of the issues critical to this form of pedagogy. The voices of all three constituencies improved the quality of the data gathered. Students were able to provide their own perspectives on the skills and attitudes they developed as a result of their participation in the course. Community partners provided evidence of student learning in the field. Finally, faculty could confirm many of these learnings and describe the environment that facilitated the development of these skills. These methods and findings are described in greater detail elsewhere (Gelmon, et al. 2001).

Conclusion

This review has demonstrated that service-learning is a powerful pedagogy that transforms the way people view, facilitate, and experience education. Data from students, community partners, and faculty demonstrated the impact that service-learning has on students. Both the qualitative and quantitative student data showed that service-learning positively affected each of the variables under study. Community partners added valuable insights regarding the quality of the student performance in the community. Finally, faculty tended to stress the students' awareness of community issues, communication skills, and academic achievement.

This five-year research process has revealed that service-learning experiences make courses more relevant for students by connecting academic learning to real community issues. Students were observed evolving into new roles, moving from being absorbers of facts and concepts to becoming active creators of knowledge. As this shift took place, faculty functioned less as purveyors of information and more as facilitators of discussion and discovery. Community members became co-teachers in the process of offering college students "real-world" lessons. As a result, students were transformed, and they became actively engaged in working in their communities.

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