The Public Purposes of Libraries: Innovation and Impact Through Service Learning

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What is service learning?

In these programs, field-based “experiential learning” with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life. (AAC&U, 2008)
Why is it important?

High impact educational practices
- AAC&U identified ten high-impact practices
- Increase rates of student retention and student engagement
Examples of partnerships
Examples of partnerships

Santa Clara University
Sociology 30: Self, Community, and Society
Partnership - SCU

Librarian: Nicole Branch

Three workshops focused on finding and using data

- Session 1 - Searching is Strategic: Self (school & community)
- Session 2 - Authority is Constructed & Contextual: Placement site (school & community)
- Session 3 - Information Has Value: Conditions & assets
Partnership - SCU

Searching is Strategic
- Imagining data sources
- Navigating census data
- Navigating school data

Authority is Constructed & Contextual
- Critiquing data & sources
- Navigating census & school data

Information Has Value
- Conditions/needs (health, transportation, employment, etc.)
- Community assets (people, places, characteristics, etc.)
- Independent exploration
Examples of partnerships

University of Michigan
Library Student Mini-Grants
Partnership - UMich

Grants of up to $1,000 are awarded to students to support innovative and collaborative projects

Projects must strengthen community partnerships, enhance global scholarship, and/or advocate for diversity and inclusion

74 projects have been funded

An end-of-year symposium gave the students an opportunity to present posters on their work

https://engage.lib.umich.edu/mini-grants/

Librarian: Amanda Peters
Examples of partnerships

American University
Center for Community Engagement & Service
Partnership - AU

Librarians Alex Hodges (now at Harvard) and Olivia Ivey

Faculty Fellows Institute
- Intercultural communication training
- Instructional design support
- Community site visits
- Information literacy integration work
- Cohort engagement
Example of partnerships

University of Montana
Sociology 442 – Service Learning
Partnership – U of Montana

Librarian: Megan Stark

Assignment on refugee resettlement in Missoula, MT

- The scholarly literature, accessed via traditional searching methods, prepared students to approach this issue with broad understanding in an academic way.
- Utilizing community information, accessed via more novel searching methods, augmented students’ broad understanding with nuance and a local focus.
Partnership – U of Montana

Integrating and **citing community information** alongside academic information requires instructional modeling, sharing examples and rewarding students for work done well.

Once academic libraries actively **partner with our communities** to highlight the value their data brings to our students we might begin to ask how we could help make it easier to find and use.

Academic librarians could **refine our collection** assessment tools beyond peer-to-peer comparisons to **capture and promote the unique local information** available in our communities.

Our general collections should contain community knowledge because of its legitimate research value for students.
Colloquium on Libraries & Service Learning

Date: August 9-10, 2018 at American University in Washington, DC
Theme: Critically engaged librarianship: Exploring service learning and community involvement
Website: https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/libraries-and-service-learning/2018/
CFP: Coming next week!
Twitter: @CLSL2018
Engaged library listserv

The listserv provides an opportunity for participants to engage in the sharing of research, ideas, perspectives, and best practices in library engagement with service learning.

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Questions?