

USM Service Learning Courses: Student Survey Report

Student Opinions and Attitudes about their Service Learning Course A Small Study

Prepared by:

Office of Academic Assessment

University of Southern Maine

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USM Service Learning Courses: Student Survey (N=69)

Introduction

The purpose of this survey study was to collect some preliminary information from students about their service-learning courses. A small group of faculty was asked to participate in this study by having students in their service-learning course complete a survey (during class time) at the end of the spring 2015 semester. A “Service-Learning Course Survey” (developed and currently used at Indiana University) was modified to use for gathering feedback from students. Four service-learning courses at USM participated, and a total of 69 students completed the survey.

Although the sample size was small, useful data were obtained about the student’s learning experiences. More specifically, several students reported that they gained either “medium or a great deal” of growth from their course learning in areas, such as; reviewing their own ideas (89%), being able to modify how they approach a problem (88%), and respecting people with differing viewpoints (88%). In addition, many students “agreed or strongly agreed” that integrating a service component into a college course is a very good idea (80%), and that the course helped them listen to others and understand controversial issues (81%). Also, 86% reported that their service-learning course provided them with skills/knowledge that they can use in their career. Lastly, over 90% of the students reported that reflection activities were a regular part of the course, and the activities were clearly linked to the course learning objectives. Of the 69 students who completed the survey, 63% reported that they contributed between 11 and 20 hours of service as part of their course.

In general, based upon the results of this study, students appeared to have a positive experience in their service learning course. Please see the following data tables which display the overall (aggregated) survey results.

Service-Learning Course Participants and Number of Student Respondents

Service-Learning Courses that participated:	Number of Students	
	N =69	%
• EYE 110	17	25%
• EDU 305	13	19%
• POS 446	8	11%
• SWO 393	31	45%

Demographic Information

Class Level of Respondents:	N =69	
	N =69	%
• Freshmen	19	27%
• Sophomore	6	9%
• Junior	31	45%
• Senior	11	16%
• Other	2	3%

Enrollment Status of Respondents:	N=69	
	N=69	%
• Full-time	61	88%
• Part-time	8	12%
• Non-degree	0	0%

Participated in Service as a part of this class:	N=69	%
• Yes	59	86%
• No	10	14%

Students who knew there was a service component <u>before</u> signing up for the course:	N = 68	%
• Yes	41	60%
• No	27	40%

Was service <u>required</u> in this course:	N =68	%
• Yes	50	74%
• No	18	26%

Estimated total number of <u>service hours</u> contributed as part of this class:	N = 68	%
• 0-10 hrs.	11	16%
• 11-20 hrs.	43	63%
• 21-30 hrs.	10	15%
• 31-40 hrs.	0	0%
• More than 40 hrs.	4	6%

Student Growth by Participating in Service-Learning

How much this course contributed to your <u>growth</u> in the following areas:	No Growth		Little Growth		Medium Growth		Great Deal Growth	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. Formally communicating ideas and information.	5	7%	10	14%	35	51%	19	28%
b. Communicating with a team to solve problems.	6	9%	16	23%	30	43%	17	25%
c. Analyzing different ideas and proposed solutions.	2	3%	9	13%	37	54%	21	30%
d. Reviewing your own ideas about how to approach an issue.	1	1%	7	10%	31	45%	30	44%
e. Generating new ideas about how to improve things.	3	4%	10	15%	30	43%	26	38%
f. Meeting professional standards and competencies in your field.	4	6%	12	17%	32	47%	21	30%
g. Furthering the goals of society.	4	6%	15	22%	27	39%	23	33%
h. Having an understanding of subjects outside my major.	5	7%	16	24%	25	37%	22	32%
i. Being able to modify how I approach a problem based on the situation.	2	3%	6	9%	39	56%	22	32%
j. Seeing the relationships among local, national and global issues.	6	9%	12	17%	26	38%	25	36%
k. Working effectively with those of different races, ethnicities, religions.	6	9%	12	17%	16	23%	35	51%
l. Respecting people whose viewpoints differ from mine.	2	3%	6	9%	29	42%	32	46%
m. Exercising my responsibilities as a citizen	3	4%	14	20%	31	45%	21	31%

Student Opinions about their Service-Learning Course

Indicate the choice that best describes your <u>opinion</u> :	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. This course helped me know about opportunities to become involved in the community.	1	1%	3	4%	11	16%	23	34%	31	45%
b. I think integrating a service component into a college course is a very good idea.	0	0%	4	6%	10	15%	21	31%	34	49%
c. This course has given me knowledge and skills I need to address community issues.	0	0%	8	12%	14	20%	26	38%	21	30%
d. This course has helped me to gain a clearer idea of my professional goals.	1	1%	7	10%	9	13%	26	38%	26	38%
e. The nature of this course helped motivate me to be the best student I can be.	1	1%	6	9%	14	20%	26	38%	22	32%
f. I think community service should be required for all college students.	7	10%	3	4%	15	22%	14	20%	30	44%
g. I feel confident that I can apply what I learned to solve real problems in society.	2	3%	3	4%	14	20%	26	38%	24	35%
h. I have a strong sense of civic responsibility to become involved in my community.	0	0%	2	3%	20	29%	29	42%	18	26%
i. I attended this course more consistently than I normally attend other courses.	7	10%	7	10%	20	30%	16	24%	18	26%
j. This course provided me with skills/knowledge that I can use in my career.	1	1%	2	3%	7	10%	30	45%	28	41%

k.	I participated in class discussion more frequently than I did in other courses.	5	7%	7	10%	22	32%	16	23%	19	28%
l.	This course has helped with my decision-making about my major or career	4	6%	7	10%	13	19%	18	26%	27	39%
m.	This course helped me listen to others & understand controversial issues.	2	3%	0	0%	11	16%	24	35%	32	46%
n.	This course motivated me to stay current on social, political or community issues.	1	1%	7	10%	19	28%	23	33%	19	28%
o.	This course had a positive impact on my plans to complete my college degree.	1	1%	2	3%	17	25%	18	26%	31	45%
p.	I would highly recommend that other students take this course.	0	0%	2	3%	13	19%	17	24%	37	54%
q.	This course caused me to feel more concerned about social or community problems.	0	0%	4	6%	21	30%	17	25%	27	39%
r.	This course has enriched me by having contact with cultural or ethnic diversity.	1	1%	6	9%	19	28%	13	19%	30	43%
s.	Because of this course, I am better able to discuss controversial social issues with civility and respect.	1	1%	3	4%	21	31%	19	28%	25	36%

Student Opinions about the Reflection Activities in Service Learning

Reflection activities as an important part of a service learning course:	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. Reflection activities were a regular part of this course.	0	0%	0	0%	5	7%	24	35%	39	58%
b. The reflection activities were well structured with clear directions and guidelines.	0	0%	0	0%	10	15%	25	37%	33	48%
c. Reflection activities provided me an opportunity to explore and clarify my values.	0	0%	2	3%	12	18%	22	32%	32	47%
d. The reflection activities were clearly linked to the learning objectives of the course.	0	0%	0	0%	7	10%	27	40%	34	50%

**If you have questions about this report, please contact the Office of Academic Assessment, 780-4383.*