BREAKOUT SESSION MINUTES

Session: Service Learning

Session Leader: Patti Clayton, North Carolina State University

Defining S-L: multiple definitions; sometimes course-based credit bearing; campuses tend to contextualize S-L and what it means to them which can be confusing; service intentionally applied to content

Components of S-L: integration of academic material with relevant service and critical reflection

Partners in S-L: students, faculty/staff, and community

Learning Goals of S-L: personal growth, academic enhancement, and civic learning

Counter-normativity – not how students are used to learning or faculty are used to teaching

Traditional teaching and learning – boring; lecture; tests; teacher talks/teacher center; not relevant; knowledge lives in books, web, teachers’ heads; standard forms of assessment; expectation that students will all learn the same thing in a similar way; students used to learning this way

Service-learning – hands-on; applied; student centered; relevant; not all in classroom; transformative because it forces us to learn and teach in new ways; different forms of assessment needed; more comfortable with students learning different things; difficulties arise when we invite them into a messier learning arena with more of a voice and responsibility

Tap transformative potential of S-L.

Critical Reflection
Level of investment of student
Structured reflection or open-ended
Sometimes written; sometimes dialogue exchange
Some individual; some collaborative

Reflection is: touchy/feely; opinions; subjective; warm and fuzzy; time off task – where’s the content; hard to evaluate; stream of consciousness; gendered aspect – women tend to do more than men; busy work

Critical Reflection: transformation; appropriate to grade; rubrics help in grading; analytical; integrative; rigorous; subject to critique; academically fulfilling
“We had the experience but missed the meaning” by Elliot, T.S. (1943) The Four Quartets

Critical Reflection generates, deepens, documents learning.

Critical Thinking needs guidance. When should students reflect individually, in groups, with teacher? Helping give students feedback to deepen quality of thinking.

Issues/Questions/Concerns about Definition
“civic learning”
understanding place in community
knowing rights and responsibilities you have as members of various communities
seeing public purpose of field of study
reflection – important at various stages (before, during, after)
s-l versus s-L versus S-l versus S-L – where’s the emphasis lie?

Is it worth it for faculty to implement in courses?
Sometimes; have to believe in it enough to get their feet wet; depends on the client/community partner and other hurdles; increases diversity exposure and training; build curriculum based on objectives; link s-l pedagogy to their passions; research is emerging about benefit for students and teachers; immerse faculty in the process – module in the training – give them a hands-on experience themselves and discuss what they have learned and idea implementation