Service Learning Course Development Exercise

Syllabus Revision Procedures

In the process of converting a traditional course into its civic engagement equivalent, consider the following items. Try to address each item *as specifically as possible*.

1. Identify both the learning objectives of the course as it presently exists *and* the way(s) in which community-based activities could reinforce, deepen, broaden and/or complement those objectives. (The value of the activities may be the course content related to more generic academic outcomes such as critical thinking, becoming aware of mental models/assumptions, enhanced communication skills and mastering research methods/procedures.)

2. Identify at least one important public issue to which both the course and related community-based activities could be perceived as relevant. How could both the course and the proposed activities help prepare students for democratic dialogue and public decision-making regarding that issue?

3. What kinds of community-based/public sector organizations might be able to facilitate the activities envisioned in numbers 1 and 2?

4. What concrete benefits would the community-based activities provide for the course's community partner(s) and/or the larger community in general?

5. What would be the best format for the course's community-based activities: (a) mandatory, elective or extra credit; (b) short-term or long-term; (c) individual or group? Explain your choices.

6. Would you need to make adjustments to the course's existing workload to accommodate community-based activities? (Note: If you answer "yes" but you feel boxed in by "coverage" considerations, ask what type of learning the community-based work could facilitate that is currently being delivered in a more didactic manner.)

7. How would you need to prepare your students conceptually, personally and practically for their community-based work? Should anyone else be involved in the preparation process?

8. Identify at least one assignment (in or out of class) that would help your students analyze or reflect on their community-based work vis-à-vis key course concepts, concerns and objectives. (Try to think outside the box, beyond traditional journaling to include, for example, discussion groups [face to face or electronic], presentations, case writing, role plays and debates.)

9. Identify important assessment goals related to the community-based work. Identify both academic and civic competencies students should be able to demonstrate – and you should be able to evaluate – as a result of that work.