Service Learning Courses

IUI HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICE TAXONOMY

Description

As a dimension of university-community engagement, service learning can be defined as a "course or competency-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students:

1. participate in mutually identified service activities that benefit the community, and
2. reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility." (Bringle and Clayton, 2012, adapted from Bringle and Hatcher, 1995)

Purpose

The IUI Taxonomy for Service Learning Courses has the potential to contribute to the campus and to research on service learning because the taxonomy:

1. Creates a common approach in working with instructors to support the fidelity and quality of high impact teaching practices, including service learning courses.
2. Supports institutional assessment and research on high impact practices by asking instructors to report on selected course attributes (dimensions of the course design that may vary from *low intensity* to *high intensity*), and then explore the relationship between these course variables and student outcomes;
3. Informs and advances a research agenda for service learning by identifying those course attributes (i.e., variables) that may relate to student outcomes, (e.g., civic learning, academic learning, personal growth), as well as other outcomes (e.g., faculty development, community impact, community partner collaboration and satisfaction).
4. Supports institutional and multi-campus research on service learning courses through the use of a common taxonomy that describes variations in course attributes.
5. Provides a framework and approach for other institutions to either adapt or adopt the taxonomy, depending upon how service learning is conceptualized within institutional mission and context.

Suggested Citation

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ABOUT IUPUI TAXONOMIES

The IUI high-impact practice taxonomies support instructors in the iterative development and improvement of courses that engage students in active learning.

Download all of the taxonomies at rise.iupui.edu/taxonomies

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ATTRIBUTE	HIGH IMPACT	HIGHER IMPACT	HIGHEST IMPACT
Reciprocal partnerships and processes shape the community activities, course design, and community outcomes.	The instructor contacts a community organization to host students and provides a brief overview of the course (e.g., learning outcomes, syllabus) and the purposes of the community activities.	The instructor meets with the community partner(s) to discuss the course (e.g., preparation/orientation of students, learning outcomes, syllabus), and to identify how the community activities can enrich student learning and benefit the organization.	The instructor collaborates with and learns from the community partner(s) as coeducators in various aspects of course planning and design (e.g., learning outcomes, readings, preparation/orientation of students, reflection, assessment) and together they identify how the community activities can enrich student learning and add to the capacity of the organization.
Community activities enhance academic content, course design, and assignments.	The instructor includes community activities as added components of the course. The syllabus conveys this information.	The instructor utilizes the community activities as a "text" to provide additional insight into student understanding of academic content and ability to complete assignments. The syllabus describes the relationship of the community activities to learning outcomes.	The instructor integrates the community activities and relevant social issue(s) as critical dimensions for student understanding of academic content and ability to complete assignments. The syllabus provides a strong rationale for the relationship of the community activities to learning outcomes.
Civic competencies (e.g., knowledge, skills, disposition, behavior) are well integrated into student learning outcomes.	The instructor focuses on discipline-based content with some attention given to civic learning or development of civic competencies.	The instructor focuses on discipline-based content and connects to civic learning and civic competencies when relevant to the community activities.	The instructor focuses on the integration of discipline-based content with civic learning and civic competencies and emphasizes the relevance of the community activities to the public purposes of the discipline in society.
Dialogue with others across difference (e.g., racial, ethnic, social economic status, sexual orientation) occurs regularly.	The instructor, the course, and community activities offer students opportunities for interaction and dialogue with diverse others (e.g., race, ethnicity, social economic status, gender, sexual orientation).	The instructor, the course, and community activities engage students in periodic interaction and dialogue with diverse others (e.g., race, ethnicity, social economic status, gender, sexual orientation), as well as interactions and dialogue with peers across a range of experiences and diverse perspectives.	The instructor, the course, and community activities engage students in frequent interaction and dialogue with diverse others (e.g., race, ethnicity, social economic status, gender, sexual orientation), as well as interactions and dialogue with peers across a range of experiences and diverse perspectives.
Critical reflection is well integrated into student learning.	The instructor asks students to create reflective products about the community activities at the end of the semester.	The instructor structures reflection activities and products about the community activities that connect the experience to academic content, require moderate analysis, lead to new action, and provide ongoing feedback to the student throughout the semester.	The instructor builds student capacity to critically reflect and develop products that explore the relevance of the experience to academic content, use critical thinking to analyze social issues, recognize systems of power, and lead to new action. The instructor provides ongoing feedback to the student throughout the semester.
Assessment is used for course improvement.	The instructor articulates the student learning outcomes to the class and assesses at the end of the course.	The instructor articulates the student learning outcomes to the class and uses a measurement tool to assess the service learning component of the course.	The instructor and community partner(s) articulate the student learning outcomes to the class and use measurement tools to assess the service learning component of the course and influence on community outcomes.

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