

Community-Engaged Learning in Economics
Economics Teaching and Learning Community of Practice, June 15, 2017

Definition:

A community-engaged learning course works in partnership with community organizations to create opportunities for student experiential learning. In most community-engaged learning courses, students work a certain number of hours on-site with a community organization during the course of the term though there are other models (project or consultancy-based, research-based, one-time projects etc.)

Key features of a Community-Engaged Learning course:

- Students undertake work for, and with, a community organization
- This engagement experience is tied to the learning objectives of the course
- The student's project is defined by the needs of the community organization
- The course creates opportunities for intentional reflection on the relationship between the classroom-based and experiential learning
- The course partnerships are reciprocal and serve the needs of both the community organization and the student or university

Support for your Community-Engaged Learning course:

The Centre for Community Partnerships supports University of Toronto units or individual faculty members with their community-engaged learning courses through the following programs and services:

- Consulting on course and syllabus design
- Brokering community partnerships
- Hosting events and workshops for community-engaged faculty
- Maintaining resources including a newsletter, portal site and library
- Advising on insurance, ethics and partnership agreements

Potential next steps:

- Meet with me to discuss your course ideas
- Attend an upcoming faculty event: <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/ccp/workshops>

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Resources

Websites:

“Case-Study: Service Learning.” *The Handbook for Economic Lecturers*. The Economics Network.

<https://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/handbook/ugresearch/72>

“Service-learning in Economics.” *Pedagogy in Action: the SERC Portal for Educators*. National Science Foundation and Carleton College.

<https://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/service/service-learnin.html>

“Service-Learning.” *Diversifying Economic Quality*. American Economic Association.

http://diversifyingecon.org/index.php/Service_learning

References:

Brooks, Nancy and Richard Schramm, 2007, Integrating Economics Research, Education, and Service, *Journal of Economic Education*, vol. 38(1): 36-43.

Elliott, Dawn Richards, 2009, What is the Comparative Advantage of the Service Learning Pedagogy? *Insights from Development Economics*, *Forum for Social Economics*, vol. 38(2): 263-278.

McGoldrick, KimMarie and Andrea Ziegert (eds.) *Putting the Invisible Hand to Work: Concepts and Models for Service Learning in Economics*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press: 150-167.

McGoldrick, KimMarie, Ann Battle, and Suzanne Gallagher, 2000, Service-Learning and the Principles of Economics Course: Theory and Practice, *American Economist*, vol. 44(1): 43-52.

Mertens, Jo Beth, 2009, Incorporating Service-Learning in Quantitative Methods Economics Courses, in *Service-Learning and the Liberal Arts*, Craig A. Rimmerman, Ed., Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 107-136.

Offering a Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) Course Checklist

Centre for Community Partnerships, University of Toronto

The Centre for Community Partnerships provides advice, support and resources to instructors during the course proposal, design, teaching and evaluation process. Please [contact us](#) at any time for assistance. Also, be sure to attend [our faculty events](#) to learn about new community-engaged teaching strategies and to connect with other community-engaged learning instructors.

While Planning Your Course

- Consult with the Centre for Community Partnerships (CCP)
 - We can advise you on course, syllabus, placement and assignment design, introduce you to resources and secure community placements (upon request).
- Determine what kinds of departmental support and approval you might require
- Complete a “[Request For Partnerships Proposal](#)” form so that the CCP can identify potential community placements for your course.
 - The deadline for submitting your proposal to the CCP is typically near the end of May (for Fall term or full year course placements) and the end of September (for Spring term course placements)
- Connect with your community partners before your course begins. You may want to undertake any or all of the following:
 - Involve your community partners in developing your course
 - Invite your partners to attend your course to present information about their organization early in the term or to contribute by guest-lecturing or otherwise sharing their expertise
 - Make an in-person visit to the organization to meet your community partner(s) or call to introduce yourself
 - Liaise with your partners about the placement process: discuss how to match students to placements, ask about how students should first contact them and provide a sense of the timeline of your course
 - Thank your partners for inviting your students into their organization and for their time working with your students
- Contact the CCP to book an orientation session on CEL for your course and let us know your final enrollment numbers
 - We can visit your class early in the term to provide an orientation for your students to community-engaged learning, a student handbook and important liability, confidentiality and insurance information.

Once Your Course Begins

- Match your students to the community placements available
 - There are various ways to undertake this matching process and the CCP can advise you on what might be most suitable for your course.
- Ensure that your students complete all the required forms and collect and retain/submit them (as advised)
 - These forms may be related to issues of liability, confidentiality and student placement insurance. They can be found on the CCP website [Forms for CEL Courses](#)
- Confirm that your students have contacted their community partners and have begun their placements early in the course
 - You might provide your students with a date by which they should have begun their placements and encourage them to keep you apprised of any challenges that arise in their placement.
- Check in with your community partners during the term to ensure placements are running smoothly and to ask for feedback
- Contact the CCP whenever you have questions or concerns and invite us to final course presentations or reflection sessions

After Your Course Ends

- Distribute the CCP's Student Survey to your students via email and portal and require them to complete it
- Complete the CCP's Instructor Survey
- Thank your community partners for working with your students and invite their feedback on the experience
 - Many partners especially appreciate hearing about student experiences in the course and having student assignments (like final projects, papers and reflections) shared (with student permission) with them.
- Book a post-course meeting with the CCP to discuss the successes and challenges of your course and to plan for its next iteration.

A Checklist for Service-Learning in Economics

Source: Pedagogy in Action: The SERC Portal for Educators
https://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/service/econ_checklist.html

Incorporating service-learning into any course involves careful preparation. This checklist helps faculty begin the process of developing an effective service-learning course in economics. The first step is to [prepare and design](#) your course. This involves defining learning, service and civic engagement goals. In the second step, community partners and service activities are chosen in order to [implement a service experience](#). An important third step is reflection; [reflection](#) provides students opportunities to link classroom learning to their service experiences. Finally, both formative and summative [assessment](#) activities are developed to promote and measure student learning.
[Learn more about principles of good practice in service-learning](#)

Preparing and Designing a Service-Learning Course

Student learning:

- What are the learning goals for the class?
 - Which economic theories do you want your students to learn?
 - Which economic institutions or agencies do they need to know about?
- What tasks or competencies will your students be expected to perform after the course?
 - Which economic formulas or models should they know and be able to apply?
 - Which math skills should they have to accomplish their work?
- What are your expected learning outcomes for your class?

Service activity:

- What are your service, and civic engagement goals for the class?
- What type of preparation do students need for required service?
 - What economic knowledge and skills do they need to serve effectively?
 - What information do students need about their community, community issues or problems, and community partners before they participate in service activities?
 - What civic engagement skills do students need to serve effectively?
 - team building activities
 - diversity: working with people who are different from one's self
 - role of reflection in linking course content with service experience
- What are your expected service, and civic engagement outcomes for your class?

Service-learning:

- What type of service activity best promotes the learning, service and civic engagement goals for your class?
- Which [community partners](#) would best benefit from and support your learning, service, and civic engagement outcomes?

Implementing a Service Experience

- What [type of service activities](#), placements, or projects will facilitate the learning, service, and civic engagement goals in your course?
- Is the proposed service activity meaningful to both community members and students?
- How will community partners participated in the service placements, projects, or activities?
 - What are their expected contributions and responsibilities before service (e.g. project design, student orientation, etc)?
 - What are their expected contributions and responsibilities during service (e.g. on-site supervision, documentation of service, etc)?
 - What are their expected contributions and responsibilities after service (e.g. student service evaluation, outcome evaluation)

[Learn more about effective learning and service experiences](#)

Learning through Reflection

- What [types of reflection activities](#) best link learning and service goals?
 - What types of reflection activities allow students to apply economic concepts?
 - What types of reflection activities allow students to reflect on the role, impact and consequences of economics in a civil society?
- What form will reflection take?
 - Oral or written?
 - Individual or group reflection?
- When will reflection take place? (Before, during, after service?)
- Where will reflection activities take place? (In the classroom? At the service site? Other? (electronic class chat sites)?

Evaluating Student Learning and Service Activities and Outcomes

- What types of formative assessment will be used to monitor and guide student learning?
 - Which methods will best identify gaps in student understanding of economic concepts?
 - Which methods will help student apply economic theory in a real world setting?
- What type of summative assessment best demonstrates student:
 - Learning outcomes in economics?
 - Service outcomes?
 - Civic engagement outcomes?
- What will we look for? What are the necessary indicators of our learning, service, and civic outcomes?
- How will we measure the indicators learning, service, and civic outcomes?
- Who or what will provide the necessary data?
- When will formative and summative evaluation take place throughout the term?