

# Service Learning

MITCH BENDER, PROFESSOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Background

- ▶ Started service learning in 2004
- ▶ Mostly environmentally related projects
- ▶ Majority of the projects fall loosely into water and food projects

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Background

- ▶ Courses:
  - ▶ 'Introduction to Environmental Studies' (ETS 260)
  - ▶ 'Environmental Regulation' (ETS 367)
  - ▶ 'Society and the Environment' (ETS 375)
  - ▶ 'Senior Project' (ETS 456)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Background

- ▶ In the past decade, over 1,000 students in my classes have logged over 14,000 service hours on over 125 environmental service learning projects
- ▶ These students have worked with dozens of community partners

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Background

- ▶ Notable projects
  - ▶ Water festival
  - ▶ Community garden
  - ▶ Husky Re-cycle [\[video\]](#)



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Goals

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Goals

- ▶ Students grow through a service related experience

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Goals

- ▶ Students have something to talk about in interviews

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Goals

- ▶ Build connections and networks for me, the student, and the community partner

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Challenges**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Challenges**

- ▶ Connecting local issues to global issues

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Challenges**

- ▶ Required project vs. optional project

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Challenges

- ▶ Listening to the community partner

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Challenges

- ▶ Burn out

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Challenges

- ▶ Peers and supervisors might not see the value of service learning

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Challenges

- ▶ Reflection and assessment

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Advice

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Advice

- ▶ Your community partner is your co-teacher

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Advice

- ▶ Give good, solid guidelines

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Advice

- ▶ Limit micro-management

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Advice

- ▶ Start small and don't over-extend

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Advice

- ▶ Find your own reward

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Assessment

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Feedback

- ▶ Question 1: How well did the project align with the 'Elements of Service Learning'?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Elements of Service Learning

- ▶ Students provide some meaningful service (work)
- ▶ The service provided meets a need or goal
- ▶ The need or goal is defined by a community (or some of its members)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Elements of Service Learning

- ▶ The service provided by students flows from and into course objectives
- ▶ The service is integrated into the course by means of assignments that require some form of reflection on the service in light of the course objectives
- ▶ The assignment is assessed and evaluated accordingly

Weigert (1998)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Feedback

- ▶ Question 1: How well did the project align with the 'Elements of Service Learning'?
- ▶ Ranking
  - ▶ 0 = no alignment
  - ▶ 1 = slight alignment
  - ▶ 2 = moderate alignment
  - ▶ 3 = good alignment
  - ▶ 4 = excellent alignment

Average Ranking  
3.74

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Feedback

▶ Question 2: How well did the project align with the course objectives?

### ▶ Ranking

- ▶ 0 = no alignment
- ▶ 1 = slight alignment
- ▶ 2 = moderate alignment
- ▶ 3 = good alignment
- ▶ 4 = excellent alignment

Average Ranking  
3.45

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Feedback

▶ Question 3: How would you rank your overall experience?

### ▶ Ranking

- ▶ 0 = hated it
- ▶ 1 = it was okay
- ▶ 2 = it was a good experience
- ▶ 3 = loved it!

Average Ranking  
2.73

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Feedback

▶ Overall, students appreciate the project

▶ Many see it as an opportunity to grow

▶ Some gain understand of their impact whether it be significant or slight (Meals of Wheels)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Feedback

▶ Common complaints:

- ▶ This isn't something that will help me in the long run
- ▶ I'd rather just write a paper
- ▶ One of my group mates didn't do any of the work
- ▶ Mandatory volunteering

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---